

Algeria

As described in *Panorama*¹, a ceremony just held in Constantine, Algeria, gives a classic example of how one Red Cross Society can help another to develop a new service.

At the ceremony, Swedish Red Cross President Mr. Erland von Hofsten officially handed over to the Algerian Red Crescent Society the operation of an orthopaedic centre which was set up four years ago with Swedish assistance.

The centre was aimed, at the outset, at providing artificial limbs and other care for victims of accidents in former minefields left over from the Algerian war.

In the past four years more than 2,000 victims of mine explosions, mainly children and shepherds, as well as other types of accident cases, have been treated.

The Swedish Red Cross has spent more than 1,700,000 Swiss Francs on personnel and equipment for the centre, which is attached to a Constantine hospital. The staff, while caring for the patients (who number up to 60 at a time), have been training Algerian counterparts. Now the centre is under the direction of an Algerian doctor, trained in Sweden by the Red Cross.

Netherlands

On the occasion of its Centenary, the Netherlands Red Cross has produced an impressive work with many illustrations which describes the history and actions of the National Society since its foundation in 1867².

¹ League of Red Cross Societies, Geneva, February 1968.

² Jonkheer G. M. Verspyck, *Het nederlandse Roode Kruis (1867-1967)*, G. F. Callenbach, N.V., Nijkerk, 1967, 392 p.

The author, Jonkheer G. M. Verspyck, who was for many years Director-General of the Society, begins by analysing the evolution of humane feeling in modern times and this wide sweep leads him to such personalities as S. J. Brugmans, Florence Nightingale, Henry Dunant and other pioneers of the Red Cross movement. He also describes the fine personality of a great friend of Dunant, Dr. Johan Hendrik Christiaan Basting, who took part with such enthusiasm in the initial idea and working of the Red Cross in the Netherlands.

We then see how were successively signed the Geneva Conventions to which the Netherlands Government were amongst the first to accede.

The National Society very soon undertook generous action not only in the country itself, but also abroad. It intervened in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian war, then at the end of the 19th century when localized conflicts were constantly breaking out. It was to be seen everywhere, bringing relief, sending ambulances and caring for the wounded at the front and in the rear. It was present in Borneo and at Atjeh; during the Russo-Turkish war; in South Africa; in Egypt; during the Serbo-Bulgarian and Sino-Japanese conflicts; in the Balkans; and during the epidemics of plague in Java and typhus at Enschede.

During the two world wars it courageously carried out its relief task in difficult conditions. Since then, creating a constantly expanding administration in the country itself and starting new work, it is the model of a Red Cross Society which steps in wherever private initiative can provide remedies and fill a place which the State is pleased to leave to it. It in fact symbolizes the spirit of active foresight and is open to all sufferings, to those which are hidden as well as to those which are too visible not to be appeals.

Mr. Verspyck describes the works of originality such as, amongst others, the Henry Dunant House at Zeist and the Henry Dunant boats which carry invalids on cruises on the canals. He devotes several pages to the Red Cross central laboratory of blood transfusion which was started in 1939. Installed in Amsterdam it has become a veritable research centre as the *International Review* showed in an article on the subject in its number of October 1961.

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

The Society's initiatives abroad are multiplying and these the author recalls by citing in chronological order the relief actions which show their diversity: 1951 and 1952, Italy—1953, Greece—1956 and 1957, Hungary—1958 and 1962, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia—1959, France—1960, Morocco—1961, Congo—1962, Iran—1963, Indonesia—1963, Yugoslavia—1966, Turkey—1966, Italy—1967, Middle East.

The last chapter describes the administrative form of the National Red Cross, its division into provincial sections, its legal status and the tasks which the government officially recognizes it can undertake. It can thus be seen that it has become one of the tangible manifestations of the moral strength of the country and that it is assigned a prominent place in the community. This was, moreover, demonstrated at the Centenary celebrations in The Hague last September at which senior government officials and other leading personalities paid it tribute.

This work gives proof of what a Red Cross Society can do and the feats it can accomplish when it is inspired, as in the Netherlands, by a spirit of solidarity and alert imagination.

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It should be added that the Netherlands Red Cross has published a second book on the occasion of its Centenary¹. Smaller in size, it is intended for teachers and also for youth and contains interesting information about the Junior Red Cross and its work in many fields.

¹ *Altijd overal iedereen, 1867-1967*, Netherlands Red Cross, The Hague, 1967.