

**THE HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
WILL SOON BE PUBLISHED**

The action first of all. Since its foundation a hundred years ago, the International Committee has continuously brought relief to war victims. To fulfil this particular vocation, it has sent delegates all over the world, who have intervened, frequently at great personal risk, between the armed and the unarmed, detainer and detainee, combatant and wounded, the strong and the weak.

In order to carry out its action more effectively and to ensure its smooth running, the Committee has, right from the outset, felt the need to fix and define its doctrine which belongs to the whole of the Red Cross. Gustave Moynier, its first President, laid the foundations, which Max Huber and then Jean Pictet have built upon. What they have provided is an instrument of work, a kind of formula of action, a pledge of endurance.

But the Committee has never rested on its laurels. Only now, with its Centenary approaching, has it realized that its history still remains to be written.

It is worth writing and not only because it throws light on the history of all the National Societies, and all the other Red Cross institutions, but because the history of the Committee is also a particular approach to the whole of history. It begins with *A Memory of Solferino*. This book caused a sensation because it showed war in an unusual light. It depicted the other side of war, the dark and unknown side.

Since Solferino and the Italian Campaign of 1859, innumerable conflicts have arisen. Almost without interruption the International Committee has carried on a work to which millions of men owe their lives without knowing it. The ICRC is in fact a silent witness and a discreet actor. In preparing to open its archives, it is perhaps departing somewhat from a course of conduct from which it has rarely swerved. But in the interest of the victims of war, it has a

duty not only to make itself better known, but to give a perpetual reminder of what war is, viewed from close quarters.

The rôle of the Committee has been immense in the field of the law of war, of which it is the most fruitful source. Through the Geneva Conventions, it is also its influence which makes itself felt, some of its spirit which penetrates the closed world of barbed wire and watch towers. This action through law holds a large place in the history which the Committee is going to make available to what it hopes will be a large public.

Under the general title *History of the International Committee of the Red Cross*, a first volume will appear in the month of July, edited by "Plon" in Paris. A German edition, published by "Les Editions générales", Geneva, with the collaboration of the *Nouvelle Gazette* of Zurich, will appear at the end of October. Still further translations are anticipated.

According to estimates, the second volume will appear under the same conditions in 1965. The idea of publishing a supplementary volume of illustrations benefiting from the enormous amount of iconographic documentation collected for the Centenary, is in the process of being studied.

And finally, we would like to mention that the editing of this work has been entrusted to Mr. Pierre Boissier, delegate of the ICRC, and author of already a great number of studies on the rules of war.