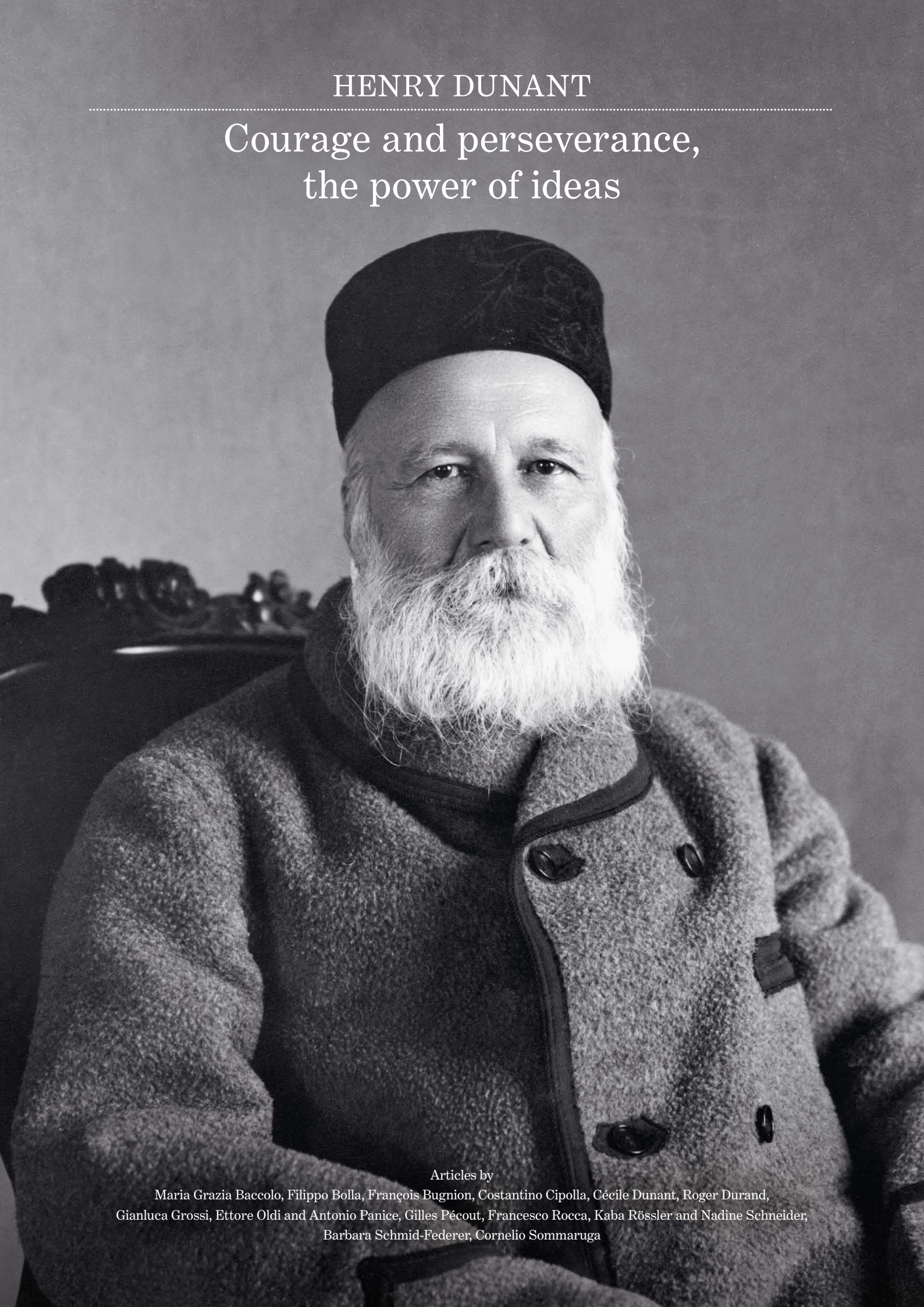
HENRY DUNANT

Courage and perseverance, the power of ideas



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HENRY DUNANT
1828-1910
FONDATEUR
DE LA
CROIX-ROUGE

Introduction

Jean-Henri Dunant (1828-1910), better known as Henry Dunant, was born into a wealthy family from Geneva which, although Protestant, practised Pietism. He showed no particular aptitude at school and was even expelled from the Calvin College he attended due to his poor grades. Despite this, he intensively pursued philanthropic activities before embarking on an entrepreneurial adventure in the economic sector in Algeria, driven by the demands of his faith, which posit that success on Earth predestines a person's ascension to heaven.

Needing to join with the entourage of Napoleon III, who was conducting the Italian Campaign at the time, Dunant travelled to the Po Valley in Italy, where a twist of fate led him to Castiglione delle Stiviere, in the province of Mantua, on the evening of 24 June 1859 – the same day as the bloody Battle of Solferino and San Martino, in which over 20,000 soldiers died and which was fought and won by the French and Italian forces against the Austrian army. He was immediately met with shocking sights and sounds: masses of wounded men all around and cries of pain. This image would imprint itself on his mind, making a profound and indelible mark on the young man. Returning to his native Geneva, he had the brilliance to turn the medical aid given by the local women there, a concrete and boundless show of solidarity expressed by Lombard social Catholicism, into a book entitled *Un Souvenir de Solférino* (A Memory of Solferino) and with it, appeal for universal secularism, exemplifying the women of Castiglione delle Stiviere with their *"tutti fratelli"* or "all brothers" (both friends and enemies) motto. In Geneva, the idea of an association based on these values started to take shape, but shortly afterwards, Dunant was declared bankrupt and, given the strict culture of the time and place, his reputation was ruined as a result. The idea of the International Red Cross was taken out of his hands and, disgraced, Dunant wandered desperately around Europe, even falling so far as to sleep under the bridges of the Seine. The International Committee of the Red Cross cut him out forever, but, in 1901, he was unanimously awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (shared with the politician and economist Frédéric Passy).

Dunant was a staunch pacifist. He was horrified by war and preached and lived by the principle that, even in life's most tragic and adversarial moments, the motto of "all brothers" remains as intrinsically humanitarian as ever. Today, after innumerable and immeasurable challenges, the Red Cross operates all over the world and fulfils its charitable duty to everyone, both in times of war (as is still the case today) and in peacetime (civil defence). And Dunant's star cannot but shine in the sky, even when it is overcast, illuminating the irreplaceable, unique and admirable humanitarian interventions of this organisation.

Who else has succeeded in such an undertaking? Who else has seeded an association that has managed to permeate all faiths and religions of the world? Who else has united people in every place and time, despite all other factors that divide us? Put succinctly, who else can claim to possess the creative genius of Henry Dunant?

Costantino Cipolla
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Front page:
Portrait of an elderly Henry Dunant.
Heiden, circa 1895

Left:
Bronze bust at Place de Neuve in Geneva.

Who is Henry Dunant?

by Roger Durand*

Left:
In a period photo. Geneva, 1863.

This page:
Henry Dunant helps one of the many wounded in the Battle of Solferino, illustration, 19th century.

Henry Dunant was born in Geneva on 8 May 1828. His father Jean-Jacques was a merchant, and his mother Anne-Antoinette, née Colladon, came from a family of Huguenot origin. Henry[1] would go on to become elder brother to Anna, Daniel, Marie and Pierre-Louis. Between his mother and aunts, the young man grew up in a very religious environment, that of the Geneva Evangelical Society, from which he drew all the founding elements to nurture a deep faith that would accompany him throughout his life.

As soon as he reached adulthood, Dunant founded the *Union chrétienne de jeunes gens* (Christian Union of Young People) in Geneva, which brought together young people between the ages of 18 and 25 who were, like himself, eager to share their Evangelical faith in a community environment – something that was a novel concept for the time. On the strength of his very compelling faith and equally convincing penmanship, he wove a real network with similar unions and associations throughout Europe, even reaching out to religious brothers in Lebanon, Algeria and as far as the United States. It is therefore unsurprising that he played an important role in establishing the Universal Alliance of Young Men's Christian Unions, also known as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), in 1855 in Paris, on the occasion of the *Exposition Universelle* (Universal Exhibition), a world's fair. Parallel to his spiritual dedication, Henry served an apprenticeship at the bank of Messrs Lullin and Sautter de Beauregard, which was very active in the colonisation of Algeria with European farmers, according to the project promoted by France under Napoleon III.

This was in the spring of 1859, at the height of the war between Piedmont and France on the one hand and the Austrian Empire, at that time ruler of the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, on the other. The Second Italian War of Independence had just broken out with promising successes for the French-Sardinian allies, including an initial victory over the Austrian army at Magenta. Napoleon III personally led the military operations that reached their climax at the Battle of Solferino on 24 June 1859. At this point, Henry Dunant intended to wrestle his projects from the clutches of the administrative machine by turning to the emperor himself; and so, he left Algeria and travelled to Italy during the war.

On 25 June, in a village a few kilometres from the fighting, Castiglione delle Stiviere, the Genevan happened to witness the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Solferino: the miserable fate of soldiers wounded in combat who were crammed carelessly into churches, including the village's Chiesa Maggiore. Bewildered by the fact that only the wounded of the victorious army were being treated, he joined the kind local women, who, like him, were doing everything they could to bridge the difference between the treatment of the suffering. These humanitarian gestures by a businessman would foreshadow a future that was as near as it was innovative.

Between 1859 and 1862, Dunant, as president of *Société anonyme des Moulins de Mons-Djémila* (the Financial and Industrial Company of Mons-Djémila Mills), endeavoured to obtain licences for his business in Algeria, but without much success. But he was not able to erase from his mind the traumatic memories of those days from 25 to 27 June 1859. The only way to come to terms with them was to write about them. And so, *Un Souvenir de Solférino* was born. The book was published in late October or early November 1862. In the text, Dunant describes the battle in great detail. It is the last pages of the book, already extremely groundbreaking in its description of the horrors of war, that make *Un Souvenir de Solférino* the mythical founding work of the humanitarian movement.

Printed at the author's expense by publisher and printer Jules-Guillaume Fick, *Un Souvenir de Solférino* enjoyed immediate success throughout Europe.

[1] The name on his birth certificate was "Jean-Henri Dunant", which he hardly ever used, except in his will. The signatures he used most at that time were "Henri" or "H". And, although he wrote his self-professed "obsession" – his book entitled A Memory of Solferino – under the name "J. Henry Dunant", he rarely signed his name as such. He sometimes anglicised his name to "Henry". This lack of homogeneity leaves us a little uncertain and complicates matters, especially when faced with two different spellings in a single publication... But, since the National Red Cross Societies choose to use "Henry", we too are sticking with this variant – despite the fact that it was the moniker least used by the person himself!

On 9 February 1863, under the leadership of its president Gustave Moynier, *Société genevoise d'utilité publique* (Geneva Society of Public Utility) formed a commission that was to be known from its first meeting as the *Comité international de secours aux blessés* (International Committee for Relief of the Wounded). Its members were General Guillaume-Henri Dufour as president, doctors Louis Appia and Théodore Maunoir, jurist Gustave Moynier and Henry Dunant as secretary. This Committee of Five, as it became known, immediately set to work, carrying out intensive promotional activities in the form of articles in the press, collecting extensive documentation on previous relief organisation initiatives and agreements between groups battling in favour of the wounded and, above all, focusing on an international charity congress set to be held the upcoming September in Berlin to publicise its plan to set up relief societies for soldiers wounded in military campaigns. Unfortunately, this honourable gathering would not take place.

The five co-founders of the humanitarian movement – it should be emphasised at this point – were strong personalities, animated by intimate convictions, sometimes intoxicated by a continent-wide notoriety, obedient to noble but often incompatible ambitions. Certainly, the signing of the *Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field* on 22 August 1864 marked the conclusion of 22 months of gruelling efforts and was rewarded with glorious success. But, gratifying as this was for the "victor" (internally, Gustave Moynier became the iconic president of the International Committee), the same could not be said for the group's forerunner (Louis Appia was the first to emphasise the fate of wounded soldiers) nor for its founder (Henry Dunant, with A Memory of Solferino and his conviction that everything must be staked on the neutralisation of medical personnel). And so, from that point on, the former was more interested in engaging in social medicine and the "urgent" approach of the "gesture that saves", whilst the latter would try to salvage his own financial affairs and social status, only to fail and find a new vocation – another with global ambitions.

Indeed, over the next five years, Henry Dunant did everything he could to maintain the incredible level of celebrity he had achieved thanks to the International Red Cross. But it was all useless.

His business in Algeria went up in smoke; in 1867, he went bankrupt and had to flee Geneva. As a result, he lost his honour, his fortune, his friends and his place in the International Red Cross. And probably also his self-respect.

Despite all this, he would spend the next ten years trying to repay his debts and regain his position on the international stage. He took refuge in Paris, where his prestige remained intact, and collaborated with the promoters of a universal international library, which aimed to bring together the masterpieces of world literature to make them accessible to the entire population. Although approved by the Ministry of Public Education, this pioneering project of UNESCO never saw the light of day, overwhelmed by the fall of the Second French Empire. During the Franco-German war of 1870-1871, Dunant imagined the commercialisation of a bandage that would stem bleeding, without success.

Apart from a few flashes of light, in short, from 1867 onwards, Henry Dunant endured a dark period. This persisted until 1892, when he finally settled in the Swiss town of Heiden, in Appenzell Ausserrhoden. He lived as a boarder in the local district hospital, where he showed remarkable resilience. First of all, he re-established his links with a number of Red Cross societies. At the same time, he had the idea of a "Green Cross" that would protect women and children like the Red Cross protected wounded soldiers. But he soon comes to the conclusion that the crucial struggle, for him, is against militarism, imperialism and the arms race. Convinced of the virtues of international arbitration, he became a passionate advocate of pacifism, among other things, alongside Bertha von Suttner. Thanks to the networks of sympathisers he managed to build, he finally obtained the much desired consecration: the first Nobel Peace Prize in history, which was awarded to him and the pacifist Frédéric Passy on 10 December 1901. He died in Heiden on 30 October 1910.

Roger Durand
Historian of humanitarianism and peace
President of the Henry Dunant Society

“The Solferino tourist”: neutrality and volunteerism as a principle of an international commitment

by Gilles Pécout*

Left:
Inside the Tower of
San Martino della Battaglia,
dedicated to Vittorio Emanuele II
and frescoed with scenes from
the Battle of Solferino.

This page:
Label attached to Henry Dunant's
manuscript in the Sala Lullin room at
the Bibliothèque de Genève.

Telemaco Signorini, *L'artiglieria toscana a Montechiaro salutata dai Francesi feriti a Solferino (The Tuscan Artillerymen at Montechiaro Greeted by the French Wounded at Solferino)*, 1859, black pencil on paper. Private collection.

In the eyes of the witnesses of the great Battle of Solferino which, on 24 June 1859, in the midst of the Risorgimento – a 19th-century movement for Italian unification – pitted the French allies of the Piedmontese against the Austrians, Henry Dunant goes unnoticed. The Geneva citizen, who repeatedly describes himself as a "mere tourist with no part whatever in this great conflict",[1] does not appear in any of the many heated accounts of the clash, neither by its protagonists nor by the first few observers of the following days.

Yet, this entrepreneur, who had only acquired French citizenship in April 1859 in the hope that it would benefit his business, was right there in Solferino: he had come to Lombardy to try to meet the Emperor of France, Napoleon III, from whom he would like to obtain a concession to expand his company, *Société financière et industrielle des Moulins de Mons-Djémila*, located in the Constantine region of French Algeria.

But, in Solferino, his destiny was soon to cease to be that of a businessman.

A book

The publication in Geneva in November 1862 of a small booklet entitled A Memory of Solferino caused a shockwave.

Initially intended for a small circle of friends, the text was sold and reprinted three times in French within a year, before being translated into German, English, Dutch and "even into Swedish, Spanish and Arabic", as the Italian translator notes when it was finally published in the language of the inhabitants of Solferino in November 1863[2].

Already the author of *Notice sur la Régence de Tunis*[3] (An Account of the Regency of Tunis), a dense and well-informed monograph written in 1858 that earned him a certain notoriety in geographical circles and in colonial academic and economic circles, Dunant changed literary genre with A Memory of Solferino to that of edifying testimony. The immediate result is a work that is as lively as it is moving and which launched the Red Cross's great humanitarian project.

A battle

It all began during the Second Italian War of Independence. The small but powerful state of Piedmont-Sardinia, under the reign of King Victor Emmanuel II of Savoy, was ruled by the moderate liberal Prime Minister Cavour, whose aim was to unify Italy's territories, starting from Turin. To achieve this, Italy needed to be independent and

Right:
Death of Colonel Malleville, Battle of Solferino. Illustration from "Le Petit Journal". Paris, 1891.

sovereign and the Austrians would have to leave Lombardy and Veneto, which were annexed and ruled by Vienna. This is what was at stake in the war that began in April 1859 and which, despite the armistice of Villafranca – concluded precisely because of the reactions provoked by the "massacre of Solferino" – led to the cession of Lombardy to Piedmont and the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in March 1861, while Veneto was only annexed to unified Italy in 1866.

Dunant begins his account by recalling the victorious advance of the French in the spring of 1859:

> "The sanguinary victory at Magenta had opened the gates of Milan to the French Army, and carried the enthusiasm of the Italians to its highest pitch. Pavia, Lodi and Cremona had seen their liberators approach, and were welcoming them rapturously."[4]

From 14 May, Napoleon III himself took command of the allied troops, a move that was imitated a month later by the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph. Dunant knew perfectly well that the Emperor of the French was on the spot, as was Marshal Mac Mahon, whom he met in Algeria and whom he would go on to greet on 28 June in Cavriana.

The author dedicates part of his book to the account of a day in battle: 12-15 hours of hard fighting on 24 June, which he did not experience directly. His pages therefore refer both to the oral testimonies of the combatants and the civilian population in the days that followed, and to reading the first published accounts of the battle.

The human toll was heavy: at the end of the fighting, more than 40,000 soldiers remained on the field, including dead and wounded on both sides, "making Solferino the most terrible European battle since Leipzig in 1813". Dunant's comparison is emblematic because it places two battles considered to be two victories of peoples and nations on the same level in terms of horror – a sign that we must always look at the human side of a war, even if it might well be politically legitimate.

