

Basle welcomes Berlin

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In September 1960 the Swiss Red Cross sent a medical team of about twenty people to the Congo, where a tremendous amount of help has been given not only to the sick, but also in maternity and welfare and in the training of Congolese nurses. Since 1960, 120 Swiss have been taking part in this action.

The annual report of the Swiss Red Cross for 1962 showed a turnover of Fr.9,637,000. The collection made every year in May had resulted in over 1½ million francs. There were legacies and gifts and a federal subsidy of Fr.100,000 towards ordinary expenditure and another of Fr.120,000 for the training of nursing personnel.

250 full-time workers were employed in 1962. 2,277 men and 5,255 women worked in the voluntary detachments, and the membership reached a total of 62,000.

And so in 1963, one hundred years after the historic meeting of the five men in Geneva, the principles of the Red Cross — impartial relief to victims of war and disaster — are acknowledged and honoured all over the world and practised by 156 million individual members of ninety-three national societies under the flags of the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, and the Red Sun and Lion. On all continents, these organizations strive to prevent or lessen human suffering in almost all its forms.

BASLE WELCOMES BERLIN

From 3rd to 8th May "Berlin Days" were held in Basle to repay to Berlin the courtesy of having welcomed Basle in March of last year. The slogan was "Basle greets Berlin", and a number of special functions, concerts and exhibitions took place. There was a gala concert by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Their interpretation of Beethoven's Second Symphony and Dvorak's Fourth Symphony caused the audience to give frenetic applause. An exhibition of photos and tables on Berlin's history, the present lay-out and on modern dwellings and industrial buildings was held at the "Gewerbemuseum". The director of the famous Berlin Zoological Gardens presented an African stork (Dattelstorch) to the Basle Zoo, and there was a football match between the two cities, Basle winning 2—0.

At the Kasino there was a "Bunter Abend", genuine Berlin entertainment mixed with the best of Basle humour — both witty and aggressive. Press conferences and meetings on political and economic questions were organised. Church groups met and the Basle and Berlin students had lively discussion groups on the position of the free Berlin University, as well as on legal, health and literary subjects. Berlin pastors preached from Basle pulpits. Bookshops exhibited just about everything ever written on Berlin or by Berliners.

Everywhere the black Berlin bear, emblem of the great German city, was to be seen on its white background bordered in red. 195 of them were put up between the Swiss and the Basle flags in the main streets, and shop-windows and trams were gaily decorated with thousands more. Large crowds welcomed the various high officials who had travelled to Basle, none more enthusiastically than Herr Willy Brandt, the popular Mayor of Berlin. Two thousand people collected at the large festival hall of the "Mustermesse", where the Mayor spoke in a fascinating manner on "Berlin — a European Task". His visit brought to a close a successful week which has consolidated the friendship between the two cities and strengthened the relationship with a town which has become a symbol of European spirit and freedom.

(A.T.S. and "Basler Nachrichten".)

The French philosopher, François Mauriac, usually pessimistic, has said "Because there is Red Cross, there is hope." Two events have shown over the past months that this may become an important factor in the establishment of peace. In Berlin in September last year the Red Cross managed to make both sides accept responsibility and to ensure that the Geneva Convention would be kept not only *de jure* but also *de facto*. The negotiations proved most helpful in furthering understanding and security and are very much in the interests of peace.

And finally, in the Cuba crisis, the Red Cross was shown great confidence by all parties concerned, the United Nations, U.S.A. and Cuba. Its former President, Dr. P. Ruegger, was asked to go to New York to negotiate. The Red Cross had a task in this which surpassed the conventional and traditional framework. It proved that it was determined not only to mitigate the sufferings of modern warfare but to do its utmost to prevent it.

So the Red Cross can celebrate its Centenary, in Switzerland and all over the world, in a spirit of mutual assistance and understanding with no strings attached, in which all men of good will can participate.

(Based on "Weltschweizer" of the A.S.S., Berne, "Swiss American"; "Switzerland Calling"; S.N.T.O. and A.T.S.)

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