

ALGERIAN REFUGEE RELIEF PROGRAMME

The League of Red Cross Societies has just published, in French and in English, the final report on the relief action it undertook from 1959 to 1962, on behalf of Algerian refugees who had sought asylum in Tunisia and Morocco. Arrangements had to be made to provide subsistence for a continuously increasing number of refugees of which there were no less than 300,000 when the moment came for their repatriation in 1962.

The report opens with a message from Mr. Schnyder, United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees. He mentions the close and useful co-operation throughout the whole action between the League and the Office of which he is the Head. In a foreword the League Secretary-General, Mr. Beer, recalls that this action " was to give birth to one of the largest relief operations ever carried out by the League ". He pays tribute to all the National Societies which participated in this splendid work of which he says : " Not only assistance was extended to unfortunate victims but they were given hope. Not only did it save them from dying, it gave them new life ; not only did it console those who had been uprooted from their homes, but it reintegrated them in their native village ".

Both in word and picture this brochure describes the difficulties of the operation. Many photographs are included which were taken on the spot. Scenes of desolation are depicted side by side with those of the joy at receiving a bowl of milk or soup or some article of clothing to replace what has been worn to miserable rags.

The report gives a historical background, and after relating the early steps taken by the Red Cross in 1957, it expounds, under the heading " Assistance in Tunisia and Morocco ", on the setting afoot of the programme and on the organization of this large-scale operation which was carried on until the refugees' return to their own country. In an annex to the report, details are given of the contributions received through the intermediary of the League and of the High Commissioner for Refugees which amounted to over 96 million Swiss Francs.

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