

IN THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT WORLD

THE 125th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

On 9 February 1863, at a meeting of the Geneva Public Welfare Society (Société genevoise d'Utilité publique), a benevolent society chaired by Gustave Moynier, a committee composed of Henry Dunant, Louis Appia, General Guillaume-Henri Dufour, Théodore Maunoir and Gustave Moynier was appointed to give effect to the conclusions of Henry Dunant's book A Memory of Solferino, and particularly his call for "the creation of a body of voluntary nurses attached to armies in the field".

This date has gone down to history, as the committee laid the foundations of what was to become on 17 February 1863 the International Committee for Relief to the Wounded (Comité international de secours aux blessés) and later the International Committee of the Red Cross. As Gustave Moynier wrote: "The date of 9 February 1863... marks the true starting point of the Red Cross".

To celebrate the 125th anniversary of this event, on 9 February 1988 a commemorative plaque was placed on the former "Casino de Genève", where the Committee of Five came into being on 9 February 1863. Several notables spoke at the unveiling ceremony; they were Mr. Pierre Wellhauser, President of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, Mr. Claude Haegi, Mayor of the City of Geneva, Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mrs. Catherine Santschi, President of the Geneva Public Welfare Society, and Mr. Roger Durand, President of the Henry Dunant Society.

The Review is happy to publish below the address by the President of the ICRC, entitled, "A tribute to the pioneers of the International Committee of the Red Cross".

The Henry Dunant Society, the ICRC and the Geneva Public Welfare Society have jointly published a souvenir brochure containing all the speeches and articles related to this event.

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