

B O O K S

NEUTRALITÄT UND VOLKERGEMEINSCHAFT ¹

by

Dr. HANS HAUG

We have already had the opportunity of mentioning in the *International Review*, the essay by Mr. Hans Haug, Doctor of laws, external lecturer at the Saint-Gall University of Commerce and Secretary General of the Swiss Red Cross, on the rôle of the Protecting Power for the benefit of victims of war.

This same subject is systematically developed in the third part of a work of nearly 200 pages which Mr. Haug has just brought out, on neutrality in international society.

Since the idea of neutrality is closely linked with the principles of the Red Cross, our readers will be interested to refer to the first and second parts of the work in which the author develops the theme of the rights and duties of neutral powers, the idea of permanent neutrality and the rôle of neutral States in the international community.

But it is first and foremost the third part, dealing with the rôle of the Protecting Power, which will interest the readers of our Review by reason of its belonging to the law of Geneva.

In the first chapter, Mr. Haug sets out the rôle of the neutral State as a Protecting Power, the development, the legal position and the duties which this protection implies, as well as the special rôle of Switzerland as a Protecting Power during the Second World War.

The second chapter is entitled "Neutrality and Humanity". It shows the services rendered by the neutral State as a land of refuge, its humanitarian activities within its own frontiers and it dwells particularly on the activity of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

¹ Polygraphischer Verlag AG, Zurich-Saint-Gall, 1962.

It recalls that, already during the First World War, the International Committee, basing itself on the Hague Convention, had been able to carry through a considerable action on behalf of prisoners of war. As the principal results of this humanitarian action were incorporated in the law of Geneva by virtue of the Convention of July 27, 1929, formulating the status of prisoners of war, the International Committee was even better equipped to extend its humanitarian work during the Second World War.

In certain cases, the International Committee was in a position to intervene on behalf of some of the civilian internees which once again was a most useful experience. It was as a direct result of this, that it was possible to define the rules of internment in the IVth Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949, relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war.

In his book, Mr. Haug lays particular stress on the fact that almost every State, big or small, has ratified the four Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, giving increased authority to the International Committee, which is mentioned many times in these Conventions. This authority is also based on tradition, and particularly on the Committee's universally recognized independence and impartiality.

Therefore, concludes Mr. Haug, tribute should be paid to this universal assent which " through States, Armies, Parties and during successive developments in world history, seeks and recognizes the man, everywhere the same, in his anguish and in his suffering, a creature of God, one of our brothers whom we must aid."

The third and last chapter " Neutrality and Peace " shows that perpetual neutrality is a factor in peace and the author lays stress on the good offices of neutral States.

No one is better qualified than Mr. Haug to deal with this important subject. He has done so in the most thorough manner and his text is particularly instructive and useful, not only for members of the Red Cross, but for lawyers and a public anxious to know something about the current development of international humanitarian law.

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