The other fight for humanity

In 1864, two important books, true epilogues of A Memory of Solferino, were published in Geneva, both related to the conference that gave birth to the Red Cross: a large volume reporting on the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (organiser of the conference) and a pamphlet by Dunant summarising the work carried out as part of the conference.[5] Five years after the Solferino disaster, was it possible, thanks to Dunant, that a lasting solution to the issue of caring for the wounded could be found?

Without evoking the entire institutional history of the Red Cross, however, we can look back on its nascent stages, in which Dunant played a prominent role. The first stage was in Geneva and involved the presentation of the ideas arising from Solferino to the Geneva Society of Public Utilities, chaired by Gustave Moynier, and the first project for the creation of a volunteer corps of nurses presented in February 1863 by the Committee of Five, comprising Dunant and Moynier themselves as well as doctors Maunoir and Appia and General Dufour. Then followed the second stage: the international stage, which took place in private between associates. It was decided that the aforementioned project should be put on the agenda of a charity congress scheduled to take place in Berlin in September 1863; however, not having been able to speak in Berlin, the Committee of Five convened an international conference in Geneva in October 1863 which, in the presence of just under forty representatives of associations and governments, formalised the establishment of Wounded Relief Committees. The institutionalisation of the Committee and the precise definition of its tasks and competencies would finally take place in 1864.

At this point, an international committee was created with Dufour as honorary president and Dunant as secretary. It was the latter's task to get the Geneva Convention signed in August 1864, which formalised the birth of the first National Red Cross Societies in Belgium, France, Denmark, Spain, Oldenburg, Prussia and Württemberg, which were soon joined by those in Italy, Saxony and Sweden. In the same year, a new European conflict, the war of "the

Duchies" or Second Schleswig War, pitted Prussia and Austria against Denmark for possession of Schleswig, while the Austro-Prussian and Austro-Italian wars of 1866 – the first trial by fire for the Geneva Convention – were already on the horizon.

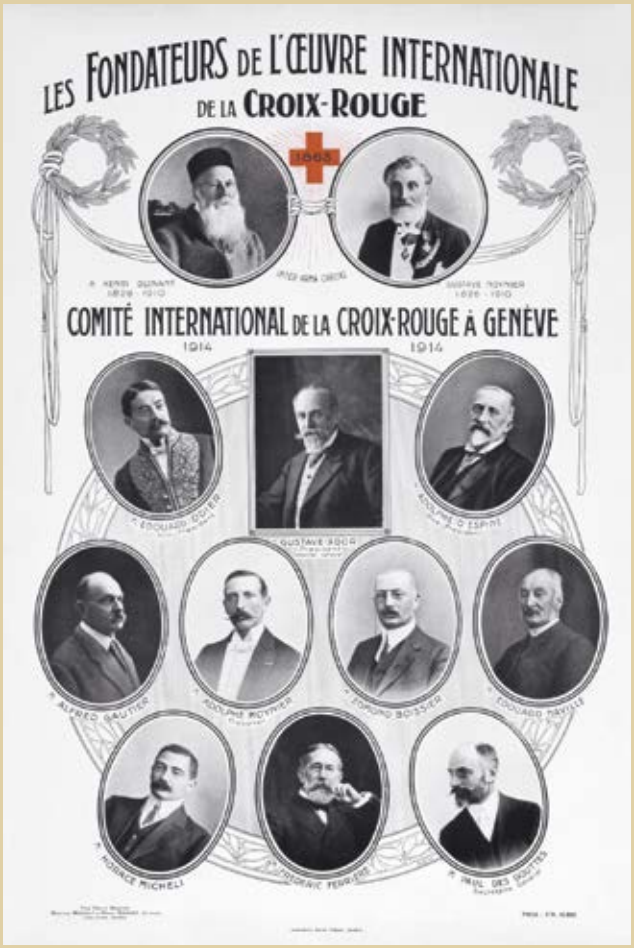
Meanwhile, a favourable intellectual, social and political environment led Dunant to focus on the two key concepts of volunteerism and neutrality.

Calling on volunteers to help the wounded can certainly make up for the shortage of hospital and nursing staff in wartime. But not only that. Resorting to volunteerism also meant emphasising that the progressive 19th century was the century of volunteers. Such as the political volunteers who become armed irregulars or enlist in regular armies to defend their homeland. Or like the social volunteers linked to the Mutual Aid Societies born with the Springtime of the Peoples of 1848 or to religious or denominational associations, especially Protestant ones, an expression of the evangelical movement to which Dunant belonged. However, it is not surprising that the idea of volunteer nurses working alongside the military medical services initially upset certain military and political authorities who feared not only incompetence, but also competition with the administration for assignments and even the subversive spirit sometimes associated with volunteering. And the matter was even more complicated with these volunteers who were supposed to be... neutral.

The question of neutrality is at the centre of an international political and legal deliberation that could not fail to influence even Henry Dunant. For the Zurich jurist and politician Johann Caspar Bluntschli, who – using one of the most stringent formulas – spoke of "one of the most useful achievements of modern international law", neutrality is defined as "not participating in the war initiated between third parties and maintaining peace within one's own territory". The idea was clear and would be completed in the course of the 1860s: in times of war, neutrality allows certain states to circumscribe the events of war and preserve the interests of peace. In this sense, if Switzerland's neutrality could be respected during the Second War of Italian Independence, it could have been expected that the Swiss mercenaries enlisted in the papal army in Umbria would have also stopped fighting.

For Dunant, the time was ripe to move from the neutrality of states to the neutralisation of combatants. In fact, he proposed the neutralisation, in wartime, not only of the wounded, but also of the nursing and medical personnel who care for them. And he was not the only one to propose this. At the same time, and without Dunant having had any direct contact with him, a Neapolitan surgeon who was well connected in France pursued the same objective: Dr Ferdinando Palasciano, vice-president of the Medical Congress of Lyon, published a study in the *Gazette médicale de Lyon* in August 1861 on the neutrality of the wounded in wartime, which he supplemented with a demand for temporary neutralisation of medical personnel.[6]

Despite disagreements within the Committee, Dunant succeeded in 1864 in imposing not only the neutrality of ambulances and medical personnel in time of war, but also that of civilians assisting the wounded (Article 5 of the Geneva Convention). He would go even further, proposing, a few years later, the neutralisation of valid prisoners of



The founders of the International Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross on a period poster. Geneva, 1914.

war, in particular leveraging the positive role in this regard of the Austrian Red Cross Committee chaired by Prince Colloredo-Mansfeld during the war of 1866. Indeed, a problem arose: the wounded were to be considered neutral, but what about the healthy prisoners? Well, it was then up to the Red Cross Committees not only to "ensure that all the needs of captive prisoners are met [until] their repatriation", but also to ensure that the prisoner had a good opinion of the country in which he was being held "by inspiring in him a real sympathy for the people he has fought".[7]

De l'assistance aux blessés comme remède humanitaire, à la sympathie et à l'amitié entre les peuples comme armes de prévention, tel est le chemin qu'a parcouru depuis 1859 celui qui fut bien plus que le «touriste de Solférino». C'est cet itinéraire, après quelques déboires et divergences avec les autres promoteurs de la Croix-Rouge, que viendra couronner plus de trois décennies plus tard, en 1901, le premier prix Nobel de la paix.

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Exhumation of the bones of dead soldiers from Solferino battlefield, beside St Peter's Church in Vincoli. Illustration from "L'Illustration, Journal Universel", 2 April 1870. Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

Note

[1] Henry Dunant, *Un Souvenir de Solférino*, Geneva, 1862, reprinted Geneva, ICRC, 1990, p. 5. Cited from the English version, American Red Cross: Henry Dunant, *A Memory of Solferino*. Published by the ICRC online under https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-0361.pdf.

[2] Henry Dunant, *Un ricordo di Solferino*, Geneva, 1862, reprinted: Geneva, ICRC, 1990. *Con un Appendice sulla formazione permanente di Istituzioni internazionali pel servizio sanitario degli eserciti in tempo di guerra*, Italian version by Luigi Zanetti, Milan, Tipografia Guglielmini, 1863, published as an e-book on www.liberliber.it, p. 13.

[3] Henry Dunant, *Notice sur la Régence de Tunis*, Fick, Geneva, 1858.

[4] Henry Dunant, *Un ricordo di Solferino…*, ibid, p. 10.

[5] *Secours aux blessés. Communication du comité international faisant suite au compte rendu de la Conférence internationale de Genève,* Fick, Geneva, 1864 (218 pages), and Henry Dunant, *La Charité sur les champs de bataille, suite du Souvenir de Solférino et résultat de la conférence de Genève,* Société d'utilité publique, Geneva, 1864 (34 pages).

[6] Ferdinando Palasciano, *De la neutralisation des blessés en temps de guerre et des conséquences thérapeutiques*, Vingtrinier, Lyon, 1864.

[7] Henry Dunant, *Les Prisonniers de guerre. Rapport présenté aux conférences internationales des Sociétés de secours aux blessés militaires des armées de terre et de mer*, Dupont, Paris, 1867, p. 12, IT translation: CB Service.

NOTICE

SUR LA

RÉGENCE DE TUNIS

PAR

J. HENRY DUNANT

GENÈVE

IMPRIMERIE DE JULES-G^me^ FICK

1858

The road to global humanitarianism: the Algerian stage

by Roger Durand*

Left:
Front cover of
Notice sur la régence de Tunis
(An Account of the Regency in Tunis),
J.G. Fick, Geneva, 1858.

Roman triumphal arch in Djemila,
Algeria, engraving from "L'album,
giornale letterario e di belle arti",
20 May 1843, Year 10.
Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

To understand the entrepreneurial period of Henry Dunant's life properly, we need to understand his familial and religious background.

His father Jean-Jacques (1789-1875), a merchant, dedicated his life to business, especially in Marseilles, where he lived for twenty years, but also in Paris, London, Martinique and wherever his many travels took him to buy anything and everything: wheat, stockfish, almonds, oranges, olive oil, saffron and so on. A globetrotter who would, however, at some point be called back to Geneva by his sisters to start a family to ensure the continuity of his family name. But, absorbed as he was by his work, he would be almost completely absent both as a husband and father. He did, however, manage to amass a considerable fortune, which would be discovered upon his death in 1875. Starting with this surprising fact, let us highlight two causes of the future philanthropist's later attitude towards financial commitment. First of all, Jean-Jacques seemed to be more inclined to accumulate wealth to be stashed away in secret, rather than provide a decent household budget for his loved ones to live on, as evidenced by his wife's complaints about the lack of money for the house and children. Troubled by the suffering of his mother in this respect, later on, Henry, as the eldest son, tried to establish himself professionally with a view to solving the problem, only to feel (too) soon caged in the role of head of the family (and person responsible for continuing the family name) as a result of his father's failure to do so. And so his hunger for success was born.

Continuing to explore the influences exerted on the young Henry by various personalities in the family, we can look to his grandfather, Bernard Dunant (1746-1822), who had seen the inside of a prison cell in his lifetime. He had, in fact, been imprisoned for debt in the bishopric prison, where the young Jean-Jacques and his brother David (1784-1872) used to visit him; the family certainly never forgot the cruel memory of Bernard's disgrace. Henry's paternal uncle, David Dunant, was also an unlucky entrepreneur: his bookstore-publishing house wound up going under. We end on a more comforting note with his maternal uncle, Jean-Daniel Colladon (1802-1893), a physicist of European renown who worked in both scientific research and industry. He is best known for developing air drills that facilitate the excavation of tunnels.

Nothing would have felt more natural for Henry, then, than to follow in the footsteps of his lineage in business and commerce. From 1848, he likely served an apprenticeship at the bank of Messrs Lullin and Sautter de Beauregard, the main shareholders of *Compagnie genevoise des colonies suisses de Sétif* (Geneva Company of Swiss Colonies in Sétif). An already experienced clerk, in 1853 (at the age of 25), he was sent to north-eastern Algeria to replace an accountant there. He set sail in Marseilles for Philippeville (today Skikda) on 1 September and would return to Geneva on 28 October. During his time there, he made urgent payments, ordered firewood in anticipation of winter (it has even been known to snow in this area of the highlands of north-eastern Algeria), and had gardens and vegetable gardens built for the settlers who had just arrived from the continent. In the end, his bosses were satisfied with the work he did in Algeria over those two months and even gave him a bonus.

On his return to Switzerland, Henry distinguished himself in a role even better suited to his qualities. *Compagnie genevoise* was granted a 20,000-hectare plot of land on the condition that it would be used to build settlements with European inhabitants. However, the recruitment of new volunteers faced serious difficulties. The brilliant international secretary of the *Union chrétienne de jeunes gens de Genève* was thus entrusted with the task of scouring the Geneva and Vaud countryside in search of capable peasants willing to move to Algeria – also to, let us be honest, rid some communes of their poor...

Let us recall at this point that Dunant, a devoted disciple of the Awakening, had just founded the aforementioned Christian Union of Young People in Geneva, one of whose main aims was to popularise reformed Christianity. Henry Dunant's colonial endeavours were therefore also motivated by evangelical motives that would further fuel the zeal of our lay missionary.

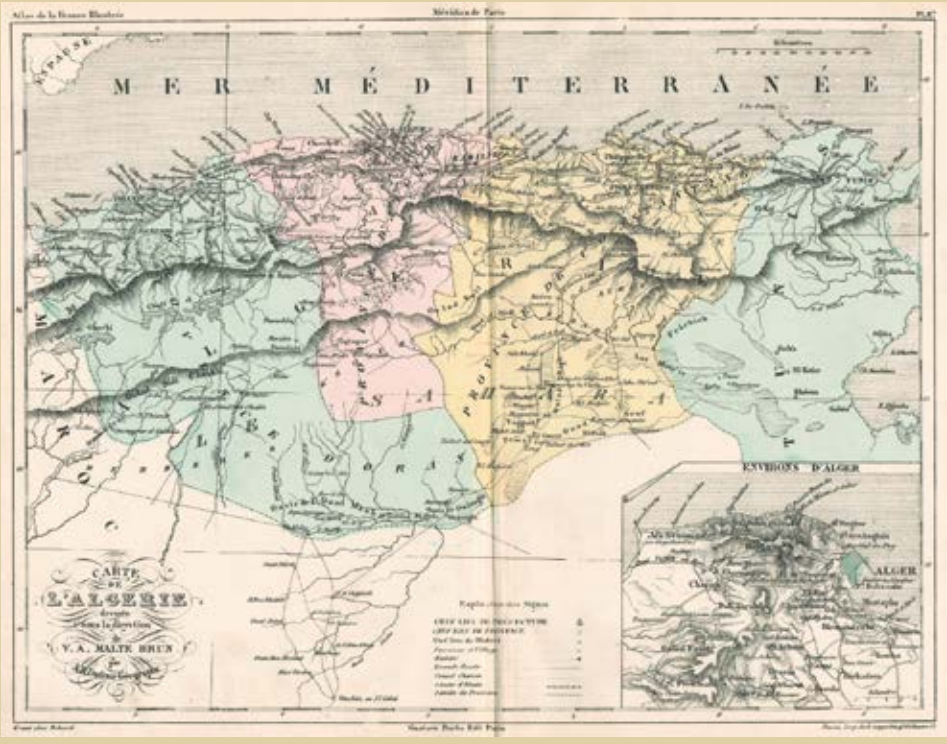
During his second stay in Algeria, from June to mid-September 1854, Dunant again enjoyed the unconditional esteem of his employers.

The diligent clerk, however, decided to focus on his independence after negotiating an agreement with his bosses: he would take over certain tasks until his replacement was appointed; in return, he was to have his travel expenses reimbursed. From the summer of 1854, therefore, Dunant was acting under his own steam.

Taking advantage of his freedom of action, he began to learn more about the Arab-Muslim civilisation, while trying to evangelise the local population. Above all, he travelled the region in search of a place to establish his own colonial enterprise.

On 1 March 1855, he left again for Algeria, this time accompanied by his brother Daniel. He soon obtained his first concession: seven hectares and seventy acres of land with a waterfall in the Uadi Deheb, near the Roman ruins of Mons, 17 km from Djémila. The plot is not far from Sétif, in whose surroundings the Romans cultivated vast fields of wheat. Right from the start, Dunant pursued ambitious goals: he intended to build a large freestone watermill to grind wheat with solid wooden floors that he had to bring in from elsewhere, just like the mechanism capable of driving four pairs of grinding wheels that he ordered from England; the investment in this industrial structure was accompanied by the construction of a road. To make such a powerful flour mill profitable, however, a large quantity of grain would be required. This is why Dunant requested an additional concession of 200 hectares of arable land. But the imperial administration refused.

To lend more weight to his undertaking, Dunant thus created the *Société anonyme des Moulins de Mons-Djémila*, authorised by the Geneva Council of State on 8 January 1858. To strengthen his position, he raised the company's capital to one million francs, a considerable sum for the time. He secured weighty references and recommendations, including that of General Guillaume-Henri Dufour, commander-in-chief of the Swiss army during the Sonderbund War in 1847 and mentor to Emperor Napoleon III. He had a memorandum printed for *Société financière et industrielle des Moulins de Mons-Djémila en Algérie*. But despite all this, the imperial administration was not listening. The disciple of the Awakening thus decided to submit his project to Napoleon III himself. As we know, in June 1859, this conversation would never actually take place because the emperor was at war in Italy, and the Battle of Solferino and



Old map of Algeria and the surroundings of Algiers, published by Gustave Barba. Paris, 1852.

Napoleon III being cheered in the Place du Gouvernement, Algiers, 8 May 1865. Illustration from "L'Illustration, Journal Universel", 13 May 1865. Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

the experience in the Chiesa Maggiore of Castiglione delle Stiviere would transform the businessman into an apostle of charity, a tireless militant at the service of soldiers wounded in combat.

