

THE ETERNAL FIGHT

THIS TAPE WAS TRANSFERED FROM
A 16MM FILM ORIGINAL BY
COLORLAB FOR THE
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE
OCTOBER 2005
NLM CALL NUMBER
HF 0569

THE UNITED NATIONS FILM BOARD
Presents

THE ETERNAL FIGHT

Produced by
MADELEINE CARROL FILMS

Photographed and Directed by
VICTOR VICAS

Production Supervision and Editing:
MICHAEL ALEXANDER

Research:
MYRIA LOEWY

Language Adaptation
INTERNATIONAL MOVIE PRODUCERS' SERVICE

Produced under the Direction of:
FILMS AND VISUAL INFORMATION
DIVISION
UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INFORMATION

Deliver us, deliver us from the plague, from hunger, from war. This has been the cry of mankind throughout all time. Blinded by ignorance, filled with terror, he lashed out against the black plague with witchcraft, against typhus with superstition. And so, in maddened efforts to stem the terrifying ravages of epidemics, prejudice and intolerance too often resulted in cruel and vicious treatment of those suffering from contagious diseases.

Despite the raging panic of ignorance, the lurking danger of contagion, scientists of many nations went to work. Painfully, they labored to nurse the flickering light of research into a broad searchlight of knowledge, using every means of communication to share their findings with each other.

It was the Dutchman, Leeuwenhoek, whose research helped provide scientists everywhere with the new and powerful vision of the microscope. Now at last the hidden enemy could be examined under the probing searchlight of science. The hunt was on for contagious diseases and their causes, wherever they existed.

Spallanzani in Italy, pioneered the work on the origins and growth of microscopic organisms. He proved that fermentation did not take place in sealed containers, but occurred only through contact with the microorganisms present in the air.

Jenner in England, painstakingly evolved the basic principles of vaccination. And a little British girl was the first to wince at the sting of a vaccinating needle.

And Pasteur in France. His was the brilliant research that resulted in the discovery of the causes of contagious diseases. He proved that microbes were at the root of such diseases and thus, medical science marched forward, bringing light where once there had been darkness, hope where once there had been despair.

And in Germany, Koch identified and isolated the Koch bacillus and the dreaded germ of cholera.

Across the sea in America, Walter Reed and his colleagues sought to prove that the mosquito was the sole transmitter of yellow fever. They offered their lives and won. And so the old prejudices were smashed, and the free exchange of information forged modern weapons to strike the ancient diseases of mankind.

Then, in the course of the nineteenth century, the world underwent a striking change, gave birth to the industrial revolution, transformed man's way of life. Men, women and children crowded into cities became parts of a vast machine. Deprived of sun and fresh nourishment of the country, men's bodies rusted, became more vulnerable to contagion.

New means of transportation brought the world tight and close together, making it one tremendous and congested city.

From a disease-infected zone the traveler now became unwittingly a carrier of deadly germs. Wherever he went, the germs stayed and spread.

CHOLERA!!

Epidemics break out far from the known infected areas. Country to country, continent to continent, a deadly cargo of microbes is transported, menacing on a vast scale the very existence of humanity.

EPIDEMIE DE CHOLERA ATTEINT PARIS!!

IN HAMBURG STERBEN TAUSENDE AN CHOLERA

CHOLERA EPIDEMIC IN NEW YORK!

(Russian title)

Mass infection and epidemics are a threat to every city, to every nation. Scientific and medical work on a local scale are no longer enough. Thus in common defense, nations joined in international agreement in the battle against epidemics. Medical agreements and protective measures are formulated, quarantine measures extended, frontier control set up. When an epidemic strikes, that country is subjected to special restrictive measures, suspected carriers are isolated. And step by step, the dangers of contagion grow less and less.

War. The first Great World War, like all wars, sucking mankind down to misery and death. And together with war, pestilence and disease. Epidemics wreck havoc greater than war, wipe out civilian populations. The problem is everywhere and must be dealt with internationally.

A network of medical information is swiftly organized, through radio, newspapers, pamphlets, bulletins. The League of Nations spreads information, that all may fight the contagion of diseases.

SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS LEAGUE OF NATIONS
LEXIQUE POLYGLOTTE
DES MALADIES CONTAGIEUSES

BULLETIN OF THE HEALTH ORGANISATION
BIOLOGICAL STANDARDISATION
UNIFICATION OF PHARMACOPŒIAS

In Geneva, this immense storehouse of information becomes part of the arsenal of embattled doctors and scientists everywhere. Health reports are received, checked, filed, collated and sent out again, ready for use, because now trains are entering and leaving stations.

Ships leave and dock at foreign ports. Millions live, work and suffer. For the sailor it's always hard to say good bye, harder still when your wife is sick burning with fever, and you have to pull anchor. "There's nothing to worry about", you say. "She'll be alright in a couple of days". Besides, you need the job. But neither of you suspect... typhus, the black plague. And so, good bye. Both have become carriers of death-dealing germs. Germs that will blast the lives of shipmates. Germs travelling across seas to start a terrible epidemic at any moment, any place.

Epidemics start any time, any place, wherever you are, wherever she is now in a hospital. There are no doubts, it is contagious. Immediate action, a life at stake and those she might infect, or has already infected. Who is she? Her friends? Her kinfolk? Send the alert! Everywhere! To every nation, to every port, in every language! Easy enough to locate all ships which left the area before the outbreak. Message to all ships at sea. The quarantine service must know the health condition aboard ships at every port, every day, almost every moment. For epidemics strike any time, any place, wherever you are.

