

BOOKS AND REVIEWS

CESAR GOMEZ GUILLERMOPRIETO: "OBJETO
Y FUNCIONAMIENTO DE LA CRUZ ROJA INTERNACIONAL" ¹

The author of this study first relates Henry Dunant's reaction at Solferino and depicts what the Geneva Conventions represent for mankind; he then situates more closely the place of the Red Cross today among the other international institutions. In a third chapter, he examines the significance of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, but without stating that they are the outcome of earlier humanitarian conventions signed between 1864 and 1929.

The title of the study: "Purpose, Organization and Working of the International Red Cross", is warranted by the contents of the next few chapters. The author points out, in particular, the role of neutral intermediary assumed, in all circumstances, by the Red Cross, and defines also the mission of National Societies and of their federation, the League, particularly when natural disasters occur, and when a more extensive application of development programmes is required.

Some space is devoted to ICRC activities during the Second World War. The author calls to mind, here, the role of the Prisoners of War Central Agency, and the vast action carried out by the International Committee to ensure the distribution of relief supplies to prisoners of war throughout the whole world. In 1945, families dispersed at the end of the war were reunited, while conflicts breaking out in various regions of the earth have obliged the ICRC to continue its humanitarian action.

The last chapter is devoted to the Mexican Red Cross and gives readers the opportunity to find out, in clear and useful fashion, more of the development and internal structure of that National Society and of all the various activities which it performs in peacetime, especially in the medical field. There is an extensive bibliography at the end.

P.J.

¹ Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1971, 124 pp.