His unconditional commitment to this new cause was probably the reason why *Société des Moulins de Mons-Djémila* never became a profitable enterprise. But that was not all: things got even worse as its president ventured into promising but not immediately profitable projects, such as the very expensive exploitation of cork oak trees or silver-lead mines. The chronic lack of liquidity paralysed investments, which was why Dunant engaged in dangerous operations in order to be able to distribute the promised dividends to his shareholders, resorting to "deadly" palliatives such as tapping into the already plentiful corporate capital, overvaluing balance sheet assets and even speculating on grain or livestock prices. Inspired by his expedition to Castiglione delle Stiviere six years earlier, Dunant finally obtained an audience with Napoleon III on 3 May 1865 in Algiers to ask for imperial support for the creation of an Algerian parent company, but without success. He set up an Algerian company to get his hands on a fresh flow of money, also without success. He tried to have his company taken over by an established competitor, again, without success. He asked his many connections in the banking world for help but, of course, without success. In the meantime, he accumulated a debt of 300,000 francs that Crédit Lyonnais lent him for *Société des Moulins de Mons-Djémila*. A foolish expedient would be the cause his downfall: in dire straits, he bought a marble quarry in Felfela (Tlemcen Province) without first assessing the costs of its exploitation. In 1866, he attempted one last play of the dice by selling it to Crédit Genevois, a highly speculative banking institution, of which he became a director. He received an advance of 200,000 francs which he immediately used to pay off his debt with Crédit Lyonnais. But he promised his new partners to sell the quarry back to a French investor at a good margin. Unfortunately, the latter existed only on paper... namely, an information document in which Dunant presented an imaginary company as real. And that was the nail in the coffin for Dunant's business endeavours. On 25 February 1867, Crédit Genevois went bankrupt and the liquidators soon discovered the fraud. Hoping to avoid the shame of a trial, the Dunant family sold all its assets in Algeria to the company's shareholders. Henry was completely ruined and his brother Daniel lost most of his possessions. The amicable agreement that was reached at least confirms that the investments made by Dunant were reasonable: the lenders agreed to take them over in the hope of making them profitable. But the final blow came on 17 August 1868, when the *Cour de justice civile* (Court of Civil Justice, the highest instance of Geneva's justice system at the time) ruled that "Mr Dunant, who

deliberately misled his colleagues, must be held responsible for all the loss caused by this affair". As a result, the seller of the Felfela quarry was declared liable for the bankruptcy of Crédit Genevois as a whole and charged with all the resulting damages, amounting to the colossal sum of one million francs. He also suffered the infamy of appearing to be the only person involved in the affair who lied. The judgement was final. It was published on the front page of the *Journal de Genève* and reproduced in the *Journal des tribunaux vaudois*, both highly prestigious publications at the time, widespread and followed in all business circles and beyond.

The first consequence: as early as the spring of 1867, the bankrupt took refuge in Paris, where his good name and honour were still intact and where he endeavoured, in vain, to get together the money needed to erase the disgrace he had suffered. Having fled his city, the Genevan would never return.

Second consequence: ruin. Dunant, who previously lived as a wealthy gentleman with two secretaries and a servant in tow first suffered disgrace, then poverty.

Third consequence: exclusion from the International Committee of the Red Cross. A ruthless antagonism between Dunant and Moynier ensued from the former's fall from grace, although the latter was acting in his capacity as chairman of the Committee and not in his personal capacity. Each would go on to rub salt into these wounds for the rest of their lives, until their deaths – and even beyond.

1867 thus marks a turning point in Henry Dunant's life.

In Paris, then Brussels, then London, then Germany, he tried to rebuild his life. He discovered a life of uncertainty and also misery, both mental and material. Until 1875, he persevered in various activities and initiatives.

What he got up to over the next dozen years of his life eludes us. He spoke of the support of a few – very few – friends, such as Pastor Pétavel in Neuchâtel and Ernst Rudolf Wagner in Stuttgart, university professor Rudolf Müller, also in Stuttgart, and the enigmatic Léonie Kastner between Paris and Strasbourg. We get the impression of him as a soul in distress during this period, an uprooted person, a vagabond who did not know how to spend his time. We do have some clues, however, in the form of the innumerable notebooks he left us. Thousands of pages filled with brief recollections, notes on readings, press cuttings, extracts from the Bible or theological treatises, materials for topics to think about, and even drafts of books with titles such as *Un Déluge de Sang* (A Deluge of Blood) and *L'avenir sanglant* (The Bloody Future), in which he denounced militarism, imperialism, the unbridled race of the great powers towards a cataclysm.

He, the former president of *Société anonyme des Moulins de Mons-Djémila*, realised the misdeeds carried out by imperialism in the northern hemisphere (the United States and Tsarist Russia were on the same level as the colonising nations of Europe in this respect).

How far the settler had come and what an evolution he had undergone, driven by the mission of evangelism and the desire to obtain a land concession at the expense of Berber or Arab tribes on the eastern Algerian highlands! Given all of this, it would be fair to conclude that the failure of his ambitions for material success, his "desert crossing" that lasted ten, indeed twenty long years, his having known and experienced first hand the fate of impoverished people on this Earth led him to fight against pauperism, against militarism and for peace. The stature of the great humanitarian that Henry Dunant acquired globally is certainly also a result of this path he took in life. And the Algerian colonial adventure was, without a doubt, a painful, but decisive stage in his journey.

Roger Durand
Historian of humanitarianism and peace
President of the Henry Dunant Society

In Heiden, “by land and sea”

by Kaba Rössler and Nadine Schneider*

Left:
Photograph of an exhibition panel displayed in the first memorial room dedicated to Dunant at the Heiden Museum. It portrays Jakob Haug, sponsor of a monument dedicated to Henry Dunant, who took personal responsibility for looking after it and maintaining it for many years.

This page:
Heiden, circa 1895.

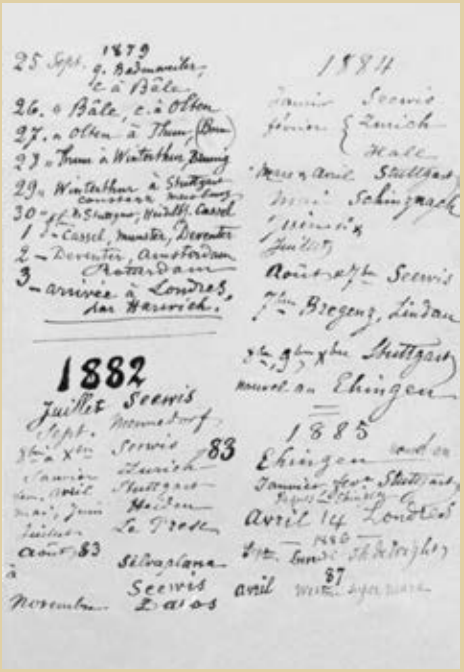
In the summer of 1887, Henry Dunant arrived in the idyllic town of Heiden, situated 400 metres above Lake Constance. He did not know then that he would end up spending the last years of his life there. But why did the cosmopolitan Genevan settle in this pleasant Appenzell resort?

Twenty years earlier, at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1867, Henry Dunant, initiator of what is now the world's largest humanitarian organisation, had been showered with fame and honour. In that very year, however, his past presented him with a bill. As a young businessman in the 1850s, he invested several tens of millions (current value) in his own colonial enterprises in Algeria – losing a fortune as a result of unsuccessful speculation. In 1867, his bank, Crédit Genevois, had to declare bankruptcy. A year later Dunant, a member of the board of directors of that same banking institution, was convicted of fraudulent bankruptcy by the Geneva Commercial Court. His family and friends who helped finance his activities were also implicated in the scandal. For Dunant, now approaching the age of forty, these ruinous financial misadventures resulted in a social and personal disaster: he was expelled from the International Committee of Societies for Relief of the Wounded (known as the ICRC from 1875) and, fleeing his creditors, left Geneva for good.

A note in his notebooks and his passport show that, from 1867 to 1887, he travelled halfway across Europe, from Paris to Brussels and London, via Rome and Stuttgart. He started countless projects, constantly facing failure, but also repeatedly receiving financial support from various personalities, often women.

In Stuttgart, he was able to count on some trusted friends who had known and admired him since the founding years of the Red Cross. He was a welcome house guest of Pastor Ernst Rudolf Wagner and his wife, who often offered his restless wandering soul free accommodation in surroundings appropriate to his rank. It was here in 1877 that he met student Rudolf Müller, his future biographer, loyal friend and supporter.
In 1885, Mrs Wagner died and Dunant had to leave the house. Two years later, on the recommendation of his friends in Stuttgart, he arrived in Heiden, taking up residence at the Paradies guesthouse.

Scarred by the toils of life and afflicted by various aches and pains, he probably reached this location, a curative centre that used whey in its treatments, on the scenic Rorschach-Heiden railway, a standard-gauge cogwheel train offering a direct connection from Lake Constance to tourists from all over the world. Heiden is



The only known manuscript by Henry Dunant that tells of his travels during the darkest period of his life.

Henry Dunant's passport, issued by the Embassy of the Swiss Confederation in Italy on 8 December 1867.

home to a spa, a music pavilion, a spa park, a cosy tree-lined avenue and a geological nature trail, as well as some 20 hotels and guesthouses.

In 1892, he finally settled in what was to be his last home: the town's district hospital, where he lived as a boarder. Here, he enjoyed some peace and quiet, reflected on his life and works, and tried to redeem himself from the disappointments and hardships of his life by re-establishing his reputation as a humanitarian champion. He corresponded extensively with people from all over the world, wrote his memoirs and, in collaboration with Rudolf Müller, the history of the birth of the Red Cross Movement.

When his health permitted, he would receive visits or meet personages such as the doctor and hospital director Hermann Altherr and his wife, the French-speaking hotelier Emma Altherr-Simond or the teacher Wilhelm Sonderegger and his wife Susanna. Dunant cultivated lively exchanges of views, discussed his religious and humanitarian ideas and received support from various quarters.

In 1890, he noted with satisfaction the foundation of a Red Cross branch in Heiden and offered his help by drafting its articles of association in French, later translated by Wilhelm Sonderegger, and also designing the cover.

In 1895, a Zurich weekly published a short story about the co-founder of the Red Cross living in Heiden. Shortly afterwards, the famous German magazine *Über Land und Meer* (Over Land and Sea), which was

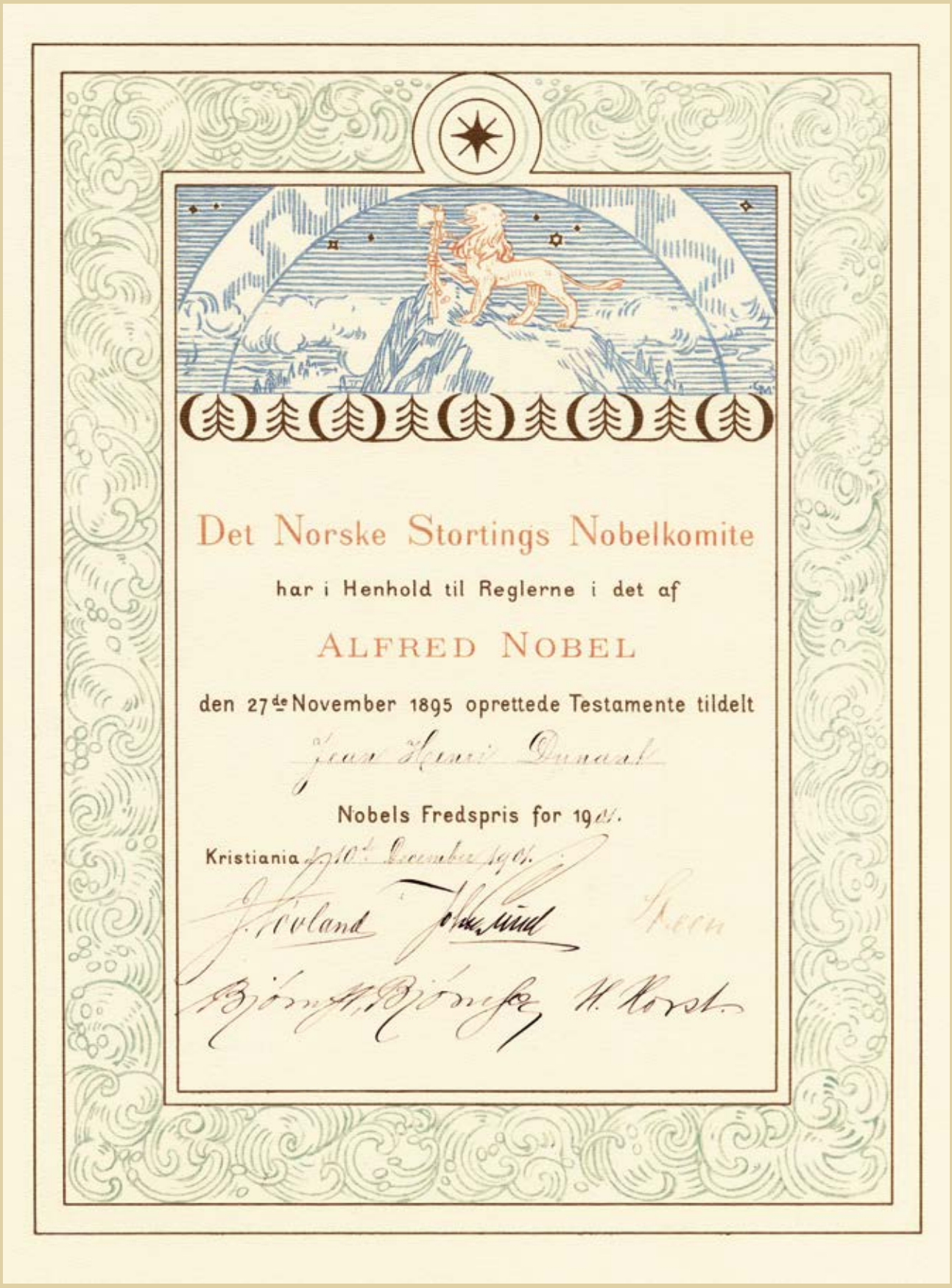
widely followed, commissioned Georg Baumberger, editor of the Appenzell newspaper *Appenzeller Nachrichten*, to tell the story of the Genevan, whom many at the time believed to be dead. Baumberger was accompanied by St. Gallen photography pioneer Otto Rietmann. Baumberger's article and the portrait of Dunant in the centre of the page brought the great humanist to the attention of a worldwide audience.

Two years later, he received a distinguished guest: Maria Feodorovna, the mother of the last Russian tsar, Nicholas II, a benefactor with many commitments, came to Heiden to announce in person that she would pay an annual income to the Red Cross promoter – a sign of admiration and gratitude that would considerably lighten Dunant's precarious financial situation.

The same year saw the publication of Rudolf Müller's *Entstehungsgeschichte des Roten Kreuzes und der Genfer Konvention* (History of the Birth of the Red Cross and the Geneva Convention). Bertha von Suttner, author of the bestseller Lay Down Your Arms (Original German title: *Die Waffen nieder!*)

Henry Dunant lived at the district hospital as a paying boarder from 30 April 1892 until his death on 30 October 1910 Heiden, circa 1901.

On 1 August 1890, the Heiden Red Cross Society appointed Dunant as its honorary president.



Det Norske Stortings Nobelkomite

har i Henhold til Reglerne i det af

ALFRED NOBEL

den 27de November 1895 oprettede Testamente tildelt

Jean Henri Dunant

Nobels Fredspris for 1901.

Kristiania d. 10de December 1901.

J. Lövland Johan Irgens

Bjørn M. Bjørnson H. Horst

and confidante of Alfred Nobel, was among the first people to receive the newly printed work. He worked together with Müller and the Norwegian doctor Hans Daae, a friend of Dunant's since the founding of the ICRC, to ensure that the first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to him in 1901. Dunant was thus at a decisive turning point: he had been fully rehabilitated.

The last journey and posthumous honours

1908 marked another decisive moment for Dunant: on the occasion of his 80th birthday, telegrams, letters and gifts from all over the world arrived in Heiden. These included a medal with his portrait, specially minted by Rudolf Müller, a white flannel dressing gown made by Swedish "crocerossine" or Red Cross Nurses, and a congratulatory telegram from the Swiss Federal Council.

Once the fuss surrounding his 80th birthday was over, the founding father of the Red Cross slipped once again out of sight of the public eye. His strength gradually faded away and he barely received any guests. Among the last visitors he welcomed, in 1910, a few months before his death, was Princess Therese of Bavaria, an ethnologist and travel writer involved in charity work, whom he allowed to photograph him. The portrait, striking in its great sensitivity, would be the last photograph ever taken of Dunant.

Left:
Nobel Peace Prize diploma awarded jointly to Dunant and pacifist Frédéric Passy in 1901.

The last portrait:
Henry Dunant a few months before his death, photographed by Princess Therese of Bavaria.

The great humanist sensed the end was drawing near and had his favourite nephew, Maurice Dunant, come from Geneva. On 27 July 1910, he drew up his will, presumably in the presence of Dr Hermann Altherr, his brother Pierre-Louis and the latter's son Maurice.

His estate, which had increased considerably thanks to the Nobel Prize, was bequeathed to the people close to him such as Emma Altherr-Simond and her husband, Dr Altherr, and nurse Elise Bolliger. A substantial sum of CHF 13,000 was earmarked to establish a bed fund for indigent patients at the district hospital in Heiden. The rest of the sum was divided equally for philanthropic works in Switzerland and Norway. Regarding the debts he had accumulated over a period of decades, they went with Dunant on his last journey; in his will, his creditors are not mentioned.

On 30 October, at exactly 10.05pm, Henry Dunant died. On All Saints' Day, his body was transported to Zurich by rail and cremated in the city's crematorium, as he wished.

As early as around 1890, Dunant had already expressed himself in no uncertain terms about his funeral: "I want to be buried like a dog". On 29 October 1908, he also arranged for his remains to be cremated in Zurich without any kind of ceremony. Dunant's explicit renunciation of a ritual Christian burial can be interpreted as a sign of his pietistic upbringing or as an expression of his aversion to ecclesiastical institutions. In his memoirs, he accuses the Christian churches of blasphemy, because they allowed wars and therefore thousands of deaths.

On 2 November 1910, the urn with his ashes was placed in plot no. 1174 at the Sihlfeld Cemetery in Zurich in the presence of forty people. In accordance with his uncle's wishes, Maurice Dunant asked those present to refrain from making speeches. It would still take more than 20 years and the initiative of the Zurich Samaritans' Association before the initiator of the Red

Cross would find a resting place worthy of a personage of his calibre. And finally, on 9 May 1931, the humanitarian's imposing tomb was unveiled. It can still be admired today in the niche in Hall no. 4 of Sihlfeld Cemetery.

