

BOOKS AND REVIEWS

PETER VOGELSANGER : " MAX HUBER " ¹

The author, a Pastor in Zurich, knew Max Huber intimately from long friendship. Drawing from his memories and also from many documents, he gives in this book perhaps the most complete portrait ever of the former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross. In his account of the life and work of this legal expert, professor, judge at the International Court of Justice, thinker and man of Red Cross action he not only relates facts but gives a penetrating view of a mind both rich and profound, and he endeavours to explain its essential aspects.

This biography, written with special insight, is worthy of a collection intended to make known to the general public the great personalities of Swiss notables. A more representative contemporary figure than Max Huber could not have been found. All those who were associated with this man of outstanding intellect during the difficult years of the Second World War remember him with emotion and gratitude.

Peter Vogelsanger highlights the outstanding events in Max Huber's exceptional career, particularly the decisive moment in 1928 when he succeeded Gustave Ador at the head of the ICRC. When giving up his bench on the Permanent Court of International Justice, he chose to work more actively for humanity, abandoning the calm of the judge's office, entering whole-heartedly into Red Cross service. In doing so he cut short in singular fashion his co-operation in the framing of the International Law of Peace, but he participated in no uncertain manner in the general work to defend essential human rights.

The Red Cross offered him this opportunity to achieve fulfilment on the practical and the theoretical level. As the author shows, he combined boldness with timidity, tolerance with profound faith, a wide culture with extreme modesty. He remained true to himself

¹ Verlag Huber, Frauenfeld, 1967, 232 pp.

BOOKS AND REVIEWS

under all circumstances, displaying the qualities expressed in the words "Vermögen zur Gleichzeitigkeit". He was a man who brought to bear in time of crisis a wealth of moral and intellectual values accumulated over the years. As Mr. Vogelsanger says, his secret lay in his power of synthesis ("Diese Kraft der Zusammenfassung ist sein eigentliches Geheimnis").

Max Huber devoted himself wholly to whatever he undertook and his service with the Red Cross took up most of his time from the moment when he decided to dedicate himself to it. The author, with reference to considerable personal documentary material, also shows that this spirit of service took root in a religious conviction which never diminished.

It is no doubt because he was motivated by powerful feelings that Max Huber was able to give so much of himself to Red Cross work of which, moreover, as a sincere believer, he elevated the spiritual level. Hence the self-sacrifice he made without expressing his regret at not accomplishing a project which he had taken to heart in his youth, the writing of an *Esprit du Droit international public* by analogy to R. von Jhiring's *Esprit du Droit Romain*. Thenceforth his thoughts—as shown in his conferences and articles—were turned solely towards the philosophy of humanitarian work and the conditions in which this was accomplished under Red Cross auspices.

His faith denied him the refuge in study which his great intelligence and well-to-do situation would have permitted him. He wanted to go out into the world and from September 1939 onwards that meant for him the daily struggle against fatigue and discouragement; it required him to forgo his research work, to cease his writings on international law in order the better to help through charity those who sought his aid.

This spontaneous selfless striving in the relief of suffering is the spirit of the good Samaritan and of Max Huber. The Red Cross no doubt appeared to him as an opportunity to achieve his heart's desire. Mr. Vogelsanger must be given credit for giving us, among other things, better understanding of Max Huber's idea of the Red Cross and what it was which impelled him to take an interest in causes both great and small. For the generous soul nothing is negligible. Max Huber, for example, wrote with his own hand the

statutes of the Commission for liaison between the ICRC and its staff.

Of course, as the legal expert whose voice was heeded in the Federal Council, as the Professor of Zurich University, as the Judge at the Court in The Hague, he had already earned our esteem. And yet for us, what was best in him he gave to the work of the Red Cross, which he saw as a chance to perpetuate a tradition and at the same time to transmit for posterity the values he considered eternal.

J.-G. L.

Nursing services in Bermuda, *International Nursing Review*, Basel, 1968, Vol. 15, No. 3.

The first nursing services in Bermuda outside the hospitals were begun by the district nurses in the mid-1920's, closely followed by the Public Health Department, which had three trained nurses on the staff in 1944 and has since increased the number considerably. Nurses are engaged, too, in the fight against tuberculosis, and work mainly with the school children.

The Red Cross Society in Bermuda runs the blood bank at the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital and holds donor clinics twice weekly.

There are two hospitals on the island—St. Brendan's Hospital for the mentally sick and the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital for the physically sick. Each hospital is well equipped to cover a wide range of illness.

The nurses of Bermuda have recently formed a national nurses' organization, the Bermuda Registered Nurses' Association, which, although in its very early stages, has mapped out an extensive programme for itself, designed to promote and foster an active interest in the nursing profession, both in these islands and elsewhere in the world.