

Henry Dunant, Red on the Cross: world première
Patrick Jaquin, Communications Service, EBU

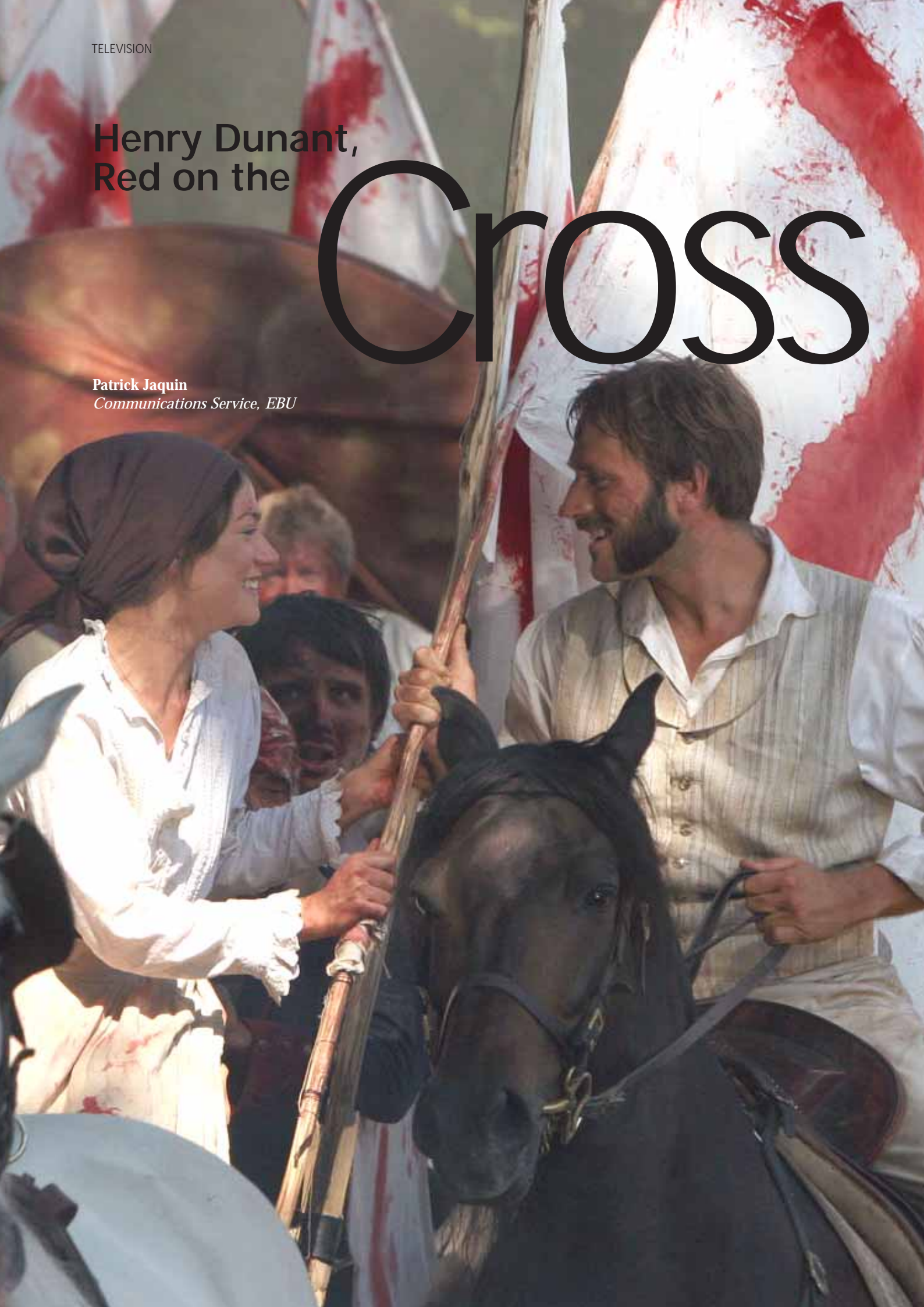


TELEVISION

Henry Dunant,
Red on the

Cross

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Communications Service, EBU



World première on 10 March 2006 in Geneva.

Henry Dunant, Red on the Cross will be presented by the Télévision Suisse Romande (TSR) and the EBU at the opening of the 4th International Film Festival on Human Rights.

It is the first TV movie that portrays Henry Dunant's quest which resulted in the founding of the Red Cross.

Henry Dunant, Red on the Cross is a major international coproduction between: Dune and France 2 (France), Bohemian Films and Télévision Suisse Romande (Switzerland), Pale Blue Productions (Austria), ENTV (Algeria), ARTE (France/Germany), and 18 public service broadcasters: BNT (Bulgaria), ERT (Greece), ETV (Estonia), LRT (Lithuania), MTV (Hungary), NRK (Norway), ORF (Austria), RUV (Iceland), RTBF and VRT (Belgium), RTP (Portugal), RTVSLO (Slovenia), SBS (Australia), STV (Slovakia), Teleac/NOT (Netherlands), TVE (Spain), TVP (Poland) and YLE (Finland).