In Heiden, it would be a long time before anyone would think of honouring the memory of perhaps the most influential Swiss person in history, who spent a good 20 years in the picturesque Appenzell village. It would be carpenter Jakob Haug who would take the initiative in this matter. He wanted to erect a memorial in Heiden in memory of the founder of the Red Cross forty years after his death and only succeeded with his plan in 1962, after a few false starts, by inaugurating the first ever monument dedicated to Henry Dunant in Switzerland. The author of the work, carved from 7.5 tonnes of granite from Grisons, was sculptor Charlotte Germann-Jahn who, instead of a portrait, carved an abstract representation of her pioneering idea of humanitarian aid in stone: a merciful Samaritan and a person in need of help. Worthy of note is the admittedly unorthodox financing of the project, which was supported by all Swiss cantons with one cent per inhabitant, totalling CHF 45,000.

In 1969, Jakob Haug laid the foundation for what was to become the Henry Dunant Museum and set up a memorial room in the district hospital. Even then, visitors from all over Switzerland and abroad – from southern Germany, England and even Japan – travelled to Heiden to see where Dunant had spent the last years of his life.

To this day, the sepulchre, designed by sculptor Hans Gisler and inaugurated on 9 May 1931, is still a place of pilgrimage for those who wish to honour Henry Dunant. Sihlfeld Cemetery, Zurich.

The memorial room underwent its first renovation just under 20 years later, in 1988. The then President of the ICRC, Cornelio Sommaruga, inaugurated the museum, enriching it with a reproduction of the Nobel Peace Prize diploma.

Ten years later, in 1998, the museum was expanded significantly and as part of the overall renovation of the building, and a usufruct right for the ground floor was acquired that will be valid until at least 2051. The driving force behind this initiative was the then President of the Appenzell Ausserrhoden branch of the Swiss Red Cross, Dr Ethel Kocher[1].

Remembering, preserving and creating space for the new

In 2020, the Management Committee of the Henry Dunant Museum Association decided to tackle this task with a complete renovation. Together with the new, dynamic duo in charge of the museum and the project, an ambitious refurbishment process was initiated. The museum is scheduled to reopen in 2023/24. In addition to structural and architectural works, an innovative basic exhibition concept with a modular structure will also be realised. The aim is to create a prototype of the National Museum of 21st Century Art in Rome. Paradoxically, the source of inspiration for this idea is an object from the 1960s: the Dunant monument in Heiden which, just like the future museum, focuses not only on the person, but additionally – and above all – on his values and visions.

[1] Dr Ethel Kocher (d. 2020), who was instrumental in the expansion of the museum in 1998, remains connected to its future development, even though she is no longer with us. A bequest from her to the Henry Dunant Museum ensures that the costs of the renovation work are amply covered.

Rendering of the redesigned entrance area of the Henry Dunant Museum.

The compelling and controversial biography of the creator of the ICRC and the ever-present themes that emerge from the comparison with Dunant link the museum to the present: human dignity and empathy, women's rights and freedom of religion, human rights and international humanitarian law are of paramount importance both locally and globally. As the only museum in the world dedicated to Henry Dunant, the one in Heiden makes a distinctly exclusive and striking impact. This potential needs to be fully exploited in the future. Operational innovations are also being pursued for the refurbished institution. The museum will be the first in Europe to offer, in addition to a personalised welcome, a 24-hour self-check-in area, providing visitors with an experience completely free of time restrictions.

Kaba Rössler and Nadine Schneider
Museum and project managers,
Henry Dunant Museum

The women in Dunant's life

by Maria Grazia Baccolo*

Left:
A Castiglione woman tends to a wounded man, fragment of a painting of the battle of 24 June 1859 by Eugène Charpentier. Musée de l'Armée, Paris.

This page:
Henry Dunant helps a wounded man after the Battle of Solferino, oil on canvas. Archivio Alinari, Florence.

Florence Nightingale, centre, and nurses from the Nightingale Training School at Claydon House (England), where Nightingale spent part of her life, 1886.

Right:
Portrait of author Harriet Beecher Stowe, circa 1870.

"The world can only – and I stress only – improve if women are in charge of it." This was how Henry Dunant thought about the female gender. I think that this is an incredibly modern statement, if we consider that it is the idea of a man living in the second half of the 19th century. In this sentence, Dunant demonstrates a great admiration for the female sex, which accompanied him throughout his life.

After all, he thought of an organisation that would serve as a mother, sister, daughter, woman, in short. He understood that female empathy is something that, generally speaking, goes beyond help, beyond rescue: it is care, physical closeness, but above all, something spiritual. For everyone, the woman represents the bridge to life, the sweetness of the early years, the security of being accepted always and everywhere. For the Red Cross, every person is equally deserving of support and help, in this it is very feminine. Dunant understood this well – very well, in fact. To quote from his memoirs:

> "Today, it is to women that the preservation of society belongs, much more than to the twenty-two million European soldiers, whose bayonets shine from Gibraltar to the Ural Mountains, from Palermo to the Baltic."

Brought up by the women of his family, Dunant met other female figures in life who had a decisive influence on his character and personality.

The first was his mother, Anne-Antoinette Colladon – although everyone called her Nancy – who passed on to him her sensitivity in caring for those who are suffering, for the vulnerable. His mother used to take him with her when visiting old people's homes.

His family was deeply Calvinist, in fact, Henry studied at the Calvin College in Geneva until the age of 16. At that time, his aunt Sophie, who lived near the college and attended the Geneva Evangelical Society, welcomed him in the afternoons after school to help him with his studies. Henry was particularly interested in books on religion and, with her, he delved into Calvinism and that specific movement known as the "Awakening". From his aunt Sophie, he assimilated ideas for a renewal of the evangelical community that he considered to be too rigid, too entrenched. It was here, at a young age, that Dunant demonstrated his skills as an enthusiastic creator of movements, as a mediator, as a motivator, as a true leader.

As a teenager, he became fascinated by the writer Harriet Beecher Stowe through reading her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which made him realise how, albeit with different shades of skin colour, human beings are all the same. This theme would always remain in his heart, so much so that, at the age of 29, he wrote a chapter on the problem of slavery in the book *An Account of the Regency of Tunis* and, in 1874, when he was 46 and already out of the International Committee of the Red Cross, he proposed the issue of the slave trade at the Brussels Conference, encouraged by the "British Anti-Slavery Society".

In the years following his bankruptcy in 1867, he travelled to London many times to give lectures on the various topics to which he devoted special attention. It was there on 6 August 1872 that he met Léonie Kastner, née Boursault, widow of the composer Jean-Georges Kastner. The friendship between the two is based on mutual esteem and admiration; there are no documents or letters to the contrary. Madame Kastner believed in Dunant's ideas and humanitarian causes to such an extent that she supported him in attending conferences and congresses; in return, she asked Henry to be a kind of mentor for her son Frédéric, inventor of the pyrophone (1870), a musical instrument similar to a traditional organ, but with glass pipes inside which hydrogen is circulated and ignited (it is in fact also known as the "flame organ"). This instrument saw neither success nor popularity, but the Kastner-Dunant collaboration would continue for over a decade.

In the last period of his life, Dunant strongly sought recognition of his authorship of the idea for the Red Cross. Important aid came from Bertha von Suttner, an Austrian baroness who distinguished herself as a writer and resolutely supported him in achieving his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1901. Bertha von Suttner was such a central figure in the international peace activism of the time that she, too, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905. With her, Dunant shared the projects of the "International League of Peace" and the "International League of Women in Defence of the Family", aimed at uniting women in associations that would protect and safeguard them.

The one woman who inspired him throughout his life, however, was Florence Nightingale, a British nurse known as "the lady with the lamp", whose courageous work in the background of the Crimean conflict of 1854 was known to Dunant. He kept up a close correspondence with her, but they never met, although he lived for short periods in England. They had different ideas on what the foundations of relief societies should be, namely: volunteering, impartiality, neutrality.

Dunant openly declared his respect and esteem for women in his book *A Memory of Solferino*, published in 1862, in which he describes the impromptu rescue deployed by the Castiglionese population and, in particular, the women who shouted "all brothers". In doing this, he made them the protagonists of an momentous fact, a fact that is at the origin of his great idea. Those women were humble, uneducated, looked after their houses, raised their children and worked in the fields. They belonged to the lowest stratum of society and would not normally have had the dignity to even be mentioned. For his part, Dunant could have written that the cry of "all brothers", which later became the Red Cross motto that is still recognised worldwide today, was his own and no objection would ever have been raised to it.

Above:
Florence Nightingale, circa 1860. She was the first woman to be awarded the Order of Merit of the United Kingdom for her dedication to caring for the wounded in the Crimean War.

Bertha von Suttner, circa 1906.


ERU
Emergency Response Unit

The IFRC sent global support to help the Pakistan Red Crescent distribute critical relief supplies to those most affected by the floods. Hafsa, from the Danish Red Cross, will work in Pakistan as a member of the Emergency Response Unit (ERU). Larkana, Pakistan, 2022.

Although he did not have a wife and children, Dunant was very dedicated to his family and the world of women. He promoted an international movement on behalf of women, mothers, widows and girls to help them live decently, find work, defend their rights and ensure their independence. He called it the "Green Cross", a project he worked on for years, but which never saw the light of day. Dunant would not abandon his support of feminism, however, because he believed it was the best, most direct and surest path to peace.

Since 1863, the year when the National Red Cross Societies were founded, the role of women in voluntary work has changed a great deal, going from being exclusively nurses working in the background to leading figures in relief work in all sectors: from natural disasters to armed conflicts, so much so that, in 1908, the figure of the volunteer nurse, known as the "crocerossina", was recognised. And yet, other changes were implemented with the civil volunteerism of men and women. In recent decades, the proportion of women participating in Red Cross volunteer activities at all levels has well exceeded 50%.

Maria Grazia Baccolo

An active member of the Italian Red Cross since 1982, she worked at the International Red Cross Museum in Castiglione delle Stiviere (Mantua, Italy) for 28 years, 13 of which she spent as director. She is currently a member of the National Commission for the History of the Red Cross and a corresponding member of the Société Henry Dunant in Geneva.

Henry Dunant and the symbol of the Red Cross

by François Bugnion*

Left:
Sculptures in front of the
International Red Cross and
Red Crescent Museum in Geneva.

This page:
Bust of Henry Dunant at the
headquarters of the ICRC in Geneva.

Right:
The work by painter Édouard Armand-Dumaresq shows General Dufour presenting the document of the First Convention (22 August 1864) to one of the plenipotentiaries at Geneva Town Hall. Next to him, the co-founder of the Red Cross, Gustav Moynier.

Below:
The Committee of Five. Geneva, 1863.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was created to give a concrete form to two brilliant ideas formulated by Henry Dunant in the last pages of his book *A Memory of Solferino*:

- the creation, in the various countries, of relief societies for wounded soldiers that mobilised the resources of private charity. This is the origin of the Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies, which now operate all over the world.
- The adoption of a convention to protect wounded soldiers and those who assist them on the battlefield was the starting point from which today's international humanitarian law would be born.

At first, no thought was given to defining a specific emblem. However, as early as the first meeting of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 17 February 1863, the need emerged to find and adopt a uniform symbol or distinguishing sign – the same for all countries – so that volunteer nurses recruited by the Relief Societies would be immediately recognisable and their actions universally accepted. At the Conference in October 1863, which gave birth to the Red Cross, Dr Louis Appia, a member of the ICRC, emphasised the importance of such a uniform sign of recognition and proposed a white armband. The minutes of the conference laconically state:

> "[...]after some discussion, Mr Appia's proposal is adopted, modified in the sense that the white armband will have a red cross."

This led to Resolution 8 of the Conference in October 1863, which stipulated that volunteer nurses should wear a white armband with a red cross in all countries.
In August 1864, the ICRC convened a diplomatic conference in Geneva that adopted the *Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field*.
Article 7 of the Geneva Convention of 22 August 1864 reads:

> "A distinctive and uniform flag will be adopted for hospitals, ambulances and evacuations[...].
> An armband will also be allowed for neutralised personnel[...].
> The flag and armband will have a red cross on a white background."

This provision gave a legal value to the sign of the red cross, which became the visual manifestation of the protection guaranteed by the Convention to the wounded and rescuers.

From the outset, therefore, the adoption of a uniform insignia appeared to be one of the essential conditions for the inviolability of the health services of the armed forces, ambulances and volunteer nurses.

For reasons which it was not deemed necessary to specify in the minutes of the Conference of October 1863, the emblem of the red cross on a white background was chosen. Unless new documents are discovered to enlighten us on this point, we will never know who suggested adding a red cross on the white armband proposed

by Dr Appia, nor the reasons that led to the choice of this particular emblem. We are therefore forced to speculate.

The white flag has been recognised since antiquity as a symbol of the parliamentarian or the surrendering man. It was forbidden to open fire on those who used it in good faith. The addition of a red cross would have given an additional meaning to this symbol: the respect due to the wounded and those who rescue them. What is more, a red cross on a white background is an easy badge to make and, thanks to the contrasting colours, easily recognisable even from a distance.
Since the emblem had to be the visible manifestation of the neutrality of the rescuers and the protection afforded to them, the colours of the Swiss Confederation, the homeland of the founder Dunant, were inverted. Switzerland, in fact, enjoyed a status of permanent neutrality, which had been firmly rooted and consolidated for several centuries and was confirmed by the Congress of Vienna and the Second Treaty of Paris, which ended the Napoleonic wars in 1815.

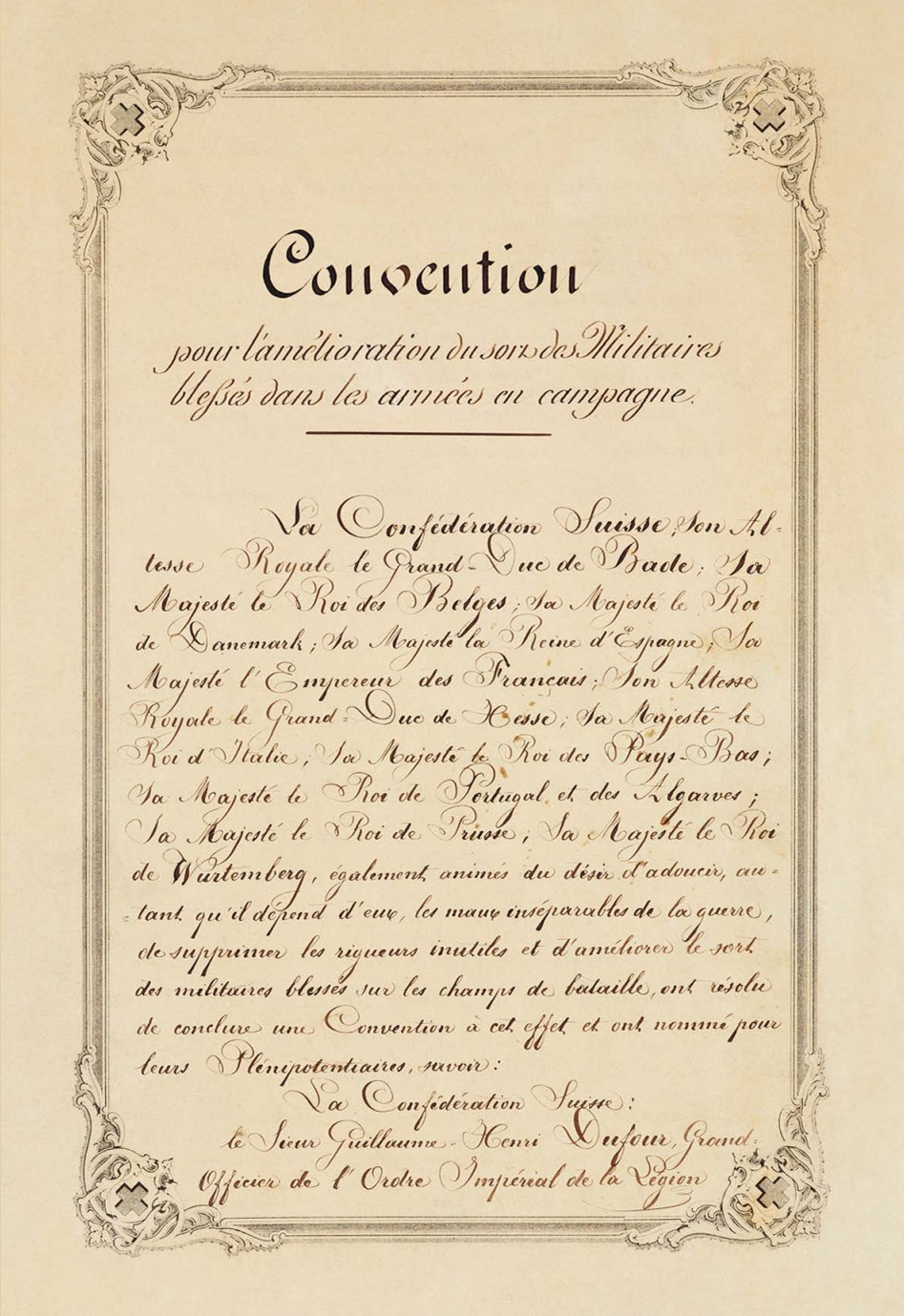
Nothing in the preparatory work suggests that any religious significance was intended to be attached to the distinctive sign of the volunteer nurses and military medical services, nor that the Conference of October 1863 was aware that an emblem had been adopted that could be recognised as having a religious significance, since the organisation that was to be created was intended to transcend national boundaries and faith divisions.
However, 19th century Europe considered itself to be the centre of the world and certainly did not think that the choice of the red cross could be challenged when the organisation and its emblem crossed the borders of the ancient continent. But such difficulties soon presented themselves.

