

ELSA BRANDSTRÖM¹

by

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The *Revue internationale* has already had occasion to publish articles on Elsa Brandström². A new biography has now appeared in German which is illustrated by a series of photographs depicting this generous-hearted woman in many different circumstances, carrying out humanitarian tasks in her family or amongst friends.

On reading this book, we discover how Elsa Brandström was gradually led to devote her whole life to those who were suffering. There were first of all the German prisoners of war held in Siberia. Daughter of a Swedish diplomat and herself born in Russia, she well foresaw all the difficulties she would encounter in order to bring aid to these men whom destiny had forced into total misery, both physical and moral. Nothing however could stop her, and the aid and support which she brought them in exceptionally hard circumstances were proof of courage and determination, examples of which we find throughout these pages. After the First World War, in the years 1920-1930, her mind and heart steeled by her experiences in Siberia, she was to continue her work. The author describes her in Germany intervening in particular on behalf of repatriated prisoners and war orphans. She then went to the United States and continued to be active for the victims of war and, amongst others, Jewish refugees in America.

So much courage and energy were to find further fields of activity after the Second World War. She returned to Germany in 1945 and engaged in a relief action for refugees as well as for children for whom she founded a home near Chemnitz. She died in 1948 on her return to the USA.

The book is most attractively written and one follows with unflagging interest the vicissitudes of her life filled with such rich experience. What perhaps strikes one most about Elsa Brandström is that she appears to have fully reconciled her life of self-sacrifice with that of being a wife and mother.

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¹ Quell-Verlag, Stuttgart.

² See *Revue internationale*, August 1920, June 1958.