

Théodore Maunoir

one of the founders of the Red Cross

by Roger Durand

International Review of the Red Cross is pleased to bring to its readers' attention an article on Dr. Théodore Maunoir, one of the five founders of the Red Cross, about whom little is known and little has been written.

The article is from the pen of Mr. Roger Durand, President of the Henry Dunant Society, Geneva, who published it recently in *Gesnerus*, the quarterly review of the Société suisse d'histoire de la médecine et des sciences naturelles (vol. 34, fasc. 1/2, pp. 139-155, Ed. Sauerländer, Aarau, 1977). It is reproduced here with the kind permission of the author, of *Gesnerus* and of Editions Sauerländer, to whom we express our thanks.

Historical background

On 24 June 1859, the Austrian, French and Piedmontese armies clashed on the battlefield of Solferino. In the evening, nearly 45,000 dead and wounded lay on the battlefield. From the very beginning of the fighting, the medical services were overwhelmed. Three days later, wounded soldiers were still being found, still alive, despite the lack of any care.

On 22 August 1864, twelve countries signed the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field.

By 1978, 144 States have acceded to the Geneva Conventions.

The action of the Red Cross¹ thus marked a turning point in the history of human charity. For the first time, military wounded were cared for without distinction; for the first time, such assistance was provided in peace-time as in wartime; for the first time, the neutral status of medical services was decreed in a standing international agreement.

In Geneva, the birth and development of the humanitarian movement had a decisive effect upon the life of the city. The preparatory conference in October 1863 inaugurated an unprecedented series of international events in Geneva. It was after that date that the city of Calvin and Rousseau truly became aware of its international destiny and entered into its career as the headquarters for numerous world organizations.

Prompted by the magnitude of the Red Cross phenomenon, historians and writers of many countries have devoted their attention to the origins of the movement, especially to the role of the International Standing Committee for Aid to Wounded Soldiers.

Nearly all authors agree that this Committee of Five, as it was commonly known, can be regarded as the real and only founder of the Red Cross. We should bear in mind the fact that the institution very quickly gained worldwide recognition, and it was understood just as quickly that whoever could impose himself (or be accepted) as its initiator could claim (or be accorded) worldwide fame. Very early, therefore, the question of paternity arose; the question whether, among these five, one or other could lay claim to the title of founder, to the exclusion of the others.

The struggle was fierce and covert. Due to his financial difficulties, Henry Dunant was obliged to resign from the Committee in August 1867. Considering that he had been robbed of his achievement, Dunant launched a series of public campaigns for recognition. Under the vigorous leadership of Gustave Moynier, the Committee acted for nearly thirty years as if it were unaware that the author of "A Memory of Solferino" had conceived the basic ideas (sometimes with the reluctant acquiescence of its members) and that he had served as Secretary to the

¹ We should clarify a matter of terminology at the outset. In the interest of simplicity, we shall consistently refer to the "Red Cross", even though the various organisms from which the movement developed did not use the term for several years. For example, the present "*International Committee of the Red Cross*" (or for short the International Committee) existed from 1863 onwards under the name "Comité international de Secours aux Blessés" and only adopted its present title in 1880.

Committee from 1863 to 1867—its most crucial years. Moynier and his colleagues defined their position by a pointed gesture: on the title page of the highly official *Bulletin international des sociétés de la Croix Rouge*, they ordered the addition of the following phrase: “publié par le Comité international fondateur de cette institution” (published by the International Committee, founder of this institution). This innovation appeared for the first time in April 1902, four months after Henry Dunant had received the first Nobel Peace Prize, as a pacifist and as founder of the Red Cross!

Historiographers were stimulated by the situation and by the personalities of the protagonists. They devoted their attention particularly to Dunant, on the one hand, and to the International Committee, regarded as a unit, on the other hand. The role of the good Samaritan of Solferino has been the subject of abundant study, ranging from sharp criticism to blind worship. Four of his former colleagues remained on the Committee. Of these, Guillaume-Henri Dufour aroused the interest of several biographers because of his prominence in 19th century Swiss history. As head of the International Committee, Gustave Moynier always received some attention. Louis Appia was to find a kindly biographer in the person of Roger Boppe, and Bruno Zanobio has also dealt recently with some aspects of his activities.

