

# IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

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## Norway

The Norwegian Red Cross invited to Oslo, for its Centenary celebration, representatives of the Red Cross international institutions and also the Chairmen and Secretaries-General of the Swedish, Danish, Finnish and Icelandic National Societies. The ICRC was represented by its Vice-President, Mr. Hans Bachmann, and the League by its Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Senedu Gabru, of the Ethiopian Red Cross.

The ceremony commemorating the foundation of the Norwegian Red Cross took place at Oslo University on September 22, 1965 ; it was presided over by H.M. King Olav V and H.R.H. Princess Astrid Mrs. Ferner<sup>1</sup>. Members of the Junior Red Cross, bearing Red Cross flags, formed a guard of honour for the dignitaries attending the ceremony. Before the rostrum, nurses had taken up their stand.

The President of the National Society, Mr. Ulf Styren, delivered the opening speech, followed by Professor Edvard Hambro, Vice-President of the National Society, who recalled the start and development of the Red Cross movement in Norway and internationally. He concluded his speech :

The Red Cross represents brotherhood in international collaboration. Human beings meet here in confidence and solidarity. National considerations or prestige do not count. The only important task is to save life and health... The Red Cross, although it was started in war, is today the strongest force against war. The Red Cross stands committed to the belief that international collaboration across all frontiers in the service of charity is a most important means to eradicate the hatred, the suspicion and the fear which contain in themselves the seed of war. That is why we claim that the Red Cross is not only an organization but a way of life. Those men and women who represent the Red Cross in the inter-

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate* : H. M. King Olav V, arriving at the University of Oslo.  
Professor E. Hambro delivering an address at the official ceremony.

national sphere do not contend with political difficulties. They do not represent States or Governments. They meet in friendship and confidence because they feel that the Red Cross idea is to rise above strife and disputes. They feel that they contribute to building the world of the future based on peace and understanding. They are grateful because they are allowed to work for brotherhood and the spirit "love thy neighbour as thyself" across national boundaries. They know that the only real progress is progress in charity and in human solidarity. Our new motto is: "Per humanitatem ad pacem"!

Finally Mr. Einar Gerhardson, Prime Minister, Mrs. Gabru and Mr. A.E. Martola, in turn, expressed the congratulations and good wishes of the Norwegian Government, the League of Red Cross Societies and the Scandinavian Red Cross Societies.

The ceremony began with a performance of Benjamin Britten's "Cantata Misericordium" by the Philharmonic Orchestra and the Oslo Choir. In the afternoon a reception was given at the Royal Palace, attended by the foreign guests and more than 500 Red Cross delegates from all over the country. In the evening, at the Oslo castle, during an official dinner, Mr. Hans Bachmann conveyed the congratulations and good wishes of the ICRC.

He recalled the important rôle played by the Norwegian Red Cross, one of the first on the international scene to give aid to sister societies in territory where war was being waged. It was, in fact, as early as 1870 that the Oslo central committee gave appreciable material assistance to the International Committee's Basle agency, which was entrusted with caring for victims of the Franco-Prussian War. Mr. Bachmann went on to say:

... How could we in Genève, at the very source of the Red Cross movement, fail to share your rejoicing at the centenary of such an active National Society as the Norwegian Red Cross? Nothing was of greater concern to Henry Dunant than the setting up of national relief societies to prepare in peace-time the reserve of medical personnel who, in time of war, would bring help to the wounded on the battle-field, in contrast to the wounded abandoned at Solferino.

Dunant could not foresee the favourable development which National Societies have known, nor the essential rôle they play today in many countries in the every-day life of the people, by training nurses, blood collection, dedication to medical services and ever-ready help wherever needed in disasters, accidents and epidemics.

Although the Norwegian Red Cross is so useful that the country would not relinquish it, it has not forgotten its original aim: assistance to the



H. M. King Olav V, accompanied by Princess Astrid Mrs. Ferner, arriving at the University of Oslo. (Behind the King, on left, Mr. Ulf Styren, President of the National Society.)

## CENTENARY OF THE NORWEGIAN RED CROSS

Mr. Edvard Hambro, Vice-President, delivering an address at the official ceremony.