In fact, ever since the Serbian-Turkish War of 1876-1878, the Ottoman Empire – which had unreservedly adhered to the Geneva Convention of 1864 – declared in a note of 16 November 1876 that, while respecting the sign of the red cross protecting the ambulances of the enemy army, it would in future adopt a red crescent for the protection of its own ambulances. In its note, the Sublime Porte asserted that

> "in the exercise of its rights under the Convention, Turkey had, until now, been paralysed by the very nature of the Convention's distinctive sign which hurt the susceptibility of the Muslim soldier."

A long negotiation ensued that led to the recognition of the red crescent emblem through the mechanism of reservations in the Geneva Convention of 6 July 1906, then in law in the Geneva Convention of 27 July 1929 and finally in the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, which is still in force today.
Likewise, Persia sought recognition of the emblem of the red lion and sun for the protection of the medical services of its armed forces. This emblem was approved following the same process that had enabled the recognition of the red crescent. However, in a note dated 4 September 1980, the Islamic Republic of Iran announced that it would renounce the use of the red lion and sun emblem and would also use the red crescent to protect its health services in future.

The image of Henry Dunant on a Red Cross flag used to protect a captured worker in Angola from the cold at night. Permanent exhibition, Henry Dunant Museum, Heiden.



Convention

pour l'amélioration du sort des Militaires
blessés dans les armées en campagne.

Sa Confédération Suisse, Son Altesse Royale le Grand-Duc de Bade, Sa Majesté le Roi des Belges, Sa Majesté le Roi de Danemark, Sa Majesté la Reine d'Espagne, Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Français, Son Altesse Royale le Grand-Duc de Hesse, Sa Majesté le Roi d'Italie, Sa Majesté le Roi des Pays-Bas, Sa Majesté le Roi de Portugal et des Algarves, Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse, Sa Majesté le Roi de Wurtemberg, également animés du désir d'adoucir, autant qu'il dépend d'eux, les maux inséparables de la guerre, de supprimer les rigueurs inutiles et d'améliorer le sort des militaires blessés sur les champs de bataille, ont résolu de conclure une Convention à cet effet et ont nommé pour leurs Plénipotentiaires, savoir:

Sa Confédération Suisse:
le Sieur Guillaume-Henri Dufour, Grand-Officier de l'Ordre Impérial de la Légion

First page of the Geneva Convention of 22 August 1864. The original document is stored at the Swiss Federal Archives in Bern.

Finally, at the 1949 Diplomatic Conference, which adopted the Geneva Conventions in force today, the State of Israel sought recognition of the symbol of the red Shield of David (Star of David) to protect its military health services. After an intense debate where emotions ran high, the Conference rejected the proposal, mainly for fear of opening the door to an unstoppable proliferation of signs. Because of this decision, the Israeli Relief Society Magen David Adom (Red Shield of David), for over fifty years, could not be admitted by law into the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as the movement's statutory rules require that a national society use one of the emblems recognised by the Geneva Conventions. The Geneva Diplomatic Conference in December 2005 finally adopted the Third Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, under which an additional emblem without any national, political or religious connotations – the Red Crystal – was created, paving the way for the simultaneous recognition of the Magen David Adom and the Palestinian Red Crescent.

What conclusions are to be drawn after this all too quick tour through 150 years of the history of a thorny issue?

By suggesting the creation of relief societies for wounded soldiers and the adoption of a convention for the protection of the wounded and military medical services on the battlefield, Henry Dunant implicitly raised the question of the adoption of a uniform, distinguishing mark to identify both the volunteers of the relief societies and the health nurses and soldiers and their vehicles.

In doing this, Dunant helped to create one of the world's best known and most respected emblems, the quintessential symbol of voluntary and selfless help.

For reasons which it was not deemed necessary to make explicit in the minutes of the Conference of October 1863, the choice fell on a red cross on a white background, but without establishing a precise graphic representation of this sign. At some point, however, a shortened red cross on a white background was imposed, essentially the image of the Swiss flag but with the colours inverted.

It was a stroke of genius and a mistake at the same time.

A stroke of genius because the sign of the cross, which predates Christianity by a long way, is a symbol of the position of the human being in the universe, with the vertical axis connecting them to the Earth on one end and to the Divinity on the other, while the horizontal axis symbolises the ties with their fellow human beings and the world. The early Christians recovered a pre-existing sign by identifying it with the instrument of Christ's passion – even though, in reality, the cross, as an instrument of torture, was T-shaped and the extension of the vertical axis beyond the horizontal played no role in the killing of the condemned man.

And it was a mistake because the chosen sign was perceived – rightly or wrongly so – as laden with religious connotation, which led at least in part to its rejection and the adoption of other symbols. The chosen sign did not therefore meet the objective of universality that the founders of the Red Cross had set themselves.

Experience also shows that, when troops facing each other on the battlefield use two different symbols to protect their health services, the risk of violation of this invisible protective shield is much greater than when both sides use the same symbol.

The adoption of the Third Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, which allowed for the recognition – alongside the emblems enshrined in the Conventions of 12 August 1949 – of a distinctive sign (the Red Crystal) devoid of any national, political or religious connotations, is a first step towards resolving this issue. A first step in full harmony with the spirit of Henry Dunant's teaching.

François Bugnion
Honorary Member of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Inauguration of the exhibition "Humanizing War? ICRC – 150 years of humanitarian action". Musée Rath, Geneva, 2014.

The times of a text

by Gianluca Grossi*

Left:
A young Palestinian boy playing war games with a plastic rifle. Shatila refugee camp, Beirut, Lebanon, 2012.

This page:
The helmet of a Libyan regular soldier during the revolution. Tripoli, 2011.

Had he been a contemporary of ours, Henry Dunant would have consigned his *A Memory of Solferino* to the internet: the possibility of downloading it for free would have been the updated formula of "ne se vend pas" (i.e.: it is free) that accompanied the first edition of the volume in November 1862. The author bore the costs of printing and distribution to political figures, journalists, intellectuals and socialites, from whom he hoped to receive an explicit endorsement of the project that was the book's essence: to give life to what was to become, on 17 February 1863, the International Committee for Relief of the Wounded, renamed the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1875. Dunant was convinced of the need to create an international body that, in times of war, would be authorised by states and armies to take care, while remaining neutral, of wounded soldiers: in the name of "*l'humanité et du christianisme*" (humanity and Christianity).

A Syrian boy practices shooting during the Syrian revolution. Camp near Aleppo. Syria, 2012.

If Dunant had lived today, he would have delivered his observations, even before a book, to social media – in real time. Not as a war correspondent, however, but in his capacity as a "**mere tourist**", or citizen journalist. The trouble would start right here: someone would ask Dunant to demonstrate his presence on the front line with a selfie. And Dunant would be in trouble: on 24 June 1859, he did not witness the devastating clash of the French army (with its Sardinian and Piedmontese allies) and the Austrian army, the battle that decided the fate of the Second War of Italian Independence. He based his reconstruction (his chronicle) on what was "reported and explained" to him by third parties,[1] but did not state this explicitly. The Genevan would have ended up at the centre of an endless and extremely violent controversy (the technical term is "shitstorm") that would have swept over and overwhelmed – and thus unfairly discrediting – even the testimony, this time an eyewitness account, that he gave from the very evening (some think from the following day, 25 June) of the aftermath of the Battle of Solferino, when, that is, Dunant arrived in the town of Castiglione. What had led him there was his wanderings in search of Emperor Napoleon III, with whom he would have loved to discuss his ill-fated investments and unsuccessful business in Algeria.

For a reporter accustomed to war, reading *A Memory of Solferino* was a very interesting experience. The title alone would be enough to generate pages of reflections. Today it would be impractical, at the time it reflected the fact that Dunant had stumbled into a battle as a "tourist, by chance". What do we produce with our dispatches from the battlefields? Deposits of memory destined for the archives of history, or nightmares from which we hope the denunciation of violence, the collective effort to stop it, will take shape? Dunant's text raises such questions and is therefore readable not only from a historiographical point of view, but with respect to how it also relates to current events. It is the trigger for quite a few considerations about journalism, or, in a term I prefer, about telling the world. This, for example: the description of a single battle that took place in 1859 was enough to crown Dunant's ambition to make war "more humane", to the point of giving rise to, with the Geneva Conventions, children of *A Memory of Solferino* itself and adapted over time, the protection of non-fighters, i.e. civilians. Today, we are forced to admit that the narrative of war entrusted to highly sophisticated means of communication is unable to further Dunant's vision, to give it further power, to transform it into definitive testimony capable of rendering war itself unthinkable and therefore impossible. Indeed, from contemporary battlefields, we can only send the account of how nothing is controllable.

In fact, I have never seen or reported on a war that respected the Geneva Conventions. Not one. Particularly when I think of civilians. The dead and wounded, the refugees I wrote about, whom I photographed and filmed, were mostly civilians. The relevance of *A Memory of Solferino* in today's world is therefore also to be found in this comparison, to which the text forces us, between ideals and the reality of the battlefields. Henry Dunant wrote the book as a realist: he was convinced that it was indispensable to create an international, neutral humanitarian organisation not to prevent or avert war, but in anticipation of new conflicts, which would be fought with ever more powerful and devastating armaments. He was right. Nevertheless, there are passages in the book in which a different intention, inclined to revolt against the reality, appears. They are hidden. They must be sought out with care. This requires a slow approach to the nerve centres of the text.

As is often the case, and indeed by a combination of circumstances, life had also decided for Dunant: it led him to witness what he calls "*un désastre pour ainsi dire européen*" (a European disaster, so to speak). The word "disaster" could not have been accidental, not in that historical period: in the second part of *A Memory of Solferino*, to which the author entrusts the description of what he saw and experienced first-hand at the end of the battle while walking among dead, dying and wounded soldiers, this word finds its most original and, in some respects, subversive objectification. And not only that. It is ablaze with condemnation (however implicit) in the manifestation of its kinship – whether conscious or not it, it does not matter, it nevertheless demands to be identified and contemplated – similarly to Francisco Goya's *The Disasters of War*: the 82 engravings with which the artist illustrated, between 1810 and 1820, the massacres that occurred during the Spanish War of Independence, in a sort of universal archiving of what human beings are capable of in war.

At a pivotal point in *A Memory of Solferino*, one would really say in the middle of the book, Dunant did what a TV journalist (or vlogger) would do today to dramatise (as well as demonstrate) his presence there: he inserted himself into the story. The scene takes place in Castiglione: Dunant describes himself caring for wounded soldiers, without distinguishing between

A young girl flees from the fighting between insurgents and government troops in Aleppo. Syria, 2012.

Wounded young Syrians during fighting at the camp near Aleppo. Syria, 2012.

nationalities and armies. Local women begin to follow his example and repeat the famous phrase: "all brothers!". This is the radical turning point between the first part of the *A Memory of Solferino*, in which the fury of the fighting is reconstructed through the literary canons of the war epic (where death given or suffered is understood as a virtuous and heroic gesture), and the second part in which the consequences of battle assume, in Dunant's description, the function of counterpoint, or rather a contradiction, or even scandal capable, if not of dismantling, at least of making the reader question the idealisation and glorification of war.

Enlightening, again in this circumstance, is Dunant's quotation of the letter he received from Swiss General Guillaume-Henri Dufour in response to his sending of a copy of *A Memory of Solferino*: Dufour acknowledges Dunant for highlighting, in addition to the "*gloire des champs de bataille*" (glory of the battlefield), the cost they impose in terms of "*tortures et de larmes*" (torture and tears), conceding that "*on n'est que trop porté à ne voir que le côté brillant d'une guerre, et à fermer les yeux sur ses tristes conséquences...*". (we are all too inclined to see only the bright side of war, and to close our eyes to its sad consequences...) Dufour himself, who was initially unconvinced by Dunant's proposals and doubted their feasibility, ended up being one of the co-founders of the International Committee for Relief of the Wounded and, from 1863 to 1864, was its first president.

Some premonitions of the revolution from the "shining aspect" of war to its opposite (today we would rather say, though perhaps not in unison: its true face) are also to be found scattered throughout the first part of *A Memory of Solferino*, particularly when Dunant, not without drawing on a reservoir of metaphors that we might call typical of the genre, compares war action to "*un combat de bêtes feroces, furieuses et ivres de sang*" (a fight of ferocious beasts, furious and blood drunk), but above all – and in this case in the explanation of a view that, personally, I believe is superior in depth and power to radicalise – the exhortation to consider the fallen "all brothers", when, among the soldiers engaged in battle, the author perceives the presence of several "contraints d'être homicides à vingt ans!": the presence, that is, of men forced to become murderers in their twenties. This is no small utterance. Indeed: if there is an insight that can be isolated, today, from the explicit absence of a condemnation of war by Dunant, I believe it is this: it directly urges us to examine *A Memory of Solferino* from our point of view in time, from the point of view our own convictions and, certainly more creatively, to ask ourselves what the author would have written if he had witnessed one of the conflicts taking place today (in 2022).

An Iraqi soldier prepares for battle against the Islamic State in Mosul. Iraq, 2016.

As far as I am concerned, and precisely because I have seen and reported on so many wars for a living, I consider that it is this short, tiny, almost invisible passage in the text that possesses the greatest force of Dunant's thoughts. Were he writing today, he would probably develop, rather than the pathos of the description of the terrifying scenes, his "human realism", which, in *A Memory of Solferino*, is only timidly hinted at, almost concealed between the lines of the text: wars are fought by young men forced to become murderers. In writing this, Dunant dismantled then and would still dismantle in our time any attempt to make us believe that war, any war, could be anything else.

The scenes that Henry Dunant observed immediately after the battle forced him to reconsider one point. He writes about this in a footnote in *A Memory of Solferino*, but it is an important passage: a lady from Geneva's high society had told him of the

A Syrian fighter wounded in clashes with the army in Damascus undergoes surgery at a school near Deir es-Zor. Syria, 2013.

A Syrian mother holds her son after he arrives on the island of Lesvos from Turkey. Greece, 2015.

need to set up a committee to send aid to the wounded of the Italian Campaign. The fact that this military campaign had not yet manifested itself through combat led Dunant to ask the lady how it was possible to think of bandages when there had not been a single wounded soldier. After his experience in Solferino, Dunant recognised how right his interlocutor was: the images of heartbreak and destruction of the Lombardy battle he had witnessed first-hand prompted him to correct his "*manière de voir à cet égard*", that is, his way of thinking about that particular point. Dunant had changed his mind. Or rather, his "way of seeing". And not by just a little.

This passage is central when considered from a dual perspective: that of the era in which Dunant was writing and that of our contemporary times. The first point: Dunant could not ignore *The Charterhouse of Parma*, which Stendhal published in 1839, twenty years before *A Memory of Solferino* saw the light of day. This novel, through the figure of the protagonist, nobleman Fabrizio del Dongo, created a stumbling block in the literary narrative of war and, in a broader sense, made explicit the crisis of the modern subject contrasted with the inability to derive knowledge from experience. The young Del Dongo, a great admirer of the ideals of liberty embodied by Napoleon, decides to join the emperor in battle (curiously enough, as did Dunant himself) and, amidst many twists of fate, ends up actually finding himself in the middle of the Battle of Waterloo, without having fought it and without understanding what happened around him. Consigned to bewilderment, Fabrizio del Dongo notes,

> "the universal condition of modern man, whose only possible experience consists of verifying the inanity of his own experience".[2]

Historian Jean Norton Cru calls Del Dongo's bafflement "Stendhal's paradox": the testimony of someone who has been to war (thus also that of an observer like Dunant, or a journalist) would be incapable of contributing to the historical reconstruction of the events themselves. Norton Cru, however, rejects this paradox, saying he is

> "firmly convinced that there can be no authentic knowledge of war events that is not based on a 'view from below'",[3]

that is to say, the view of those who "were there".

Dunant reconstructed the Battle of Solferino in the first part of the book by drawing on sources and testimonies. If he had left it at that, his report would not have had the desired effect. It is, in fact, the second part, which so strongly detaches itself from the narrative models of the first, that generates all the weight of the work: the emotion and compassion of the observer (his "new view") recover the content of experience produced by the war, in particular the battle that Dunant was denied. Seeing what war does to human beings put Dunant in a position to experience and understand even what he has not seen, that is, what human beings are capable of doing to others and to themselves in combat. In this way, whether or not he was aware of the confusion that had seized the protagonist of Stendhal's *Charterhouse*, Dunant asserted the cognitive value of subjective experience, even in war.

Left:
A car bomb explodes in Mosul during an offensive against the Islamic State by the Iraqi army, Shia militias and US aircraft. Iraq, 2016.

A street on the outskirts of Mosul where fighting against the Islamic State rages. Iraq, 2016.

This leads us to the second observation point of the passage in question. In the essay *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag takes up the conviction of historian Jean Norton Cru, making a perceptible change of perspective: the authentic account of war comes, not "from below", but "from within". These are two different things. Only by starting from a devastating intimacy with war, that is, after having not only fought and suffered it or, for a journalist, observed it through a radical self-exposure to reality, but also having "intimately" understood it, is it possible to witness it, talk about it, write about it, depict its images. It is a dizzying step forward: it implies that war is not there to be seen, not there to be looked at. It is not enough to have been "faced with" a war. It is essential to have been on the "inside" to know what it really constitutes. Sontag writes:

> "We – this 'we' is everyone who has never experienced anything like what they went through – don't understand."[4]

Interestingly, among those who "understand", Sontag includes aid workers. So, indirectly, also Henry Dunant.

And finally: if *A Memory of Solferino* still remains relevant, it is probably for two reasons. On the one hand, it forces us to admit that war is stronger than any attempt to stem its consequences, to contain it by humanitarian intervention or international law. War is the total unleashing of the human being confronted with himself or herself, even before facing the enemy: "young men forced to become murderers in their twenties". Understanding war from the "inside" means understanding this. On the other hand, it allows us to assume (or at least to speculate) that one day, someone will write a book, or take a photograph that will make war unthinkable. For good.

Gianluca Grossi
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The photographs accompanying this text are by the author.

Note

1 Corinne Chaponnière, *Henry Dunant. La croix d'un homme*, Labor et Fides, 2018, p. 133 (passage translated by the author).

2 Antonio Scurati, *Guerra. Narrazioni e culture nella tradizione occidentale*, Donzelli Editore, 2007, p. 194.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 191.