This leaves Theodore Maunoir, sinking further into oblivion with each passing year. Who was he? What role did he play in the International Committee? These are the questions I propose to consider here.¹

Biography of Théodore Maunoir (1 June 1806-22 April 1869)

David Eugène Théodore Maunoir came from a family of doctors. His father, Charles-Théophile was a doctor of Paris university and his uncle, Jean-Pierre, of Montpellier. These two branches of the family con-

¹ The bibliography includes the following: André Jacob Duval, “*Notice sur le docteur Théodore Maunoir*” in the *Bulletin de la Société médicale de la Suisse romande*, October 1869, pp. 322-336; Docteur Louis Piachaud, *Rapport du président sur les travaux de la Société médicale de Genève pendant l’année 1869, lu dans la séance du 5 janvier 1870*, Lausanne (L. Corbaz) 1870, 22 pp., especially pp. 1-12; Alexis François, *Le berceau de la Croix-Rouge*, Geneva (A. Jullien) 1918, 336 pp.; Alexis François, *Les fondateurs de la Croix Rouge*, Geneva (Kundig) 1941, 21 pp.; Marc Cramer, *Ils étaient cinq... Naissance de la Croix-Rouge*, Geneva (Eglise nationale protestante de Genève) 1963, 35 pp.

tinued to follow the medical tradition, Jean-Pierre sending his son Robert to study in Montpellier and Théodore his two sons, Paul and Léon, to Paris.

As a child, Théodore suffered from ill health and his father decided to keep him at home during his earliest years. Thereafter, he had high honours in secondary school and at the Académie de Genève, as a student of literature. He acquired a practical knowledge of medicine, by helping to care for sick and injured neighbours. He carried out his first operation, for harelip, when he was still less than 20, under his father's supervision. He learned English in England, where he worked at St. Bartholomew's Hospital under the surgeons Lawrence and Abernethy.

His formal medical education began in Paris in 1829. Outstanding among his teachers were Pierre-Charles-Alexandre Louis and Philibert Roux. As he wrote, the July Revolution of 1830 and the cholera epidemic of the following year provided him with an abundance of work. During this period an episode occurred in Maunoir's life which might have caused his name to be mentioned in history books, when he rubbed shoulders with diplomacy. His father having treated a relative of Talleyrand, Théodore was received by the great man himself, who insisted that medicine was not the young man's real vocation and offered to take him into his service, where he promised him a brilliant career.

Théodore preferred medicine to diplomacy however and obtained his doctorate as a surgeon in 1833. Before leaving Paris, he founded, in company with d'Espine and Bizot, the Society for medical observations, as reported by Erwin H. Ackerknecht and Eduard-Rudolf Müllener.¹ In the same year, he passed his examinations in Geneva and qualified as a surgeon.

Family

There are indications that Maunoir married Esther Herminie Clavier in 1834. Superficially, there would appear to be nothing uncommon

¹ We may refer for example to Erwin H. Ackerknecht's "*Les membres genevois de la 'Société médicale d'observation' de Paris (1832)*" in *Gesnerus, op. cit.*, vol. 34, fasc. 1/2, 1977, pp. 90-97, especially pp. 92-93. The author refers to studies of the same subject by Eduard-Rudolf Müllener.

about such an event, for it would seem natural enough for a young doctor, brilliant and well qualified, to establish a family at the age of 28.

Less common were the facts that the family had apparently existed for four years prior to the marriage, and that the bride was the widow of a well-known writer, Paul-Louis Courier, who had been murdered under somewhat mysterious circumstances.¹ We shall not dwell on the details of a boudoir scandal, but we must nevertheless refer to what 19th century biographers prudishly evaded or rendered incomprehensible. In marrying a woman ten years his senior, and who had been spoken of in connection with a scandal five years earlier, the young doctor demonstrated a degree of courage and social independence worthy of note. If it is indeed true that the union legitimized in 1834 had already resulted in the birth of a son four years earlier, we can well imagine how the couple must have been treated in the city of Calvinism.²

In addition to its social implications, this marriage—regarded by his associates as premature—confronted Théodore with the material pro-

¹ Louis André, *L'assassinat de Paul-Louis Courier*, Paris (Plon Nourrit) 1913, and the summary of this work published in the *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, October-December, 1913.