It has received the support of the Centre national de la Cinématographie (France), Office Fédéral de la Culture, Teleproduction Fonds, State and City of Geneva, Fonds Regio (Switzerland), RTR-Fernsehfilmförderung, Filmfonds Vienna, CineStyria (Austria) and the MEDIA programme of the European Union.

Valuable contribution

The EBU believes that this film arrives at an opportune moment, showing as it does the valuable role of public service broadcasters in the creation and coproduction of significant works. "The EBU is delighted to take

an active part in the first large-scale European cooperation," emphasized the EBU secretary general Jean Réveillon in June 2005.

Project background

In 2002 a TV film project on the life of Henry Dunant proposed by the TSR to its French partner Dune (Eve Vercel) interests France 2 which decides to join the project. This is the start of a new epic. In 2003 France 2 and Dune sign a development contract commissioning Claude-Michel Rome to write a first scenario.

The following year the project, supported by TSR and France 2, is presented by Dune to the EBU, which immediately starts pre-sales of the film to broadcasters. In November, Bohemian Films (André Martin) joins TSR as a coproducer for Switzerland. In December, the EBU introduces Pale Blue Productions (Siggi Borutta and Knut Ogris) to Dune and TSR. Pale Blue Productions joins the coproduction.

In March 2005 Dominique Othenin-Girard joins the project as film director. In July, the Algerian national television (ENTV) joins the project as a coproducer.

The EBU pre-sells the film to 20 other public service broadcasters.

The script written by Claude-Michel Rome, based on an idea of Claire Level, was adapted and directed for the screen by Dominique Othenin-Girard. The film takes place during the 18 months that precede the creation of the Red Cross. It is an epic film, inspired by actual events, depicted in the same spirit and exaltation that inspired Henry Dunant's tireless passion.

Shooting started on 29 August 2005 in Austria at Bad Radkersburg with the scenes of Dunant's arrival on the battlefields in Solferino (in 1859) and the discovery of the dispensary unit

in Castiglione that so shocked Henry Dunant.

Production then moves to Geneva (Switzerland) where Dunant's project became reality. The film sets are built in the historical centre.

Algerie, Setif, is the final destination for the filming of the opening scenes of the film: Henry Dunant, sent from Geneva for his first job, is deeply involved in improving the living conditions of the local population. For support, Dunant decides to go directly to the emperor, Napoleon III, who is at war against the Austrians on the battlefield of Solferino.

Change the world

Today, there is not a single country, not a sole region on our entire planet, where the Red Cross remains unknown. But what do we know of its founder, Henry Dunant? It is difficult to imagine the intense combat that one man undertook, in the middle of the nineteenth century, to convince governments to support a rescue company to care for all the soldiers injured on their battlefields; to visit prisoners; and to provide for refugees.

It is difficult to imagine the strength of conviction that was necessary to overcome the obstacles of that era,

and to address, at long last, human suffering.

Sole defender of his cause, Dunant won his battle by the sheer force of his unique convictions. He was a modern hero, an idealist and a romantic obsessed by his work, to the point of breaking the hearts of the two women who loved him and, each in their own way, supported his cause. Manipulated by obscure political forces beyond his understanding, Henry Dunant nevertheless opened the doors of world governments and he won the admiration of the world. But Henry Dunant was made to pay dearly for his modern ideas, for his humanitarianism.

VIPs

The film will be screened in the presence of Micheline Calmy-Rey, Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; Louise Arbour, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Vanessa Redgrave, actress and president of the jury; Jakob Kellenberger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross; René Rhinow, President of the Swiss Red Cross; Gilles Marchand, Director of Télévision Suisse Romande; Patrick de Carolis, President of France Télévisions; Jean Réveillon, EBU Secretary General;

Léo Kaneman, Festival Director; Dominique Othenin-Girard, the director; and the actors, technicians and producers who worked on the film.

A press screening will also take place on the same day at 1100 at the Télévision Suisse Romande, 20, Quai Ernest-Ansermet, Genève, room Michel Soutter.

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Another screening reserved for the European Parliament will take place on 19 April 2006 at 2030, Studios Flagey – Studio 4, Place Flagey, Brussels.

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- 1) *Dispensary of Castiglione (Italy)*
- 2) *Émilie Dequenne*
- 3) *Tom Novembre and Thomas Jouannet*
- 4) *Michel Galabru*
- 5) *Noémie Kocher*
- 6) *Jean-François Balmer*
- 7) *Dominique Othenin-Girard*

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Henry Dunant

Genre: TV fiction shot in High Definition
Format: 90 minutes, Dolby Surround Sound

Filmed: Summer 2005

Delivery: Beginning of 2006

Languages: original French, dubbed in Arabic, English, German, Italian, Spanish, subtitled in 20 other languages

Production companies: Dune (France),

Pale Blue Productions (Austria),

Bohemian Films (Switzerland)

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