4 Susan Sontag, *Di fronte al dolore degli altri*, Mondadori, 2003, p. 12.

Plaque commemorating the founder of the Red Cross, erected in front of the Monte Rosa massif and Dunantspitze (Peak Dunant), the second highest peak in Switzerland, renamed by the Valais authorities in his honour.

Dear uncle Henry, I am writing to you

Dear uncle Henry,

I am writing to you because I would have loved to have met you in person, to talk to you about the motivations that were the driving force behind your life; I would also have liked you to be able to see the scope and impact that your work still has today.

The Red Cross is the only independent and neutral institution that enjoys universal trust for its work in providing aid and assistance to victims of wars and natural disasters, soldiers wounded in battle, refugees and displaced persons, and people suffering or in precarious situations.

Millions of highly committed and motivated volunteers work around the world, embodying and spreading the same values that you taught us during your lifetime. I am extremely moved by the conviction with which young people, even very young ones, strive to give some dignity to people in need. This is the "spirit of the Red Cross".

Just think that the slogan of the new youth campaign just launched by the Swiss Red Cross is "Be a Henry!".

With your book A Memory of Solferino *and your imperative "all brothers!", which became the motto of the volunteers, you were able to touch the hearts of emperors and empresses, kings and queens throughout Europe.*

There are squares, streets and schools all around the world that bear your name. In many places there are busts portraying you, and recently, even the Ostspitze, Switzerland's second highest peak in the Monte Rosa massif, was renamed "Punta Dunant"!

Among the family papers, I found some original texts written by your own hand, with inspiring, forward-looking and innovative thoughts. You were a visionary and your ideas are still as relevant today as ever. I remember the medal box on my grandfather's desk (your great-nephew Paul) and especially the medal of the first Nobel Peace Prize awarded in history, which you received in 1901, the same year he was born.

You don't know what an honour it is for me to bear your surname!

I had the opportunity to go to Algeria, discover the region you loved so much and see the mill that once belonged to you. I was also able to follow in your footsteps in Italy and Tunisia, at the Tunis Library, which houses the original version of one of your books, autographed by your own hand. I have had the opportunity to collect many beautiful testimonies – in Africa, in Central America, in Europe as well as in North Africa – that your work has been a lifeline in countless desperate situations.

I am happy with the meetings I have and will continue to have in my life, because they give me the opportunity to talk about what I know about you, your beliefs and your faith in a God who loves us. All this allowed you to fearlessly embark on this humanitarian adventure and to create a movement with a global reach.

I fervently pray that future generations will continue to be inspired by your idea of mutual help and support for those in need, repeating unceasingly "all brothers!".

As you said so well: "Only those who are crazy enough to believe that they can change the world can do so".

There's so much more to say about you... dear uncle, I thank you for your ideas and the example you have been and will be for all humanity. I am proud to be part of your family!

Your great-great-great-niece Cécile,
daughter of Bernard, son of Paul, son of Charles, son of Daniel, your brother

On international humanitarian law

Interview with Cornelio Sommaruga*

Left:
Cornelio Sommaruga at a press conference to announce the ICRC mission to Somalia, 1993.

This page:
With Somalian children during the mission, 1993.

Cornelio Sommaruga, born in Rome in 1932 to parents from Ticino, graduated with a doctorate in law in 1957 and worked for two years in the banking sector, then joined the Swiss diplomatic corps, holding top positions. In 1987, he was called by the International Committee of the Red Cross to serve as president, a position he held until 1999. In 2000, he became an honorary member. In the same year, he was appointed President of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). During his brilliant and long career, he has received many awards, including the Council of Europe's North-South Prize (2001), the Henry Dunant Medal (2009), considered the highest award of the Red Cross, and honorary doctorates from prestigious universities worldwide.

The following is a short but poignant interview that expresses with simplicity and conviction his thoughts on Dunant and the principles that guided him in his formidable career.

Dr Sommaruga, what was it that struck you about Henry Dunant's A Memory of Solferino?
I read the book early on in my education; it was already circulating among my family members as some of them were involved in the Red Cross. When reading Dunant's testimony, I was immediately struck by his description of the high number of casualties and his determination not to abandon the wounded, whether friend or foe, to their sad fate.

And, what about Henry Dunant the man, his personality? What was your impression of him?
The fact that, despite living in a time when there were no "instant" means of communication, he was aware of the Battle of Solferino and, after seeing the disaster in terms of human lives, he immediately took action to help the victims in a concrete way and managed to stir the consciences of important European politicians who recognised that the wounded and dying soldiers were and are men and women who suffer and have the right to be cared for and helped without any discrimination.

When you started your diplomatic career, was the development of humanitarian diplomacy one of your goals?
Of course, in particular international humanitarian law and I believe that I have achieved this. Humanitarian law wants to make its voice heard precisely in armed conflicts, as it protests against the worst form of violence that sets states against each other. Faced with the suffering of the victims, it reminds those fighting of the common duty of humanity, builds a last defence of man against man. It therefore plays a fundamental role.

Cornelio Sommaruga inaugurates the model of the ICRC headquarters in Geneva at Swissminiatur in Melide in the Canton of Ticino, 11 June 1993.

Visit to the Red Cross Memorial. Solferino, 1991.

You were President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for more than ten years. What values did you share?
The impartiality, independence and neutrality of the ICRC and the fundamental principles of humanitarian action. In particular, I fought for the independence of the ICRC and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in a way that did not leave them free to act according to their own judgement in favour of the victims, in favour of those who suffer and need spontaneous, voluntary aid, without being influenced by political motives.

What initiatives and innovations did you bring about during your term of office?
In 1992, I proposed the adoption of an additional emblem, devoid of any national, political or religious connotations, which would be made available to states and National Societies that did not recognise either the cross or the crescent. After almost fifteen years of negotiations, the Red Crystal was finally adopted at the 29th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in June 2006 in Geneva.
Furthermore, I have always wanted to support the neutrality of the ICRC by maintaining close ties with all governments of the signatory states of the Geneva Conventions.

What is the motto that guided you at the ICRC?
I can sum it up in three words: perseverance, rigour, humility. Each of these words had a precise meaning; perseverance: to carry on, to never give up and to persist in saving lives; rigour: to comply with the international humanitarian law of the Geneva Conventions; humility: the ability to recognise that others might be yielding better results than us, also because it was impossible for me to respond to every single request from around the world..

To conclude, how would you sum up the concept of the Red Cross?
Born out of the horrors of war, the Red Cross is the constant search for peace.

Cornelio Sommaruga
Former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

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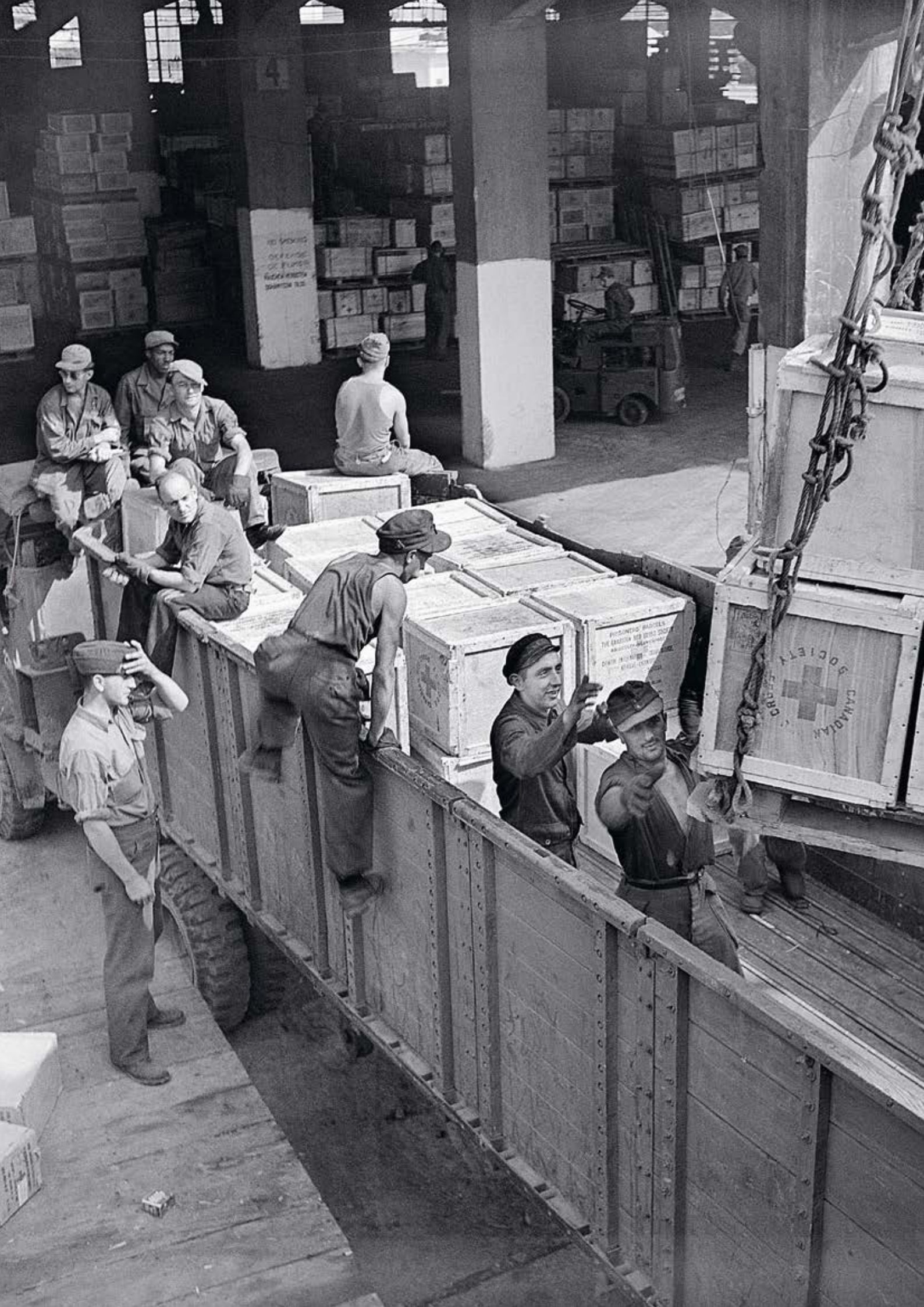
edited by Alessandra Dolci in collaboration with Andrea Romano


CANADIAN
RED CROSS SOCIETY

Voluntary service: the most important principle of the Swiss Red Cross

by Barbara Schmid-Federer*

Left:
French dockworkers and two German prisoners of war (right) unload International Committee of the Red Cross crates from the ICRC ship "Henry Dunant" in October 1945. Marseilles, France.

This page:
Swiss Red Cross volunteers check and sort the contents of the gift parcels prepared as part of the "2 x Christmas 2022" campaign at the Swiss Red Cross logistics centre in Wabern, near Bern.

Barbara-Schmid-Federer with the "2 x Christmas 2022" Red Cross aid initiative. Kemptthal, Zurich.

The seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross (humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality) were established at the 20th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent held in Vienna in 1965. They apply to the whole movement, are binding and form the basis of its work. A binding link between the members of the movement, the principles of the Red Cross were born from an ideal, but were shaped by practical work in the field, experience gained over time and from contact with different cultures. Since the foundation of the Red Cross in 1863, it took just over a century before the principles were defined and finally adopted by all 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Some figures

The principles of the Red Cross are very precisely defined and follow a clear hierarchical order. In first place are those "essentials": humanity and impartiality, on which the mission of the Red Cross is based, followed by neutrality and independence, which enable it to realise its purpose. Volunteering which, like unity and universality, is considered an "organic" principle, is linked to the institutional functioning of the Red Cross and therefore seems to play a secondary role.

However, this principle – which is expressed in both voluntary commitment and selfless help – is of particular importance. Some 53,000 volunteers are active in the 24 Swiss cantonal associations and the four SRC rescue organisations. In a country known for its high level of civil society participation in associations, the principle of voluntary service is – so to speak – naturally the backbone of Switzerland's largest humanitarian organisation, closely linked to the humanitarian work of the Red Cross Movement since its beginnings.

Driven by the fundamental idea of human compassion, Henry Dunant volunteered to assist wounded and dying soldiers on the battlefield of Solferino, receiving support from the women of Castiglione, who were also willing to volunteer.

Originally conceived by Dunant as committees of volunteers to care for the wounded in wartime, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies now employ around 500,000 full-time staff worldwide. But the backbone of the movement is the more than the 14 million people in the 192 countries where the two organisations now operate who give their time, skills and experience freely and selflessly to others. Together they form the largest volunteer network in the world. Without their unpaid commitment to this non-work activity, the international movement would not be able to carry out its humanitarian mission.

Relevance of the Red Cross principles

Because of his awareness of the ills of his time and his determination to solve them by adopting a global approach, Henry Dunant is commonly referred to as a "visionary" or even a "revolutionary". Indeed, the longevity of his work can undoubtedly be explained by the unchanged relevance of the principles underlying it. Not only voluntary service, but also the other principles still seem to be "modern" and innovatively address the challenges that present themselves little by little in the world.

The concept of volunteerism has been a hallmark of the Red Cross in its more than 150-year history, and has influenced the organisation's main texts since 1859. In response to the shortcomings in the military medical services at Solferino, Dunant proposed the employment of volunteers who, with their zeal and spirit of self-sacrifice, proved to be particularly well suited to the task. Following his recommendations, the first Red Cross resolutions adopted in 1863 endorsed

the training of "diligent, prepared volunteer nurses, initiated to carry out this task" who could assist the wounded on the battlefields. The following year, the Geneva Convention defined Red Cross Societies as "volunteer-based assistance associations". The 1951 federal decree states that "voluntary health care" is one of the three main tasks of the SRC. According to article 3 of the articles of association of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, "National Societies are autonomous national organisations that provide an indispensable framework for the activities of their members and volunteer workers".

Right from the start, the volunteers proved to be purely female: it was mainly women who took care of this new humanitarian mission. Many of them took part in the SRC's first major relief operation in Switzerland, welcoming, assisting and caring for the 87,000 soldiers of General Charles Denis Bourbaki's French army in the winter of 1871. In the decades that followed, a large proportion of the SRC's volunteer staff came from the Samaritan Societies, which soon became predominantly female and played an important role in disseminating and implanting Red Cross values throughout Switzerland.

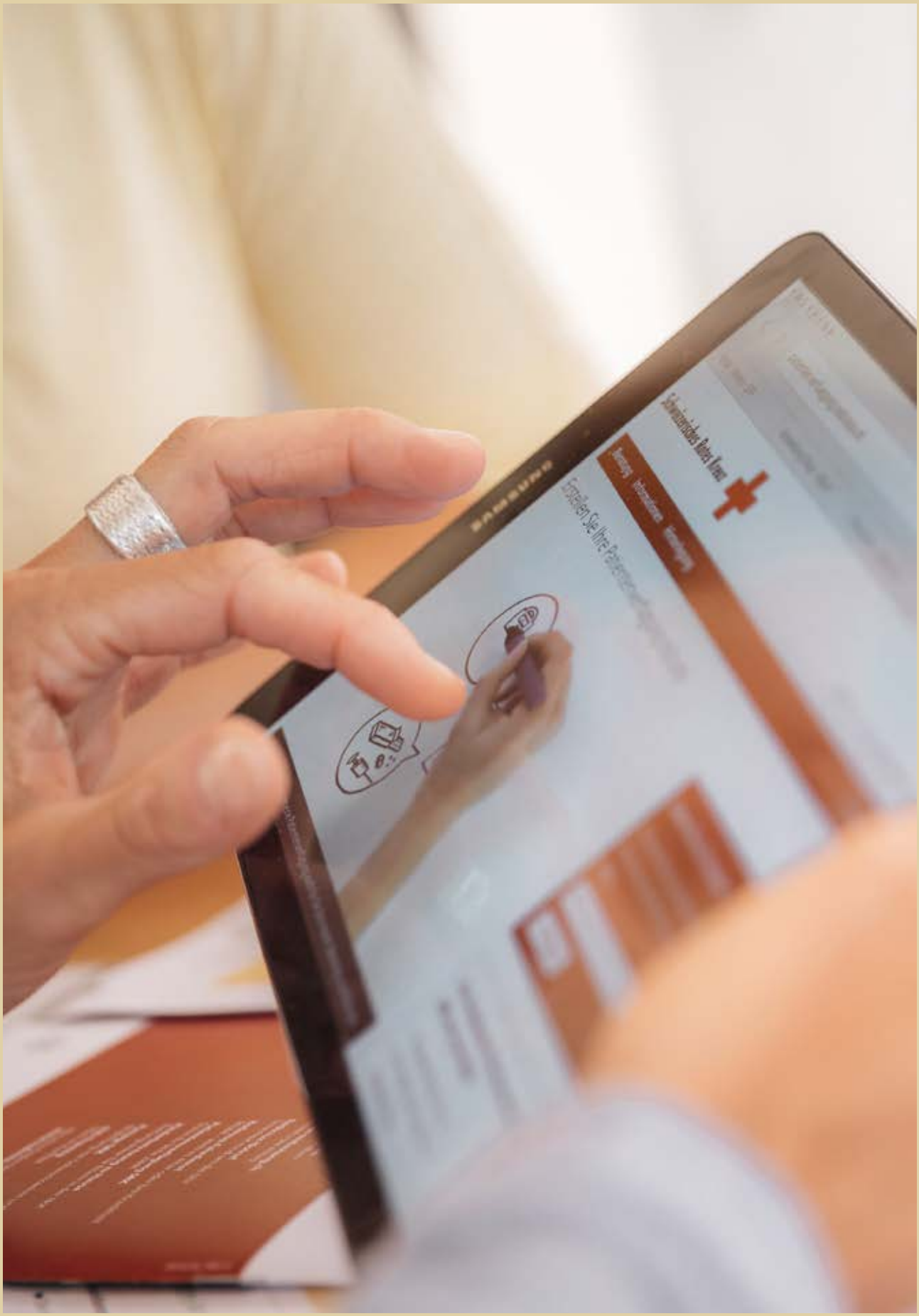
Subsequently, the SRC focused on the nursing sector and promoted the development of nurse training. Thanks to this commitment, nursing, which until then had been reserved for religious institutions, became a profession in its own right and accessible to everyone. By federal decree in 1903, the nursing schools recognised by the SRC were to receive state funding and undertake to make some of their staff available in the event of war. To this day, the Red Cross service perpetuates Henry Dunant's original idea by offering people with a professional medical background the possibility of supporting or instructing, on a voluntary basis, the staff of the Swiss Army Medical Service.

