

NEWS OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES

Formerly: International Bulletin of Red Cross Societies, founded in 1869

Bulgaria

Under the title *Bulgarian Red Cross*, the National Society has just published an album of photographs with captions in Russian, French and English. This album gives an extensive and vivid idea of the tasks undertaken under our emblem in Bulgaria. Be it in laboratories, public libraries, hospitals, hygiene classes, first-aid, sanitation supervision, the training of nurses, first-aid posts, education of youth in hygiene and emergency relief, etc., the Red Cross is present and volunteers play an important part in it.

One can follow with unwavering interest the country's development in the field of medical service for example, and, at the same time, the important help given by the Bulgarian Red Cross in the organization of sections and teams which have to bring hygiene, health and comfort to the population and also, by practical exercises, instil among people the idea of mutual assistance. Special attention is paid to all things related to childhood and the education of youth in hygiene. In the field of first-aid, the workman in the factory or mill, the peasant in the fields, the mountaineer on the summits, the sportsman in the stadium, all know that the Red Cross is at hand, ready to assist them. Thus it can be seen that the Red Cross may become an essential and vital element in the life of a country.

France

Under the title "*Cent ans de la Croix-Rouge Française — Au Service de l'Humanité*¹" the French Red Cross has produced a fine work of some 180 pages, beautifully presented and amply illustrated. The preface was written by the President of the French Red Cross, Mr. André François-Poncet, in which he lays stress

¹ Hachette, Paris, 1963.

on the "miraculous" aspect of Red Cross history, considering that only a mere five years after Dunant's appeal, "sixteen countries bound themselves by treaty to respect the wounded, to give them and those who cared for them neutral status, thus giving the lie to *Inter arma silent leges* and replacing it by the motto *Inter arma caritas*". He then put the question: "What would Dunant see if he were to come back amongst us?" In a few lines of reply he sketches for the reader "the tremendous growth of the movement he initiated, the vast work performed under the impetus provided by the ICRC, the direct descendent of his small Committee of Five".

Mr. François-Poncet then turns to the subject of the book: the French Red Cross. "If Dunant returned amongst us, he would see that France holds a place of honour in the movement to which he devoted his life." In an eloquent survey, he gave an outline of this National Society's actions in the course of a century, which, nowadays, functions in a manner similar to an auxiliary service of the State," whilst preserving its pioneer rôle and intervening wherever there is some dearth, some shortage, or where some experiment is called for . . ." He concludes with an observation, which is of itself a reason for a hopeful outlook: The French Red Cross may look with confidence to its 1,200,000 members, for they will be equal to the task of facing the future.

In his foreword, the author, Mr. Ruault, warns the reader that in view of the abundant subject matter, "he does not claim to have covered the whole field". However, he has dealt with the essentials and displayed a talent of conveying to the reader implications which are not exhaustively dealt with in the text. His "historical introduction" takes us back a hundred years, recalling Henry Dunant's biography and recounting the events which led up to the foundation of the ICRC, of the French Red Cross and later on of the League. Many photos are included, showing the men who contributed to the foundation of the ICRC or to the drafting of the first Convention, as well as the men who formed and organized the French Red Cross Society.

Several chapters deal with the activities of the Society in time of war on behalf of troops and civilian victims of war, both in France and elsewhere.