1914
QUARANTINE LABORATORY
PORT OF NEW YORK

HEALTH OFFICER OF THE PORT OF NEW YORK
JOSEPH J. O'CONNEL M.D.
FIRST DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER WILLIAM F. MATTHEWS M.D.

SECOND DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER FRANCIS C. CLARK M.D.

A protective mechanism is set in motion. The quarantine service issues the necessary orders to the ship for investigation and control. The ship is stopped, the sick man brought ashore. All others are fully protected by inoculation.

MARINE HOSPITAL
U.S.
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

And now the ship is thoroughly disinfected. Rats are hunted out of their hiding places. Cyanide gas does the trick. Teams of specialists fumigate the boat from stem to stern, from staterooms to the hold, everything completely disinfected, before the ship is able to sail on in safety.

Such cooperation protects mankind from recurring epidemics. International cooperation provides immediate actions to smash a swift-striking enemy.

Today, there are no distances. Today, the aeroplane links continents as trains link cities. Today, the peoples of the world are one people, joined by wings over the globe.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

Today, people of all races, of every level, move from country to country in a matter of hours.

UNITED STATES
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
QUARANTINE INSPECTION

Today, vital medical control is established around the modern points of international exchange.

CHOLERA
INDIA: FOR THE WEEK ENDED MARCH 27TH, 306 CASES WERE REPORTED IN CALCUTTA.

PLAGUE
(...)

The airports. The network of health information and services has been extended here from the seaport organization.

But is this sufficient? How long does it take before a potential epidemic can be detected?

CARRACAS
LONDON
BUENOS AIRES
SAN JUAN
BERMUDA
BUENOS AIRES

LISBON

From one continent to another, only a few hours flying time. But cholera takes longer to show itself. And yellow fever three to six days. And the incubation period of smallpox from seven to sixteen days.

Passengers in a modern plane look perfectly healthy. They are. But how do we know? That little girl, when she got the doll, did she receive germs as well? Some passengers may be germs carriers, perhaps already in the incubation stage. They'll reach their destination before any symptoms show. The quarantine service can't keep every plane and passenger grounded for several days to effect thorough medical control. Today, that system of defense is no longer enough. Today, epidemics must be crushed at the very source.

Unfortunately, in some countries, contagious diseases exist in an endemic stage. That is, permanently. India for instance has certain areas that are always infected with cholera. This plague can extend to Western Europe.

In Africa, some forms of malaria still rage, germs that might easily be transmitted to South America. And cholera in Japan could strike suddenly at the West Coast of the United States.

Permanently infected zones are localized, but may cover large areas of territory, sometimes entire continents. Modern transport poses new dangers of complete universal contagion. The struggle against epidemics is a global one, for the danger of death is worldwide.

Then, what is the answer?

WE THE PEOPLES NATIONS UNIES

Within the framework of the United Nations, a new organization exists to promote the welfare of all people. The World Health Organization. In its first assembly, July 1948, Director-General Dr. Chisholm declared that this organization was physically prepared to raise the health level of all people, and to forever destroy the human afflictions of malaria, cholera, tuberculosis and syphilis. The prime objective of the World Health Organization is the fight against disease on a global scale. The representatives of nearly every nation have signed the great Charter of Health. This means an organization with the authority and means to act. Epidemics, no matter what part of the world they may infect are a potential danger to all other nations. The World Health Organization will make full use of every existing means: education, prevention, cure. All peoples of every race and belief will be helped by doctors from all races and nations. A tremendous movement of world solidarity is now born. Inoculation already widely used will be extended. Millions of people will be given prophylactic injections. A worldwide system of medical control will exist everywhere.

Enormous quantities of serums, vaccines, new and powerful drugs such as penicillin and sulfanilamides are already being manufactured at increasingly lower cost. Crates of ampoules are shipped to all parts of the world, ready for emergency measures.

RUSSIAN JOURNALS

A constant flow of up-to-date information from every nation, in every tongue now makes it possible to apply the latest discoveries of modern medicine.

Cholera broke out in Egypt, shortly before the first assembly meeting of the World Health Organization. The first cases were instantly reported. And from Cairo, every nation was immediately alerted.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA
DENMARK
EGYPT

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
INTERIM COMMISSION

New York was then the clearinghouse for the incoming orders for vaccines and equipment needed to fight the epidemic that was menacing Egypt. Dr. Calderon issued orders. How about sulfadiazine, serums, needles, syringes, anything else? Anything. Don't worry about the payment. The World Health Organization will pay. Let's get going fast. The answer was swift from France, China, Indochina, the Soviet Union and the United States. Vaccines were shipped by the fastest means. Planes flew the precious fluid into Egypt. They brought thousands of needles, syringes, other indispensable instruments. In record time, the Egyptian government had the entire population immunized, the sick put into isolation wards, and the infected areas methodically disinfected. The epidemic was checked, and within three months completely eradicated from Egypt. In the eternal battle, a struggle has been won, won by international cooperation. But there is yet a tremendous task before us, a task for all peoples, by all peoples. The lives of these little children too must be saved, that the light of hope may revive the courage of those who suffer, that mothers might yet smile in a new world.

THE END

FROM THE FILM LIBRARY
OF THE
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Transcript: Timothée Lainé