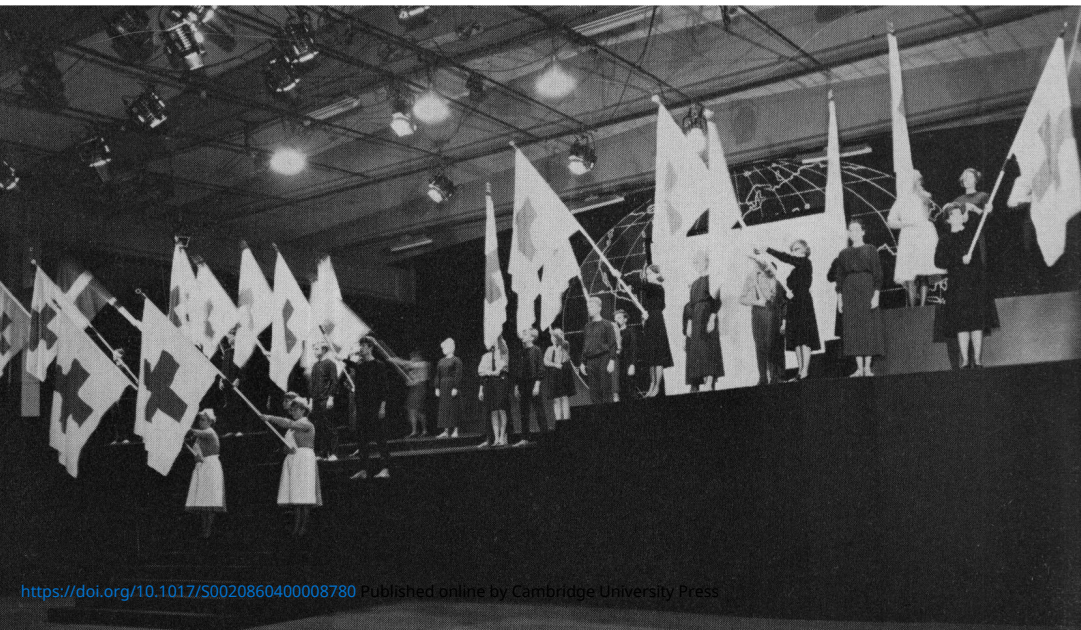




Official ceremony at the Town Hall, Stockholm.

## CENTENARY OF THE SWEDISH RED CROSS

Procession of flags closing the display.



victims of war and conflict. Whenever the ICRC launches an appeal for international aid, this Society is among the first to respond.

... Allow me to quote the message which, in 1888, on the occasion of the twentyfifth anniversary of the Norwegian Red Cross, its President Mr. Selmer, and its Secretary Mr. Peter Burg, had inserted in the memorial published by the ICRC to commemorate that event :

“ Apart from all the destruction caused by war, there is something else which is rampant : the fear and hate engendered in human hearts, leaving wounds sometimes no less profound than those left by the sword. The pain of these wounds too must be eased by the Red Cross : in the midst of the most violent cataclysms of human folly, the Red Cross exerts its beneficent influence : in the heat of slaughter and hatred, it speaks the gentle yet impelling language of human fellowship ; a balm to ire, a check to hate. ”

These words, whilst redolent of the pathos of the style of the times, are striking ; they are as valid now as ever they were. Let us not despair, let us be of good courage and resolute in order to set the example by our actions in the field of mutual assistance. Let us prove our respect for mankind, particularly in suffering, and of love for our fellowmen as exemplified in the Gospel by the parable of the Good Samaritan.

On the same day, a solemn service was held in Oslo cathedral. Several moving ceremonies took place in the course of the morning : the President of the National Society, Mr. Ulf Styren, accompanied by the Secretary-General, Mr. Mathiesen, laid wreaths on the graves of their predecessors and of Mr. Frederik Stang, the Norwegian Society's founder, as well as on the memorial to the victims of the Second World War and on the Fridtjof Nansen monument.

Thus the past and the present were linked on this day, memorable for the noble and constant dignity of the occasion, and it was with pride and confidence, conscious of the progress achieved over the century, that the Norwegian Red Cross was able to look to the future.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In its May 1965 issue, the *International Review* had already mentioned the considerable achievements of the Norwegian Red Cross, which had taken advantage of its centenary year for a nation-wide recruitment drive. As a result, the Norwegian National Society was able to announce with pride that on September 22, 1965, its membership had reached 315,203.