The limits and rebirth of volunteering

The two world wars put the ideal of voluntary work to the test: the line between selfless help and patriotic duty became blurred and even problematic. Volunteering was increasingly associated with pressure and obligation because it was considered indispensable for the survival of the country, useful for the army and functional for Swiss neutrality policy, with the consequence that certain civil, democratic and voluntary components of the SRC were sometimes sacrificed to the reason of state.

In 1965, voluntary service became one of the seven fundamental principles of the Red Cross. Its importance became fully

Outpatient clinic for French internees of General Bourbaki's army in the Terreaux Chapel. Lausanne, February 1871.


SAMSUNG

apparent after World War II, when the SRC refocused its services on the civil sector. The creation of new activities in the field of social medicine (Red Cross transport service, visit and accompaniment service, support for migrants, etc.) required volunteers. For more than 50 years now, this new form of voluntary work has been an integral part of the operational and functional structure of the cantonal Red Cross associations. It provides an adequate response to new challenges such as the ageing population, care for people with disabilities, urban loneliness, the precariousness of certain population groups and the integration of migrants and refugees.

In the framework of Strategy 2030, the SRC intends to continue its work to develop and modernise voluntary work. For example, by encouraging volunteers to actively participate in optimising services or using new technologies to bring more creative forms of volunteering to life.

Barbara Schmid-Federer
President of the Swiss Red Cross

An SRC worker informs a patient of the right to medical treatment, assuring them that their wishes will be respected even if they are no longer able to express them.

A privileged observatory of the world

by Francesco Rocca*

Left:
Francesco Rocca in Syria, 2012.

This page:
The Red Cross Memorial in Solferino (Mantua) is located in the park below the Rocca of Solferino, nicknamed the "Spy of Italy", overlooking the site of the conflict. It was erected in 1959 on the centenary of the battle to pay homage to the life and work of Henry Dunant.

Left to right: Francesco Rocca, Germano Bignotti, Mayor of Solferino, and Manuel Suarez del Toro, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, participate in the torchlight procession to mark the 150th anniversary of the Red Cross. Solferino, 27 June 2009.

Henry Dunant, our founder, was undoubtedly a visionary and a revolutionary. Having directly experienced the tragedy of the Battle of Solferino (1859), he managed to transform the suffering of thousands of people into the idea of the Red Cross, of the neutrality of rescuers, of respect for those who save lives. In a nutshell, his beliefs form the basis of modern humanitarianism. But Dunant also emphasised the importance of having well-trained national organisations ready for any eventuality, capable of communicating and working together for the good of humanity in times of peace as well as in times of war, and of responding to any kind of crisis, foreseeable and unexpected. I see our daily work in these intuitions of his.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is exactly what Dunant envisioned: an international organisation with 192 members, i.e. the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, present in as many nations, and whose main mission is the coordination of activities in emergencies along with the training of volunteers worldwide. The Covid-19 pandemic reminded everyone dramatically of the importance of having local actors capable of responding to any kind of critical situation. In times of lockdown and closed borders, having volunteers ready to intervene has meant the difference between life and death for millions of people.

Following the intuition of our founder, after more than 150 years, the International Federation firmly believes in what is referred to as the "localisation" of humanitarian aid, i.e. supporting local actors, such as Red Cross volunteers, to respond themselves, instead of only investing in international organisations and expatriates.[1] Local actors do not have to travel, they already know the local culture and language, but above all they have access to otherwise unreachable areas, they already enjoy the trust of the population and they know where the situations in need of assistance are, where to find our societies' communities of marginalised and invisible people – of which there are far too many.

There are many examples that support this view. I have already mentioned the pandemic, but the incredible humanitarian work of the Ukrainian Red Cross or the Syrian Red Crescent is there for all the world to see. National Societies that, even in times of war, have never stopped helping their own people, risking their lives. Or in the midst of the current dramatic food crisis in the Horn of Africa, the Somali Red Crescent is managing to bring help to nomadic shepherd groups thanks to their knowledge of where and how the latter moves. From Ukraine to Somalia, from Italy to Syria,

[1] International delegates who are sent to the territory of a conflict.

our volunteers are an expression of their communities and know how to deliver help in the most efficient way.

Volunteering is the resource on which our work is based, the added value of our organisation. Without volunteers, the Red Cross would not exist. Without those who voluntarily decide to help others, one of our fundamental pillars would be missing. The other essential element is continuous training: it is not enough to be generous, we also need to be uniquely prepared to be able to intervene in small or large emergencies in a consistent way and have the same approach everywhere. Many people think the Red Cross is "just" the ambulance service, but our tasks range from mental health support to civil protection, from food distribution to water purification or building shelters or camps for displaced people. Activities obviously depend on the locale and differ from nation to nation, but the lowest common denominator is our seven fundamental principles (humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality) that guide us like the North Star – a light to guide us in any context, in any corner of the world.

I am also a volunteer. Both of my positions, President of the Italian Red Cross and President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, do not provide a salary and are elected positions. Volunteers electing other volunteers at every level: local, regional, national, international. I personally feel the responsibility of being the spokesperson for the Red Cross at the Italian and global level. At every conference, mission, event, meeting, I feel the responsibility to represent 14 million volunteers working, even at this very moment, in 192 nations, to help the most vulnerable. And again, I feel a responsibility to give a voice to those many, too many, communities that have no representation at the global level. The stories, the eyes, the suffering, the joy, the hope of the people I meet in my missions stay with me and accompany me in all my activities. Although it is often hard, I feel privileged. I am privileged to be able to serve the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to visit remote places that no one talks about and to spread the message from the world's forgotten people.

During my presidency, I wanted to invest more and more in volunteering and training and I worked a lot on transparency and integrity. In order to meet the needs of the community, we need to be ready for every eventuality, but we also need to maintain trust, as I mentioned before. Without trust, there would be no access to humanitarian aid and too many people would be left without support. This is why preserving integrity is crucial: if an error or scandal were to occur in any corner of the world, it would affect all National Societies within minutes. Trust can be lost quickly, which is why we must serve as an example, always and in every situation.

The winter of 2022 was one of the coldest on record in Syria. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent supports people in the Al-Hawl refugee camp in Al-Hasakeh and other parts of the country by providing food and various basic necessities.

Francesco Rocca during a conference on young people and the importance of their participation in voluntary activities. Solferino, 2017.

Left:
A girl in a French uniform receives the Red Cross torch during the event to mark the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Solferino.

Another theme that is very dear to me is the development of young people. Having a strong base of young volunteers means working for the present and the future of the association. Young people do not make allowances, they are champions of integrity and have ideas that we might not even think of; they represent an added value in our day-to-day activities; that is why I wanted to make the necessary statutory changes to have youth delegates, elected by their peers, and to have their representation in every decision-making process, both locally and globally. I am convinced that young people are our best insurance policy for having active National Societies ready for the challenges of the future.

When I was first elected to the presidency of the International Federation in 2017, a journalist asked me why a person would voluntarily decide to accept this position at such a complex historical moment. Today, the humanitarian situation is even more difficult due to the dramatic combination of a series of unimaginable global crises, such as climate change, the pandemic, hunger, violence and the many wars. Yet, my answer would have been the same in 2017 as it is today: as a Red Cross volunteer, I have to be optimistic that a return to dialogue and multilateralism can alleviate crises around the world. But above all, today as back then, I think that everyone must do their part and that, today more than ever, the world is in dire need of the Red Cross.

Francesco Rocca
President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies


P.-A. ZUBER
HENRY DUNANT 1828-

Dunant's vision turned into a solid economic reality

by Filippo Bolla*

Left:
On 8 May 2010 at the Kursaal Heiden, the Federal Mint Swissmint unveiled a 20-franc silver coin to commemorate Henry Dunant.

This page:
The hands of Saber Al Breim, mother of six, are filled with seeds to cultivate the land by an ICRC volunteer. Her house was damaged during the conflict and her land completely destroyed. Gaza, Al-Qarara, 2015.

Henry Dunant could never have imagined that his "crazy idea", as many have called it, would turn into a solid economic reality, capable of adapting to changing times without ever betraying its origins.
The International Red Cross Movement is, in fact, among the largest humanitarian networks in the world with over 500,000 employees and more than 14 million volunteers.

- disaster response and readiness;
- access to health and health promotion;
- assistance for refugees inside and outside conflict zones;
- respect for human rights and visits to prisoners;
- social integration;
- promotion of volunteering;
- dissemination of fundamental principles and humanitarian values.

Its organisation is based on three pillars: the 192 National Societies that develop humanitarian programmes in their countries, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which works mainly in conflict zones, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), whose main role is to coordinate operations worldwide together with the National Societies.

The entire network is very decentralised and is sure to remain cohesive thanks to members who share its values and principles.

The work of the National Red Cross Societies and the Federation in the world

The services of National Societies

The consolidated annual expenditure of CHF 39 billion enables 192 National Societies to offer humanitarian services worldwide. Their size varies from structures with just a few volunteers to companies with more than 50,000 employees. Six exceed CHF 1 billion in turnover and 18 account for 95% of the annual Red Cross budget worldwide.

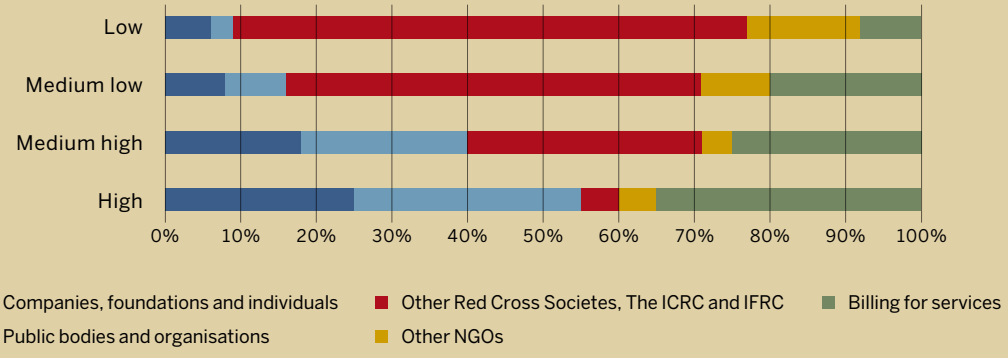
Financing

The financing of operations comes mainly from five sources:

- companies, foundations and individuals;
- national governments through performance mandates;
- other Red Cross Societies, the ICRC and IFRC;
- other NGOs;
- billing for National Red Cross services.

The breakdown of these sources of financing varies according to the income group to which the country concerned belongs.

Financial Sources of Domestic Companies by Income Group (Source: FICR)



This graph shows that low-income National Societies are, on average, 60% funded by international projects of the Red Cross and other NGOs. Those with high incomes are more than 50% financed by invoiced benefits and services and mandates from the state. In this case, they canbe said to act as "auxiliaries" of the public authorities.

Human resources

Volunteering

Voluntary service is one of the seven principles of the Red Cross Movement. National Societies have over 14 million volunteers worldwide. This number varies widely between National Societies, but four of the largest ones comprise more than 50% of the world's volunteers, so the average value is not meaningful. The median is 5,200 volunteers.

Data on volunteer work is of increasing interest to the International Labour Office: there are already some studies that report an average of half a day to one day per month for each active volunteer.

A 2020 report published by the Swiss Federal Administration gives the figure of three hours per week per capita for organised volunteering. Applying these values to the number of Red Cross volunteers worldwide, volunteering would represent more than one million people employed full-time.[1] Of course, this figure must be taken with caution, but it is likely that the weight of Red Cross volunteers worldwide is equivalent to a few tens of billions of Swiss francs.

Staff

The National Societies employ 518,000 people worldwide. Their number varies greatly from one country to another. The average is 2,700 employees and the median about 186 employees.

The global network

Solidarity is the Red Cross's strength.

The international Red Cross network finances about 70% of humanitarian operations and services in countries where the National Societies would not otherwise be able to find the necessary funds. The following table provides an aggregated view of the distribution of services across the regions

Services

In the different areas in which it works, the Red Cross provided services to some 244.5 million people in 2021 with disaster response programmes and 144.2 million with long-term services and development programmes. In total, more than 500 million people have had contact with the Red Cross.

[1] According to an average of 1,800 hours per year for a full-time employee.

Distribution of services provided by region (Source: FICR)

		Support received					
		AF	AM	AP	ECA	MENA	World
Support provided	Africa (AF)	3%	0%	0%	1%	0%	5%
	America (AM)	1%	5%	2%	1%	0%	9%
	Asia-Pacific (AP)	2%	1%	11%	2%	1%	17%
	Europe and Central Asia (ECA)	20%	8%	10%	17%	7%	61%
	Middle East and North Africa (MENA)	3%	1%	2%	1%	2%	8%
	World	28%	14%	25%	23%	10%	100%

We can see that European National Societies make up most of the network support relationships, at the intra-regional level, but especially at the inter-regional level. It is important to remember, however, that IFRC statistics do not collect data on the type or amount of support activities underlying these reports.

The work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The ICRC intervenes mainly in areas of conflict and violence. It seeks to limit human suffering by promoting respect for international humanitarian law and developing initiatives on the ground. The ICRC also visits thousands of prisoners every year, checks what kind of situations they live in and offers support to improve their conditions.

Its work is often carried out in cooperation with national Red Crosses.

A house destroyed by an armed group, in the background an ICRC land cruiser. Tolima department, municipality of Ovejas-Sucre, district of Pijiguay, Colombia, 2022.

The Swiss National Red Cross Society (SRC)

With over 50,000 volunteers and more than 5,000 employees, the Swiss Red Cross is one of the largest National Red Cross Societies.

In 2021, the 50,000 volunteers of the Swiss Red Cross put in 2.7 million hours, which corresponds to the full-time work of about 1,500 people.

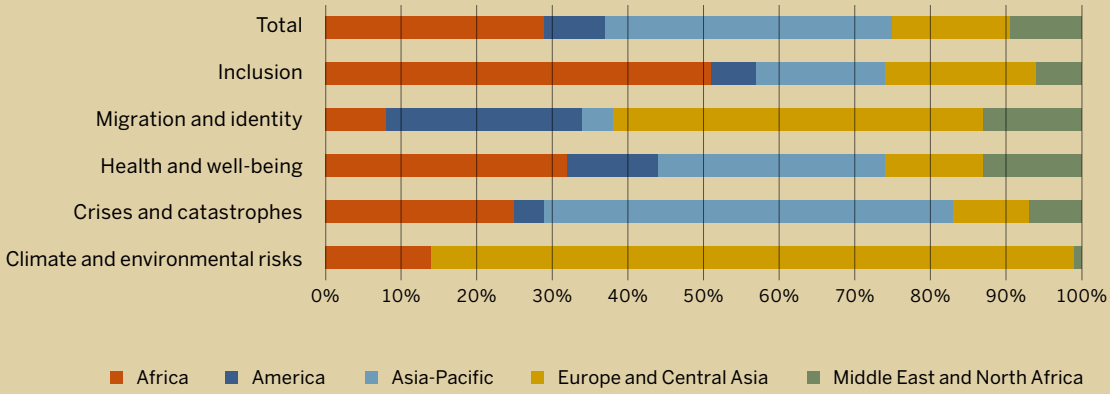
With around CHF 50 million invested in international projects, the SRC is among the National Societies offering the most services outside its borders.

In 2021, the SRC was active in 38 countries, where it implemented 146 projects in cooperation with local populations and partner companies.

Its turnover was CHF 565 million. Funding comes from invoiced services (49%) and contributions from public authorities (28%). At federal and cantonal level, the Swiss Red Cross is an important partner of the state, which entrusts to it numerous national and international mandates.

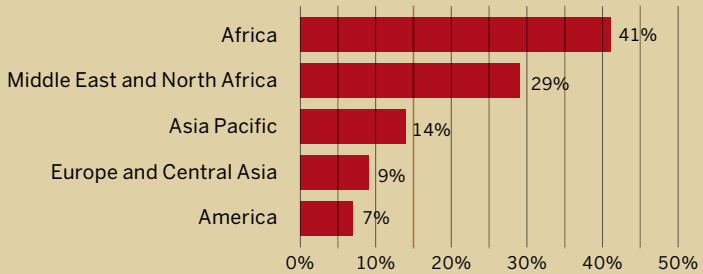
Share allocation around the world

(Source: FICR)



Distribution of ICRC works worldwide

(Source: CICR)



The ICRC has more than 20,000 employees in some 100 delegations worldwide. Its annual budget is almost two billion Swiss francs. About 70% of the interventions take place in Africa and the Middle East to North Africa. Ukraine was recently added.

A detailed view of Ukrainian refugees arriving at the Federal Asylum Centre. Chiasso, 2022.

What is the economic and social impact of the Red Cross worldwide?

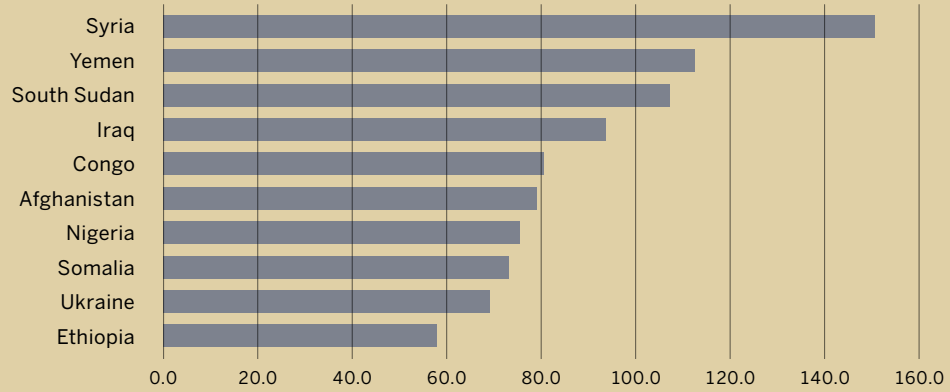
Red Cross volunteerism is going from strength to strength. This growth can be fostered partly by companies striving to improve in environment, social and governance (ESG) matters, and partly by young people. Having volunteering on their CVs can increase the chances of getting a job for young graduates. As far as senior citizens, who are a growing group in industrialised countries, are concerned, volunteering is a way to keep active and maintain a social life – factors that have a positive impact on health. The Red Cross, like many other NGOs, helps to promote a more altruistic view of the world. But another of its strengths is its neutrality, which allows it to open many doors and approach fragile people around the world. Natural disasters and wars, which are unfortunately frequent, increase the demand for humanitarian actions and the willingness of the population to dedicate some of their time to helping people in need. With the war in Ukraine, the number of Swiss families making themselves available to receive refugees has increased considerably. In times of crisis, volunteering can be a way to give meaning to one's life.