Married at the age of 18 to a writer old enough to be her father, Herminie Clavier was soon betrayed and abandoned. In 1825, Courier was murdered. The murder was unsolved. Four years later, a farmer's daughter gave information involving the widow. In January 1830, Herminie was arrested, discharged and duly freed of all suspicion. In April of the same year, she gave birth to Théodore's first son.

The affair created a scandal, spoken of by Sainte-Beuve in his *Causeries du lundi*, Paris (Garnier) s.d., t. 6, pp. 322-361; 26 July and 2 August 1852. Alfred de Vigny referred to Théodore Maunoir as the "successor to Paul-Louis Courier, in flesh as in spirit", in his "*Lettres à une puritaine*" in the *Revue de Paris*, 15 August and 15 September 1897, pp. 299-320, especially p. 313.

² We have been unable to find in the official records either the date of the civil marriage of Herminie and Théodore or the birth certificate identifying the father of Charles Maunoir, born on 23 June 1830 at Poggibonsi, in Tuscany.

Although the census of 1834 lists Théodore as a bachelor, the birth certificate for Paul (21 June 1835) proves that the marriage had already taken place. The legal marriage must therefore have been performed sometime between the beginning of 1834 and June 1835, even though the indication provided by the census records must not be regarded as infallible.

Was Theodore Charles' father? In his will (Geneva State Archives, *Jur. Civ. AAq*, 14, No. 190, p. 201-202)—he stated that his two eldest sons—Charles and Paul—should be treated in the same way as the three children of his second marriage and that "It goes without saying that neither I nor my two eldest sons have any claim at all to my [second] wife's wealth".

Although we cannot regard it as certain, we shall accept as a supposition that Théodore had a son, Charles, in 1830, at a time when he was not yet married to the child's mother.

blems and requirements of day-to-day life. He had to apply himself to his work, with great urgency, to care for his family, since he had no family fortune behind him. The couple had a second son, Paul, in 1835. Seven years later, Herminie died. Théodore married again on 26 December 1845, to Anne Jarvis, daughter of a New York attorney. The couple had three children, Léon, in 1848, Winton, 1852 and Christine, 1856.

Maunoir differed from his colleagues on the International Committee in that he had to earn his living; Dufour had reached the age of retirement; Dunant had always considered himself a man of letters; Appia travelled more than he practised; and Moynier lived on his income. The need to earn his living no doubt affected Maunoir's scientific work.

Medicine

Maunoir left no great work to posterity. Writings which have been preserved include his thesis on operations for cataract,¹ a few case histories, and some scientific reports.²

There were no more than about ten of these reports, which is the more surprising as medical publications relating to the Red Cross were abundant, even at that time. We can note however an extremely significant statement about the International Committee's attitude to the following dilemma: helping the military wounded makes war more humane and consequently makes it almost tolerable and may even encourage it:

“The International Committee of Geneva and all the members of the Conference (August 1864) would have felt it naive to include a sentence stigmatising war.

¹ Théodore Maunoir, *Essai sur quelques points de l'histoire de la cataracte; thèse présentée et soutenue à la Faculté de la Médecine de Paris, le 12 décembre 1833*, Paris (Didot) 1833, 96 pp.

² These reports, sometimes in the form of notes without references, have been put together in a book entitled *Theodore Maunoir*, bearing the reference M. 349 of the Science Museum in Geneva. See also note 2, p. 154.

On the subject of a book on nursing by Florence Nightingale who British authors too often regard as the fountainhead of the Red Cross, Maunoir said, “The general tone of her book indicates decisiveness, familiarity with command and action; but however capable one may be on the battlefield, every captain is not a Caesar when it comes to taking his pen in hand, and we believe Miss Nightingale would have been well advised not to write her Commentaries.”

