

DE MAN IN HET WIT¹

by

ANS MUIDERMAN

The character of Henry Dunant will without doubt always inspire those who seek to restore certain great moral ideas which, in spite of time, will continue to be present in the minds of men. They will assert themselves through the undeniable truth which they contain, that is to say, the absolute necessity to allow enough justice and solidarity to reign so that the purpose of mankind does not perish.

The introduction of this book, published in the Netherlands, shows the author's design in writing this work: "This is a story . . . an appeal to generosity and love of one's fellow men, addressed to the young people, boys and girls alike, of our time". This work is, in fact, a biography in which, chapter after chapter, the author follows his hero, from childhood to his death, giving the intimate story of the events, influences and the struggles which marked his life. The text shows the care which the author has taken to make the story attractive, while not forgetting its serious aspect, that note of solemnity which leads one to suspect just how stubborn the battle was which Dunant had to wage in order to bring fulfilment to his first impulse, which was later to end in the creation of a viable and effective organism.

It appears, moreover, that Dunant's life can interest a young public in a number of ways, above all when, as Ans Muiderman has done, it is recounted in a simple and straightforward manner, allowing one to draw one's own conclusions, in full freedom of mind.

It should be added that numerous attractive illustrations give the story a sense of movement and truth. We see the young Dunant progressing with large steps towards some unknown goal, whilst a group of serious and solemn looking gentlemen discuss amongst themselves without paying him the slightest attention. In chapter II, entitled "a new sound", there is a reproduction of Van Gogh's famous painting representing the grim walk of prisoners.

¹ Ed. Van Goor Zonen, The Hague.

BOOKS

This "new sound" recalls the declaration according to which "once the enemy has been beaten, the enemy wounded must be treated as well as our own". Other illustrations evoke the different stages in the life of "the man in white".

This work could therefore be of interest to young people, inspire them to greater things and attract a large public.

J. Z.

FORTY YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES¹

This 29 page booklet summarizes the main outlines of the development of what has become the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which has its headquarters in Geneva.

In the introduction to this booklet the author goes back to Fridtjof Nansen who, as long ago as 1921 (the year he was nominated on the recommendation of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the post of League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), gave this institution its international character. For thirty years he was to serve as an example to those engaged on this action. In a few lines, the booklet recalls that there already existed at this time different groups of refugees and, in order to lend them assistance, recourse was necessary to organized outside aid. It was then "that the moral force and determination of one man, Nansen, successfully carried through the first internationally organized attempt at solving a humanitarian problem of this nature.

"Since then," the author continues, "refugee problems have become a continuous concern of the international community." He points out that it was not until 1950, however, that the statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was drawn up, which granted a mandate establishing definite regulations which would permit the settling, within the framework of this

¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, 1961.