

LA COOPÉRATION INTERNATIONALE ET NOUS¹

by

LOUIS VERNIERS

The Union of International Associations—the international organization responsible for the classification, study and promotion of international relations, whose Secretariat is in Brussels—has just published a booklet whose author is no stranger to the Red Cross world since among the numerous functions which he holds in various international organizations must be included that of adviser for education and youth problems to the League of Red Cross Societies. This goes to prove Mr. Louis Verniers' interest in everything concerning the future of mankind and it is this interest which stimulates the work that we should like to present to our readers.

But in order to prepare the future, the past must be known, brought close to us and its lesson understood ; this study of about 100 pages therefore opens with a brief historical introduction on the development of mankind from its origins until the present day. We see the notion of international co-operation gradually evolving and taking shape. Conceding its due place to private initiative, Mr. Verniers then mentions, first of all, the creation of the Anti-Slavery Society (1823) and that of the International Committee of the Red Cross. " Everyone knows that the International Red Cross was born of the courage and will of the young Swiss Henry Dunant, who witnessed the horrors of the battle of Solferino and tended the wounded, regardless of whether they were French, Italian or Austrian. As the founder of an international relief institution which places itself above any racial, religious or ideological discrimination, this hero of philanthropic action deserves the eternal gratitude of the whole world."

In the second chapter of this work, entitled " The world needs international co-operation ", the author gives an outline of the development of the world during the last fifty years and states that " the international organizations are the instruments for peace,

¹ Union of International Associations, No. 172, Brussels, 1961.

human progress and justice for all". Then follows a review of the various categories of international organizations; in 1959 there were 149 inter-governmental and 1,060 non-governmental international organizations. In an interesting paragraph of this chapter, "The infinite variety of N.G.O.", the author reminds his readers that, chronologically speaking, these take priority over the inter-governmental organizations, and gives some illustrative figures. If in 1857 there were ten N.G.O., by 1907 there were already 224, whereas this figure had risen to nearly 1,000 by 1957. Reviewing the characteristic features of some of these N.G.O., Mr. Verniers then quotes several whose members consist of national or local groups, such as the International Council of Nurses and the League.

In Chapter IV, entitled "The mechanism of international co-operation", the reader learns, as the title implies, about the way in which each of the component parts of an international organization works and he is reminded of the need for confident co-operation between inter-governmental organizations and N.G.O. Finally, Chapter V, "Everyone benefits by international co-operation", is of particular interest since it gives a survey of the achievements of the two types of international organizations under consideration. One cannot but be struck by the manifold tasks being carried out in all countries of the world and by the results which have been achieved. Here we have a summary of all the efforts of these intergovernmental organizations for the purpose of safeguarding or restoring peace, preventing war, raising the standard of living in various less developed countries, helping groups in need, aiding children, emigrants, refugees, etc.

With regard to the achievements of the non-governmental international organizations, as was mentioned above, they are infinitely varied, due to the manifold situations in which they play a rôle. The paragraph on these achievements gives pride of place to the ICRC and the League with its National Societies. In addition to emphasizing the prestige which these two international institutions, united under the same sign, enjoy throughout the world, the author quotes various figures "which should be interpreted more with the heart than with a rational intellect". He reminds his readers of the work carried out by the ICRC and the League and concludes this paragraph with the comment that "men can rely

on the vigilance and material and moral aid of the Red Cross as much in peace-time as in time of war ”.

The final chapter is entitled “ Everyone can and owes it to himself to participate in international co-operation ”. The author turns in the first place to the young people and suggests a whole programme to them. Indeed, Mr. Verniers is well acquainted with young people, since his functions bring him into touch with the Junior Red Cross, and he knows well what can be expected from them. He therefore speaks from experience when he writes : “ A whole volume would not be sufficient to describe the hundred and one ingenious ways which the Red Cross Juniors devised in order to aid the victims of the war (prisoners, refugees, handicapped).” With regard to the adults, they must take a truly fruitful part “ in building up that peaceful world which is the age-old dream of mankind ”.

This clear and lively account, adequately illustrated with documentary material, will act as a guide as well as an encouragement for all those who consider international co-operation to be a necessary and effective means of ensuring peace.

J. Z.

HANDBUCH DES INTERNATIONALEN
FLÜCHTLINGSRECHTS ¹

This 372-page manual on the Rights of International Refugees is published by the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation under the direction of Professor Walter Schätzel and Mr. Theodor Veiter, the Chairmen of the Committee on Legal Questions created by the Association for the Study of the World Refugee Problem (AWR). This Association has its headquarters in Vaduz and enjoys an advisory status with the United Nations.

Published at the end of the World Refugee Year, this manual gives, for the first time, a general survey of the rights of the so-

¹ *Wilhelm Braumüller*, Vienna and Stuttgart, 1960.