The horror of war is underlined by every word, by every act and by every document published on this occasion. To deny this would be to deny the movement, while the work of the Conference goes on.”¹

As a practitioner, Maunoir did not leave any lasting traces. At a time when specialization was far less pronounced than today, it seems that he distinguished himself mainly as a gynecologist and a surgeon and that he acquired a local reputation for operating on cataracts. It seems that his colleagues often consulted him when they felt the need of advice. In the obituary notice by the *Société médicale de Genève*, on 5 January 1870, these were the aspects underlined by the Society's President Dr. Piachaud.² Maunoir was an active member of the Medical Society and was its president for two terms.

Towards the end of his life he devoted himself unstintingly to the founding of a hospital exclusively for children. His efforts were successful only after his death, when the *Maison des enfants malades Chemin Gourgas* opened on 3 October 1872. His widow and his son Paul carried on the work, both of them being members of the managing board of the Hospital in which Paul gave consultations.

Personality

All contemporary writers agreed on the character of the man. With a keen and sometimes caustic mind, Maunoir unhesitatingly espoused new ideas and theories, but was ready to retract if common sense so dictated. He was neither an orator nor a writer but he had the gift of repartee. He was admired particularly for his quick and sharp retorts which he delighted in exchanging with his colleague Rilliet in Latin.

Maunoir left only a few records from which his moral portrait could be outlined. Some letters scattered among various collections show that he belonged to that Genevese circle of the 19th century which was motivated by social and charitable concerns. The founding of the Gourgas Hospital was one testimony to this; other work he undertook confirmed it.

¹ *La guerre et la charité* by Gustave Moynier and Louis Appia; report in “*Journal de Genève*”, 3 April 1868.

² Doctor Piachaud, *Rapport du président*, op. cit., p. 10-11.

In October 1846 political troubles seriously disturbed the city. Bloodshed in fighting between the partisans of James Fazy and the Geneva Government required the intervention of the medical profession. Maunoir volunteered to work with the *Comité pour les blessés*, under the President Jean-Louis Moré. From his correspondence with Lullin we learn that he was not able to tend the wounded in the field itself (the districts of the ponts de l'Ile and of Saint Gervais), but that he cared for several individuals, Châteauvieux, Revilliod and de Sellon. It is probable that the first of these three patients was Lt. Colonel Lullin de Châteauvieux, Commander of the Peney batallion, wounded on 7 October near the porte de Cornavin.¹

In 1863 he was active in organizing a public collection for the reconstruction of a farm belonging to some poor peasants who had lost everything in a fire.²

He was also one of the active members of the Genevese Society for Public Utility. This was greatly to affect his life as we shall see later.

From these vague indications, there emerges the impression of a man of culture, competent, discrete, with a degree of independence, and alive to the difficulties of his less fortunate fellows. And yet we must recognize that, in spite of his noble qualities, this honourable Genevese doctor would have remained unknown like so many virtuous citizens if his name had not been attached to that of the Red Cross.

The Red Cross

Geneva a receptive city

We have little information about Maunoir's work in the International Committee for Aid to Wounded Soldiers. His private correspondence does not mention it, other written material is lacking, and printed documents shed little light on the matter. We have therefore little to go on to form an idea of the extent to which he participated in the beginning of the movement.

¹ Letters from Maunoir to H. Lullin, one dated 20 October [1846] and the other undated; *Bibliothèque publique et universitaire (BPU)*, Ms suppl. 928, p. 214-215.

² See his letter to François Bartholony, dated October 1863, BPU Ms var. 19/3, p. 19-20.

Today it is generally accepted that the success of the Red Cross is the result of a brilliant idea which was put into effect by a group of people in whose eyes it found considerable favour. The idea was Dunant's, and consisted of granting neutral status to medical personnel, the adoption of a distinctive sign, and the foundation of permanent relief societies. The receptive setting was the Genevese Society for Public Utility. The founders were Dufour, Appia, Maunoir and especially Moynier.

