

B O O K S

PEOPLE IN HOSPITAL ¹

by

ELIZABETH BARNES

This book is based on the findings of the International Study of Psychological Problems in General Hospitals. Sponsored jointly by the World Federation for Mental Health, the International Council of Nurses and the International Hospital Federation, the work was undertaken by 18 study groups in Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the USA. Since this was an essentially human problem, the emphasis being placed on the patient rather than on the hospital, it was considered to be more effective to rely on discussions rather than on an official research programme. After two years, these study groups produced their reports to provide discussion material for an International Expert Group.

Miss Barnes, who co-ordinated the work, describes in a stimulating way the various problems involving patients from their admission to hospital, their relationship with the hospital staff, both doctors and nurses, their attitude towards other patients in the same ward, their treatment and their return home. She also deals with the specific problems of children and old people. The administration of large hospitals in the main cities is one of great complexity, and which, in view of the shortage of nursing staff, in many cases results in patients being treated impersonally and with merely clinical efficiency.

The study groups have done a useful work in drawing attention to the natural anxieties, to the fears, to the monotonous daily life

¹ Mamillan and Co. Ltd., London, 1961.

of patients and to their relationships with the nursing staff. It would appear that a great deal still needs to be done in order to obtain more support and greater comprehension of the problems involved from hospital administrations. The suffering and the indignities of illness can to a large extent be lessened by personal interest and communication. Instead of feeling isolation and loss of known surroundings, the patient should be made to feel that the hospital is part of the community.

The pace of modern life is not likely to be slowed down : the problem is therefore one of present urgency.

M. C. S. P.

VÖLKERRECHT¹

by

FRIEDRICH AUGUST VON DER HEYDTE

“ In present studies made in German² which are devoted to modern international law, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the rules of war are more often than not treated summarily, even in too summary a manner ” . . .

This is the observation which Professor von der Heydte is unfortunately forced to make in the introduction to the second volume of his treatise on international law. The author has therefore attempted to set forth in as detailed and as methodical a fashion as possible the principles and rules aimed at limiting the use of force and arbitrariness in the case of armed conflict.

One can but applaud this conception, if one starts with the point of view that the rules of war, as he so aptly recalls, “ attempt to uphold a minimum of juridical order, thus fulfilling the real task of all law, which is to protect the individual and enable him to give a purpose to his life, and through this its entire value. All standards in the law of war in their strict sense are, in their final

¹ *Ein Lehrbuch, II, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln-Berlin.*

² We could add : “ in other languages as well ” . . . (*Editorial Note*).