For example, the crisis caused by Covid-19 brought many people closer to volunteering, although, at the same time, some older volunteers withdrew for fear of contracting the disease.

Out of suffering and crises can come new vocations to build a better world

***Filippo Bolla**
Economist and President of the Ticino Red Cross

The ten most important interventions in 2021 in CHF million (Source: FICR)



In 2021, half of the available budget was invested in the ten countries listed in the graph.

Dunant at the theatre

Interview with Ettore Oldi* and Antonio Panice*

Over the next few pages, a few scenes from the play *Dunant. Una questione di principio.* Teatro Sociale, Brescia, 2017.

***Ettore**, how was the Dunant show born? Was it a matter of principle?*
The show was the brainchild of Marta Nocivelli, who was very active in the Brescia Red Cross as a member of the Board of Directors at the time. It was originally not supposed to feature Henry Dunant, but was meant to tell the story of how the Battle of Solferino and San Martino took place, naturally including the figure of Dunant and the birth of the Red Cross. A short performance was planned that was to be staged at a charity dinner. So, in 2016, we produced a play lasting about 20 minutes (which won the Franco Molé prize for theatre in the same year), which was well received. Again Marta Nocivelli, with the organisational support of the Brescia Red Cross Committee, chaired by Carolina David, put the idea to us of creating a full show, which was staged for the first time in December 2017 at the Teatro Sociale in Brescia. From the outset, however, interest shifted to the last years of Dunant's life, a time span that represents a very fertile "pocket of material" for a play.

Why did you decide to bring the story of this character to the stage?
Because, as I delved deeper into the events that involved him, I realised that he had had an exciting life, to say the least. The element that, for me, remains the core of the whole play is the journalist Georg Baumberger who, having found Dunant hidden and forgotten in Heiden, tried to interview him by any means. This dynamic struck a chord with me and fascinated me enough to develop the story into three acts: the first and second are set in 1895, the year Baumberger tracks Dunant down, and the third in 1901 when Dunant, in disbelief, receives the news that he has won the Nobel Peace Prize.
I imagined that Baumberger's first attempts to contact him "alarmed" Dunant somewhat, he was frightened, he even feared for his own life, suspecting that the journalist might be an emissary of the adversarial power he perceived around him... not entirely wrongly, in fact. He was certainly not a man who was in full control of his life, the circumstances surrounding his involvement justified any exaggeration of hostility that was nonetheless there. It is undeniable that he suffered injustice and a *damnatio memoriae*.

Apart from Dunant and Baumberger, the other characters are fictional people that represent the end of 19th century society. What are they like?
The other characters are Konrad and Agnes. Konrad is a 12-year-old boy who has high hopes and expectations for his life. The idea was to put him side by side with Dunant, the "grand old man", to create a conflict situation about the future. Reading the writings of Dunant, who tried in every way to change society for the better, to always find the silver lining in life's various events, I was surprised by the emergence of a very pessimistic outlook that inevitably contrasts him with the young Konrad, who sees on the horizon technological innovations, scientific discoveries and, in general, opportunities that were not even contemplated during Dunant's lifetime until just a few decades earlier.

What about Agnes?
Agnes is a caretaker at the hospice where Dunant is hospitalised, but mainly she is Konrad's mother; I needed a female figure, who played a fundamental and painful role in Dunant's life and would remain an "open question". Rather than force my hand on the relationship with Madame Kastner, I preferred to include a simulacrum of her, namely Agnes. Konrad's father died when he was still a young child, so he only ever lived with her, his mother, who would have liked to restrict him to the small world of Heiden, maybe push him to become a craftsman like his father and stay there, in a safe place.

The set design and the show itself are basic. What motivated this choice?
Because for me, the protagonists in theatre are the actors. We could have had a more elaborate set design, but my, our theatrical outlook is focused on the actors, whose humanity (not so much performance) we want to emphasise, and on the relationship established between the various characters. We are not interested in the "packaging",

but rather the relational dynamics that we try to renew, rehearsal after rehearsal; and then there is my personal passion for the "sign". As a director, I often want to be able to summarise elements of the plot or motif using a sign that can encapsulate much of the conflicts and inner life of the characters... and then take that sign, reproduce it and layer it on the stage. In this case, the sign is the cushion, which in the first two acts becomes a sort of doll with which Dunant surrounds himself to protect himself from the outside world, but also the perfect hiding place for the original acts of the first meetings of the Geneva Committee. Inside that cushion is evidence of his participation in the founding of the Red Cross; in the third act, however, the cushions turn into sandbags, they form the trench of what he expects will happen.

What kind of feedback do you get or have you had from the audience?

We often stop to talk and I must say that, so far, we have found ourselves in front of a very knowledgeable audience, because the show has been organised in contexts close to the Red Cross Committees, but we are ready to present it to a more general audience, because we have designed it to be disseminated further. In any case, faced with a play with a lot of room for invention, we had positive feedback on the accuracy of the references; the ability to recreate "fragments of life" was also much appreciated.

If you had the chance to meet Dunant today, what question would you ask him?

Dunant was able to open up and surprise people with his insights and trains of thought, so I would never pass up the chance to ask him a question. Let me just say that he was never driven by his ego, quite the contrary. What he feared more than anything else was being turned into "a holy man", into a symbol, particularly in the last years of his life, once his character had been rehabilitated in the eyes of the world.

He was a practical man and I would like to ask him about his relationship with power. The foundation of the Committee of Five really resonated with me, but they did not yet have a Convention. General Guillaume-Henri Dufour, the doctors Théodore Maunoir and Louis Appia and the lawyer Gustave Moynier were not convinced of the neutrality of wounded soldiers, but he was, so much so that he travelled all over Europe knocking on the doors of courts to speak to sovereigns and emperors, with no one behind him, to plead his case. He set out to win the trust of the powerful in a personal capacity.

Is there still room to talk to power in the same way today?

What struck me when reading Dunant's biography was the amount of failures he had to rack up in order to have this one triumph in return. How many times are we willing to miss the target to hit the bullseye?

***Antonio**, how did you prepare to play your role?*

Preparation is the most delicate phase for an actor because, when you go on stage, you have to forget everything you have studied or explored about the character. To succeed in representing the life, the relationship, the essence of the work, we actors must create a sort of roadmap (which we no longer get to look at) of impulses, all interconnected to allow the narrative to flow.

Before I immersed myself in the preparation for the play, I did not know Dunant, I knew who he was, but I did not know his life. I thought I would start by reading *A Memory of Solferino*. I have always loved the epic and, at the very start of the book, there is a real epic parade, which I have only ever found in the Iliad. These epic formulas are unusual to us today. As he went further and further onto the chaotic battlefield, I realised that Dunant had no choice but to think of such a grandiose project as the Red Cross. He and only he had that idea. The concept was revolutionary because it involved help being given to everyone, indiscriminately; he was no longer able to tolerate the atrocious suffering of the wounded, whatever army they belonged to.

Once I had focused on this, I wondered how I would interpret it, even in front of people who had studied the movement all their lives and knew its history inside out. It was not easy to carry the burden lightly. At a certain point, rehearsals took a different direction: skill and preparation were everyone's responsibility, but, on stage, our task was and is to enter that narrative flow and turn it into a "game". That first part was not easy; anxiety got the upper hand. Then, little by little, things changed. During the rehearsals, thanks to very long moments of exploration, helped by the music suggested by Ettore, we worked on looking for concrete images that would give rise to the impulses I mentioned before. Images that had to dialogue with those of the other actors and the protagonists of the story. For example, in the relationship game with Agnes, he is seeing Agnes, but also another person, Léonie Kastner. When we were on the stage for the second time, everything was easier, the show had a broader scope. The real difficulty was trying to bring Dunant's indisputable greatness to the stage.

What were (and are) your emotions when you get on stage and walk in his shoes, so to speak?

The first time, I was very anxious and felt as though there was a lot of pressure on me, lots of attention, probably because I could feel the energy of very knowledgeable people in the audience. Later, however, getting back into it was an absolute pleasure and I stopped feeling that pressure. Also because this is not the task of the actor, instead you have to bring what delivers the most impact, that is, the essence, the life of what has been built from a spark of inspiration.

You played him in the years between 1895 and 1901 when he was an old man. What process did you undertake to step into the shoes of a man so much older than yourself?
None of us is of the age of the characters we play, it was a choice made by Ettore, the director, also because, between one act and the next, the actors, who narrate, deliver speeches and we inject our own energy into it, the energy of men and women of our time, set against the period of drama, of the events that take place. We did not work much on characterisation as it is not that important, we worked a lot on energy instead. According to Ettore, having actors who physically have nothing in common with their characters is a statement of intent. What matters is the relationship, the concrete nature of what they have to say to each other and what happens between them, not the realistic portrayal of Dunant as old and ill. No, it is more about what he has to say. What is he thinking? What happens then? So, you have to have actors who are ready to react and who provoke the audience to ask questions.

What question would you ask Dunant if he were to walk through that door now?
I would ask him a very personal but also very childish question: where did he find the strength, the courage and the grit to succeed, after 1867 when he had to formally separate himself from the Red Cross, to continue in his endeavour, to support many causes even though he was no longer supported by the emblem of the Red Cross. Although he was the most idealistic of the Five, he was the one who had the most concrete visions of what was to come.
He had been criticised and mocked and the arrival of the Nobel Prize – which he donated almost entirely to charity – shook him to his core. It had been years since anyone had thought about him, and then suddenly the world noticed him again. And this, which may appear to be a jubilant ending, actually is not... it is an ending that seems to say "let us see what happens".

Ettore Oldi
Director, actor and playwright In 2017, together with Antonio Panice and Matteo Bertuetti, he founded the artistic nucleus Le mani nude, based in Brescia.

Antonio Panice
Actor, teacher and cobbler-together of words Since 2010, modesty has not prevented him from getting on and off stages (even those that are not elevated). Since January 2020, a publisher has been distributing some of his previously only oral ramblings in written form (Rime sperse).

Both collaborate with the cultural association Centopercento Teatro in Brescia.
www.centopercentoteatro.it

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edited by Alessandra Dolci in collaboration with Andrea Romano

Solferino and Castiglione, battle relief

The idea of setting up relief societies, the future Red Cross, was born in the mind of Geneva-born Henry Dunant when he saw the people of Castiglione delle Stiviere helping the wounded at the Battle of Solferino that took place on 24 June 1859 in the hills south of Lake Garda in northern Italy, on the border of the provinces of Mantua and Brescia. In his book *A Memory of Solferino*, at his aunt Sophie's house in Geneva, Henry Dunant wrote:

On 21 June, Napoleon III and Victor Emmanuel II left Brescia and on the 22nd Lonato, Castiglione and Montechiaro were occupied. On the evening of the 23rd, Napoleon, as Commander-in-Chief, had given explicit orders for the army of the King of Sardinia, which was encamped at Desenzano and formed the left wing of the Allied Army, to attack Pozzolengo at dawn the next day.
Emperor Franz Joseph's headquarters had been removed from Verona to Villafranca, and then to Valeggio, but on the evening of 23 June, orders were given to the Austrian troops to re-cross the Mincio river during the night.
So, although both sides were fully expecting that a great battle would come shortly, the encounter between the Austrians and Franco-Sardinians on Friday, 24 June 1859, was really unlooked-for.

The two armies were in a state of alarm.
More than 300,000 men stood facing each other.
The line of battle stretched five leagues.
By six o'clock, fighting had broken out everywhere.
The Austrians, from their vantage points on the hills, swept the French with artillery fire and rained on them a steady hail of shells, case- and grape-shot.
Soil and dust, raised by this immense cloud of projectiles as they thundered into the ground, mingled with the thick fumes of smoking guns and shells. Under the artillery fire hitting the ground and, redoubling their gunfire, the French launched themselves into an assault on the most difficult positions.
Meanwhile the sky had darkened. The wind broke furiously, twisting off the branches of the trees and bearing them away into space. A cold rain driven by the tempest drenched the soldiers who were already weakened by hunger and exhaustion. So, there were now the elements to fight as well as the enemy. The armies of Emperor Franz Joseph made their retreat.
The Allied army encamped on the conquered positions.
When the sun came up on the twenty-fifth, it disclosed the most dreadful sights imaginable. Bodies of men and horses covered the battlefield. Corpses were strewn over roads, ditches, ravines, thickets and fields; the approaches of Solferino were literally thick with dead.
The fields were devastated, wheat and corn lying flat on the ground, fences broken, orchards ruins; here and there were pools of blood.

The poor mothers of the fallen, in Austria, in Hungary, in Bohemia, whose grief would be immense when they found out that their children had died, in enemy countries, without care, without succour, without consolation!

Carlo Bossoli, *Battle of Solferino*, oil on canvas, 1859. National Museum of the Italian Risorgimento, Turin.

It took three days and three nights to bury the dead on the battlefield.

The quartermaster continued, for better or worse, to collect the wounded, who medicated or not, were transported on mules or in stretchers to field hospitals in the nearest villages. In these villages, churches, convents, houses, public places, streets, promenades were all turned into field hospitals.

Many sufferers were taken to Carpenedolo, Castel, Goffredo, Medole, Guidizzolo, Volta and all the surrounding places, but the largest number went to Castiglione, whither the less severely injured had managed to drag themselves, along with the few remaining forces. From Castiglione, the wounded were supposed to go on to hospitals in Brescia, Cremona, Bergamo, Milan, and other places in Lombardy, to be given regular care, or undergo any amputations that might be necessary.

But means of transport were few and they were forced to wait in Castiglione for several days. The crowding in Castiglione became something unspeakable and the town was soon transformed into a vast improvised hospital for the French and the Austrians.

On the Saturday, the number of convoys of wounded increased to such proportions that the local authorities, the townspeople and the troops left in Castiglione, were absolutely incapable of dealing with all the suffering. Tragic scenes then began to take place. There was water and food, but even so, men died of hunger and thirst; there were plenty of bandages, but there were not enough hands to dress wounds; Most of the army doctors had to go on to Cavriana, there was a shortage of medical orderlies, and at this critical time no help was to be had.

Somehow or other a voluntary service had to be organised; but this was very difficult amid such disorder.

Men of all nations lay side by side on the flagstone floors of the churches of Castiglione – Frenchmen and Arabs, Germans and Slavs. Ranged for the time being close together inside the chapels.

Before long a group of volunteer helpers was formed. I sought to organise as best I could relief in the quarters where it seemed to be most lacking, and I adopted in particular one of the Castiglione churches, the Chiesa Maggiore. About five hundred soldiers were piled up on the straw, and a hundred more lay outside on the public square in front of the church.

The boys of the neighbourhood ran back and forth between the churches and the nearest fountains with buckets, canteens and watering pots. The distribution of water was followed by issues of soup and beef-tea, which the quartermaster's services were obliged to make in enormous quantities.

But the women of Castiglione, seeing that I made no distinction between nationalities, followed my example, showing the same kindness to all these men whose origins were so different, and all of whom were foreigners to them. "Tutti fratelli", they repeated feelingly.

All honour to these compassionate women, to these girls of Castiglione! Loving, modest, they took no account of hardship, disgust or sacrifice, nothing stopped them, exhausted or discouraged them.

For the first week after the battle, wounded men, of whom the doctors said under their breath, shaking their heads as they passed their beds: "There is no more to be done," they received hardly any care, and were simply left to die. And this indeed was quite natural, seeing how few orderlies there were to handle the enormous number of wounded.
It is, indeed, excessively distressing to realise that you can never do more than help those who are just before you because... because there are too many of them; and it is equally distressing for you are stopped by one man begging for help, then by another, held up at every step by the crowd of poor wretches who press before and about you.

But why have I told of all these scenes of pain and distress, and perhaps aroused painful emotions in my readers? Why have I lingered with seeming complacency over lamentable pictures, tracing their details with what may appear desperate fidelity? It is a natural question. Perhaps I might answer it by another: Would it not be possible, in time of peace and quiet, to form relief societies for the purpose of having care given to the wounded in wartime by volunteers, without distinguishing between nationalities?

That is why this book was written.

Societies of this kind, once formed and their permanent existence assured, would always be organised and ready for the possibility of war.

These societies could, precisely because of their permanent character, offer great services in times of epidemics, floods, major fires and other unforeseen catastrophes: the humanitarian thrust at their base would make them act in this way on every occasion when their action might be needed.

The committees would appeal to everybody who, for sincerely philanthropic motives, would undertake to devote himself for the time to this charitable work, under the direction of experienced doctors, by bringing aid and relief to the wounded on the battlefields, and then in ambulances and hospitals.

Spontaneous devotion of this kind is more easily to be found than one is inclined to think. There are plenty of people who would certainly be prepared to undertake such an eminently philanthropic task. In this age, which is often called selfish and cold, what an attraction it would be for noble and compassionate hearts to confront the same dangers as the warrior, of their own free will, in a spirit of peace, for a purpose of comfort.

And do not these considerations alone constitute more than adequate reason for taking precautions against surprise?

Reduction and adaptation from A Memory of Solferino, *taken from Henry Dunant's manuscript published in 1902 (seventh edition). The original is kept in the University Library of Geneva.*

UN SOUVENIR

DE

SOLFERINO

PAR

J. HENRY DUNANT

Cinquième Edition

GENÈVE
IMPRIMERIE DE JULES-Gᵉ FICK
1863

Front cover of *Un Souvenir de Solférino (A Memory of Solferino)*, J.G. Fick, Geneva, 1863 (third edition).

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