We know nothing of the connection between Dufour, Maunoir, Moynier and Dunant in 1863. They were almost three different generations; General Dufour was 76 years of age, Maunoir 57, Moynier 37 and Dunant 35. On the other hand we do know that there was a strong friendship between the two doctors, at least from 1853 on. Appia was twelve years Maunoir's junior, and had been introduced by Maunoir into the medical and philanthropic circles of the city. During the 1859 war the two corresponded frequently. The letters from Appia, who was a volunteer tending the wounded of both sides in Turin, Milan and elsewhere, showed how desperately inadequate were the official medical services. These letters were significant in that they suggested no long-term solution. Like Maunoir, Appia seemed to be especially concerned with making up for the lack of competent staff and with discussing surgery.¹

International Committee for aid to wounded soldiers

On 9 February 1863, the General Assembly of the Genevese Society for Public Utility met at 6 PM. in the Casino. The three main items on the agenda were:

- the publication of a popular edition of French classics;
- the addition to fighting armies of a corps of volunteer nurses, as urged in Mr. Henri Dunant's *Un souvenir de Solferino*;
- the founding of an agricultural colony for problem children in western Switzerland.

The notice convening the meeting and the minutes do not suggest that the members realized that they were witnesses to — and even

¹ See Roger Boppe, *L'homme et la guerre. Le docteur Louis Appia et les débuts de la Croix-Rouge*. Geneva/Paris (J. Muhlethaler) 1959, 235 pp., especially pp. 30-37.

participants in — a historic event. When introducing the second agenda item, Gustave Moynier, the chairman, proposed that the project of forming a corps of volunteer nurses be submitted to the Berlin International Charity Congress in October 1863.¹

Six members then took the floor. Pastor Ramu saw some major draw-backs; General Dufour considered the project difficult but worthy of a trial; Dr. Appia was in favour, as was his colleague Maunoir who said that “the ambulance service is always extremely inadequate”.²

There does not seem to have been any real discussion nor any notable enthusiasm. The proposal was accepted and the meeting appointed a commission of those persons who had spoken and the sponsor of the idea. It might have been that Maunoir joined this working group simply because he had expressed his opinion, but did he realize how important the question was? Was he fired with a will to promote the solution? We do not know. Although a member of this Society for many years he does not seem to have taken a very active part in commissions or in the leadership as rapporteur or minute writer. Nevertheless this time he agreed to join a commission: and it turned out to be the right one.

The commission met on 17 February and immediately decided to constitute a permanent International Committee, a euphemism meaning that the distinguished members acted as independent partners who were soon to go beyond the terms of reference assigned to them by the Society for Public Utility. In point of fact, from the outset, the Commission was essentially a forum for reflexion and an office for recording (sometimes with reluctance) Dunant’s ideas and initiative. This was at least the case until the October 1863 Conference which the Commission prepared carefully and competently. What part did Maunoir play?

He advocated interesting the public, in the modern sense of the word “participation”, and that the Committee should “stir up the people” to make its views known and have them adopted. The expression “stir up the people” became a catch-phrase (but it must be recognized that it

¹ This Congress did not take place. However, an international statistical congress did take place in Berlin and Dunant and Basting took advantage of it to make known the International Committee’s proposal and—without consulting the Committee—the key idea of neutral status for medical personnel.

² *Minutes of the Genevese Society for Public Utility*, in record covering the period from 13 November 1851 to 15 April 1863, no reference, Société genevoise d’utilité publique, palais de l’Athénée, Geneva.

was Dunant who translated it into action). Maunoir was the only member to stress the need to interest the general population, whereas his colleagues preferred to concentrate efforts on the upper classes and crowned heads. Maunoir induced the Committee to adopt three principles: in every country a committee should be accepted by the authorities; the corps of volunteer nurses should be under the orders of the military authorities; the corps of volunteer nurses would remain behind the lines in order not to impede the armies and would have such equipment as to be self sufficient.

From 17 February 1863 to 23 March 1864 the Committee held seven meetings¹.

Maunoir seems to have taken the floor about once at every meeting. He always supported positions which led to unanimity, with one exception, namely the proposition that efforts should be made immediately to obtain popular support for the Red Cross. This opinion was at variance with that of his colleagues and at variance with the times. Today, the 4700 members of the Geneva Red Cross, like the 230 million members of Red Cross Societies throughout the world, are the outcome of that healthy aspiration to make the humanitarian movement democratic.

October 1863 Conference

From 26 to 30 October 1863 the representatives of 17 States gathered in Geneva in response to the invitation from these private philanthropists, to examine the proposals put forward by the citizens of that city. The minutes of the Conference show that Maunoir took a very active part in the proceedings while the other members of the International Committee showed greater reserve, especially when delegates hostile to the project sought to impose their views.

