

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EDITORS OF THE REVIEW

Tribute to J.-G. Lossier

At the end of last year, the International Committee of the Red Cross bade farewell to Mr. Jean-Georges Lossier, who joined the editorial staff of the *International Review of the Red Cross* in 1946, and became its editor from 1955. Having reached the retiring age limit, he has taken leave of the ICRC, to which he devoted all his energy and zeal for the past thirty-six years.

It was in 1940, soon after war had broken out, that Mr. Lossier joined the ICRC. He was first employed at the Central Secretariat, a department that soon became deeply involved in matters concerning civilian victims of the war. Here he took charge of an important section of the Central Tracing Agency, the "civilian messages" section; more than twenty-five million civilian messages were received or sent during the conflict. In 1943, he was appointed deputy director of the division for prisoners, internees and civilians.

With the coming of peace, he was able to return to what had never ceased to be his original calling: the expression of humanitarian ideas. He became joint editor of the Review with L. Demolis, on whose retirement in 1955 he was appointed sole editor.

From then onwards, Lossier dedicated himself to the Review, and it is entirely due to him that it has become what it is today. Those who have been long familiar with the Review can best judge the extent of his achievement, the great merit of which is to have succeeded in reconciling the tradition of an admirable and long-established publication with the growing demands of modern journalism. For the Review is above all the official organ of the International Committee of the Red Cross, whose statements, policy declarations and other basic documents are published in it. By its very nature it is likewise the key journal for the whole of the Red Cross. It publishes articles of high quality and of

undoubted importance on the historical, philosophical and ethical elements which motivate Red Cross action and which provide the guidelines for its everyday activities. The Review, which at present appears in three languages, also contains topical news and thereby contributes substantially to publicizing the Red Cross movement as a whole. A complete set of issues constitutes an inexhaustible mine of information for research workers.

But the place occupied by Jean-Georges Lossier in the Red Cross world is much larger than his position as the Review's director and editor. As a man whose culture embraces a wide range of subjects, as a thinker, a sociologist and a writer who has been awarded four literary prizes, he has, by his writings, helped considerably in shaping the doctrine of the institution he served, in defining its mission and in proclaiming its ideals. Of the many works which he wrote on the Red Cross, two are of fundamental significance and may be considered authoritative.

The first, entitled *Fellowship—the Moral Significance of the Red Cross*, appeared in its original French version in 1947.¹ In this book, Lossier expounds the essential concept of the Red Cross, in all its fullness and development. For him, fellowship is a dynamic concept for the world of tomorrow, and he discusses the problem, repeatedly raised and never entirely resolved, of freedom. Here, too, he utters a fervent appeal for humanity and peace.

The second book, published in 1958, bears the title *Les civilisations et le service du prochain* and is the fruit of a long period devoted to research and meditation. It is a veritable monument raised to the idea of "service", in which the traditional notions of charity are confronted with the more recent ideas of justice and mutual assistance. Lossier describes, also, how the various beliefs and philosophies converge towards the same ideal of brotherhood, of which the most universal expression is the Red Cross, because it is accepted by everyone.

At its Assembly meeting of 15 December 1976, the International Committee unanimously expressed its deep appreciation of the man to whom the Red Cross and mankind owe a considerable debt of gratitude and whose modesty underlines all his other qualities. Our warmest wishes, too, are extended to him: may he long enjoy a quiet and happy retirement and may he continue—it cannot be otherwise—to be of service to his fellow-men.

J. P.

¹J.-G. Lossier, *Solidarité — Signification morale de la Croix-Rouge*, Genève (1947). The English translation was published in 1948.