

enormous; that is why, while asserting that the humanitarian spirit is the key to the future, he concludes his remarkable book by asking:

“ Will humanity avoid atomic war, a war of total destruction ?

The problem of survival is bound up with the question: ‘ will the humanitarian spirit prevail or not ’ ? This would mean the abandonment of armed power in favour of spiritual weapons to overcome poverty and conflicts and to ensure the rule of justice. In other words man must use the faculties with which he alone of living creatures is endowed: sentiment, reason and conscience. These gifts should enable us to transform the earth into a haven of peace, a place of spiritual values, and thus translate into reality the hope which guided humanity in the beginning ”.

Mr. Götz Fehr has written a book useful for teachers and students. The *International Review*, in subsequent issues, will reproduce some chapters from it which show the place and value of certain moral ideas in general evolutionary trends. It is a message of confidence for, in a way, it gives an understanding of how the past is a guarantee for the future.

In this the Red Cross has a rôle to fulfil, to maintain the humanitarian drive of pre-1863 and of the Red Cross founders. Chapters of particular interest are those in which the author recalls the work of the noble personalities who took up the defence of human beings, heedless of frontiers, nationality and religious and social prohibitions.

J.-G. L.

---

RENÉ MAHEU: “ LA CIVILISATION DE L’UNIVERSEL ”<sup>1</sup>

This work consists of various articles, lectures and messages either written or spoken on different occasions and represents the interests of the author, Director-General of UNESCO, whose purpose it is here to collect elements of a universal civilization and

<sup>1</sup> Editions Laffont-Gonthier, Paris, 282 pages.

draw up "an inventory for the future". He does this by summarizing in three affirmations the reasons we have for acting in the construction of that civilization for which he is searching.

"In the first place, I am very strongly convinced that in the modern world the real independence of States has overtaken the classic attributes of sovereignty which is essentially the result of autonomy in national development... Development as we see it today is the development of man by man and for man himself.

That is my first conviction.

My second conviction is that the conception of development implies international co-operation.

My third conviction is that mankind is moving towards a planetary civilization and that it is being pushed there by two forces, one being the constant progress of technology and the other a moral aspiration which is no less irresistible, the need for man to reach mankind. Referring to the rôle of international institutions in a constantly and rapidly changing world, Mr. Maheu writes: "Their essential mission is to promote this passing towards the universal, this double movement towards man and towards all mankind to which I would like to give the name of *humanistic development*" and in this connection he mentions the all-important rôle of education in the phenomenon of mutation in which humanity finds itself today. Under the influence of three factors: demographic expansion, the strain of accelerated knowledge and technical progress, of political emancipation "we are present", the author writes, "at a real mutation of mankind which involves a deep and radical transformation in education". Education is a factor in development and aid in development can, according to Mr. Maheu, act as a foundation of a moral philosophy for our times. International co-operation then assumes its real meaning. Our most urgent task is therefore, passing from the empiric to the ethical, to work for this advancement of man by access to knowledge and gradually to "the civilization of the universal". Faith in humanism, which is apparent throughout the work under review, affirms the necessity of fighting against illiteracy, to defend the values of reason and thus to set up a community of consciences on the universal qualities of justice and peace. This faith is that of men of goodwill.

It can no doubt be feared that planetary civilization, as this has already happened, is undermining particular civilizations from within instead of helping in their growth and harmonious balance. However, it is also true that the exigences of the spirit succeed in gradually modifying customs and laws. This at least is the opinion of those who consider that the Red Cross can have an influence on peace, law and customs and that it is capable of effectively defending by its action those values whose preservation is essential for the defence of human dignity.

*J.-G. L.*