Maunoir managed to deal tactfully with the military doctors who looked upon the volunteer corps of nurses as an implied criticism of their services and possibly as competition. He proved to be an adept defender of the most delicate issue, the neutral status for medical personnel. He replied firmly and skilfully to chief physician Boudier, sent

¹ See minutes of International Committee for Relief to Wounded Soldiers published by Jean Pictet under the title "*Documents inédits sur la formation de la Croix-Rouge*", in *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, December 1948, p. 861-879.

by Napoleon III. His refutation of the arguments advanced against the project are worth summing up.

— Boudier: From what class would these nurses be chosen ?

Maunoir: From every class, since soldiers are recruited from every level of society.

— B.: This undertaking would require immense personal sacrifice.

M.: Above all else, example would count. No one has imagined that this project would be a tea party.

— B.: The ignorance and inexperience of the volunteers would be more of a hindrance than a help.

M.: Those who could not stand the pace would drop out. In war, inexperienced soldiers also are thrown into the fight.

— B.: The volunteers would have to have had some instruction.

M.: In Switzerland everyone can read and write. Intelligence and good will can easily make up for habit and routine. For example, in the short time they are given military instruction, our recruits learn to do the same things as the French soldiers.¹

— B.: The volunteers might fall sick.

M.: We will not send them for their pleasure. They will, as it were, charge typhus just as soldiers charge the enemy.²

— B.: They will have no esprit de corps and no experience.

M.: They will have to be trained. Moreover we never imagined that our volunteers could reach the field as well trained as your excellent military orderlies.³ (The use of the word “excellent” must have made some members of the conference smile in view of the inadequacy of the French medical services at Solferino, to speak only of that most recent battle).

¹ Minutes of the International Conference in Geneva to examine ways and means to remedy the inadequacy of military medical services in the field; see *Bulletin de la société genevoise d'utilité publique*, vol. 3, years 1862 and 1863, Geneva (Imprimerie de Jules-G^me Fick) 1862 [sic], 698 pp., see particularly pp. 349 to 494 and p. 422. These pages should in fact bear the numbers 549 to 694.

² Id., p. 422.

³ Id., p. 423.

— B.: At the height of a campaign how can such a corps of volunteers be maintained and supplied?

M.: It is a question of money. In Switzerland, for example, where each family has at least one member in the army, there will be much more support for the medical corps if it is known to consist of volunteers.

— B.: How long will the mission of the volunteers continue? Until peace? War can go on a long time. Not all generals can say like Caesar and Napoleon III: *Veni, vidi, vici*.¹

M.: The emperor Napoleon III may have said: *Veni, vidi, vici*, but relief for the unhappy wounded did not come so quickly as victory.²

These replies by Maunoir to the almost systematic objections of the imperial delegate gave direction to the proceedings. They reduced to little or nothing the arguments advanced by the opponents of the scheme. The clash between the two men occurred towards the end of the first meeting, when anything might have happened, even recognition that the proposal was impossible, an outcome expected by Great Britain and France. After the Geneva doctor, only one speaker continued the general discussion, Major Brodrück, who spoke on the procedure for voting article by article, and then on the project as a whole. The talk then turned to details. The principle had won the day.

These delegates from the major nations of Europe did not of course cross the continent only to make known their opposition to the project. But they might have been satisfied with vague declarations of principle, leaving open the practical questions under the pressure of the two great powers who did not take kindly to criticism of their army medical services. Maunoir propitiated national prejudices and susceptibilities saying “even in the French (medical) service, although it is undoubtedly one of the best in Europe, there is still much to be done”.³ The later meetings of the conference showed that everyone admitted the shortcomings of the official services and the need to remedy them by resort to

¹ Id., p. 414.

² Id., p. 423.

³ Id., p. 423.

private civilian support. The project of the Committee of Five formed the basis of discussion, and the Conference agreed on resolutions and recommendations which paved the way for the next stage.

Geneva section of the Red Cross

Here a brief parenthesis is appropriate. Maunoir did his best to give the movement the broad national base he had advocated during the first few meetings of the International Committee. It is therefore no surprise to find him, on 17 March 1864, attending the constituent meeting of the Geneva section of the Red Cross, to which he read out the results of the October conference. In fact, he departed from his usual custom and made "a warm speech on the need for the activities and the good reasons for the creation of a Red Cross section in Geneva".¹

Beginnings of the Red Cross

The Congress and the International Treaty in August 1864 completed the work of the 1863 Conference. From then on, the Red Cross possessed solid foundations, both legal (the Convention) and institutional (the national committees). But the work was only just beginning. National committees had to be set up in all countries, and vigilance had to be exercised to ensure that the Geneva Convention remained an instrument of international charity, although some governments were even then attempting to appropriate it for themselves in order to derive moral and political prestige from it. It was the International Committee which had to guard against this.

What part did Theodore Maunoir play in the consideration of these problems? What was his contribution?

The events of the period between September 1864 and September 1867 are not known in detail, since the minutes of the meetings of the Committee of Five during that time have been lost. On the other hand, from 6 September 1867 onwards we can follow, week by week, the activities of Maunoir at the Committee's meetings.

The first thing we notice is the frequency of his attendance: he was present at 42 out of 46 meetings. As was the case for Dufour and Appia, his name was not often mentioned, as everything seems to indicate that

¹ See *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, Dec. 1948, op. cit., pp. 877-878, especially p. 877: "Séance de la Section Genevoise du 17 Mars 1864".

the main work of the Committee was taken on by Moynier, who directed the correspondence, decided on the agenda, introduced the subjects to be discussed, summed up the decisions made, etc. Yet it is possible to distinguish certain salient characteristics in the remarks made by Maunoir.

He gave reports on medical booklets relating to the care of wounded soldiers. He appears to have specialized in publications of this kind from Britain and North America. This work appears to have influenced neither the course of events nor the Red Cross principles.

He became a zealous defender of the 1864 Convention against all who wished to amend the text. In this, as he had done in October 1863, he showed keen political sense, in particular in opposing efforts by the French committee to supplant the Geneva committee as the centre of co-ordination and inspiration for the movement and as the moral authority for the institution.

Maunoir agreed to perform certain administrative work in connection with the Geneva Conference in October 1868.

On a point of principle, he held to a key argument regarding the scope of activities of the International Committee. Should these be restricted to helping the sick and wounded among the military on the field of battle? Or, on the contrary, should the activities of the Red Cross be extended in times of peace to all those in need of aid: the victims of natural disasters, the poor, the outcasts of society? On 10 April 1869, a long debate took place on the subject: "Mr. Maunoir expressed the same views [as General Dufour]. "I am willing", he said, "to place myself at the service of the public for the duration of a war, always more or less brief, but this does not mean at all that I am willing to offer my services for the indefinite period of peace. Moreover, those who are quite ready to devote themselves to caring for others in times of epidemics are not necessarily the same persons as those willing to face the perils of war. The people in the two cases are therefore unlikely to be the same: each type of work requires special aptitudes."¹

This position was for a long time that of the International Committee. Its clear-cut nature precluded any confusion and enabled the Geneva institution to acquire undeniable authority and moral ascendancy

¹ *Minutes of the Committee from 6 Sept. 1867 to 12 Sept. 1870*, International Committee of the Red Cross, unclassified. We are grateful to the Vice-President of the ICRC, Mr. Jean Pictet, for permission to consult and quote these documents.

within a field that was restricted but, alas, full of opportunities for application: the battlefield. The Committee resolved, then, to adhere closely to the letter of the Geneva Convention, leaving it to other philanthropic societies to succour those wounded by life, by civilization and by the vagaries of nature.

Conclusion

True to his nature, Théodore Maunoir contented himself with unobtrusive roles during the creation and initial stages of the Red Cross. Nevertheless, the influence which he exerted was appreciable. It was not as a doctor that he was influential, since he rarely gave his opinion on matters concerning his profession, in marked contrast to his colleague Dr Appia. He was appreciated rather as an adviser, because he took the trouble to examine the thorny problems of the International Committee in their entirety and to think of their political repercussions. He wished the humanitarian movement to involve the whole population and not only the ruling classes. He realized that the attempts to revise the Treaty of 1864 were mainly designed to transfer the centre of gravity of the Red Cross to one of the large European capitals, a move which would cut the movement from its foundation, i.e., private activity untouched by public administration, and neutrality.

The tributes paid to him after his death by the International Committee, moreover, prove how much each member appreciated the part he played, especially when we recall the pains taken by the institution to avoid emphasizing the individual and personal aspects of any of its activities:

“Meeting of 19 May [1869]

Present: Messrs Dufour, Moynier and Appia.

The minutes were read and approved.

Since the previous meeting, on 10 April, the International Committee has suffered the deeply regrettable loss of Dr Théodore Maunoir, one of its most valuable and most active members. This respected colleague passed away in two days as the result of pulmonary congestion.

The International Committee will never be able to forget that Mr Maunoir was a member from the first moment of its creation, and that during the Conference of 1863, when the work had made only a

modest beginning, he spoke in its defence with all the warmth of heart and all the nobility of spirit with which he was endowed and which the International Committee has had occasion to appreciate very often since then. Mr Maunoir leaves an ineradicable memory within the International Committee.”¹

The Committee also published an obituary notice along the same lines, slightly more detailed, in the first issue of the *Bulletin international*:²

“A sad gap in the ranks of the International Committee has been caused by the death of Dr Théodore Maunoir, one of its founders, who died on 26 April after a short illness, at the age of 62. As physician and surgeon, Dr Maunoir was one of the leading practitioners of his native city, where his good nature and his refined and cultured mind charmed all who came near him.

“An enthusiastic proponent of the institution to bring care to wounded soldiers, from its origins, when many individuals and governments regarded the aim as utopian, he never ceased to devote the liveliest interest to this cause. Despite the large number of his patients, he found time to attend the frequent meetings of the Committee of which he was a member. It was while he was following, from a distance, the work of the Berlin Conference with the greatest attention that his sudden death occurred.

“The members of the 1863 Conference have not forgotten the brilliant extempore speech in which he refuted the objections then being made to voluntary aid. Printed works on the subject have been enriched by a report by him on the American Health Commission,³ one of the first publications to make known in Europe the work of this remarkable institution. But it was above all by the fairness of his judgement, the wisdom of his advice, that he rendered outstanding service to our cause. His good council was all the more valuable to the International Committee in that, without extreme caution in the negotiations in which the Committee was involved and great circumspection in all its actions, it might easily have compromised the interests entrusted to it.”

¹ Id., meeting of 19 May 1869.

² October 1869, pp. 7-8.

³ The minutes give here the following note: “The report is in *Secours aux blessés*, International Committee, Geneva, 1864”. Cf. note 2, p. 154.

Finally, Louis Appia wrote a note for publication by A.-J. Duval.¹ It was most probably approved by the International Committee:

“The members of the International Committee will never lose sight of the fact that Maunoir was one of its members from its inception and that he contributed greatly to maintaining its existence by giving his prestige to the new venture. But he did more than lend a well-loved and highly respected name. As early as the 1863 Conference, when the work was merely beginning and when minds worthy of respect still considered it an impossible ideal, Maunoir often rose in its defence, expressing with vigour his sympathy for activities which he felt sure were destined to succeed, because he had faith in the principle of charity which underlay them. Always regular in his attendance at meetings, he gave the Committee the benefit of his expert knowledge and his clear-sighted practicality. The Committee has in its possession an interesting report which he made concerning the immense work of caring for the wounded during the American Civil War.”²

Thus, no less than three tributes were composed by the institution to honour the memory of this founding member.

Roger DURAND

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 331. Cf. *supra*, note 1, p. 139.

² *Note sur l'œuvre des comités de secours aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique*, in “*Secours aux blessés. Communication du Comité international faisant suite au compte rendu de la Conférence internationale de Genève*”, Geneva, Jules-Guillaume Fick, 1864, 218 [219] pp., plates, especially p. 179-187.

In this note, Maunoir reviews five studies on relief to the wounded during the Secession war. While praising the considerable resources and effort of the US medical commission (North), he deplors that neutralization of the wounded and of the medical personnel was unknown in America. It was a concept about which the young and dynamic America could learn from the Geneva Committee and from the example of all Europe.