

harmony and disinterested devotion to fellowmen, presented diplomas at Red Cross headquarters to about sixty girls and young men, who had become first aid instructors and first aiders.

In the afternoon, football and handball matches were played concurrently on two different sports grounds, watched by large crowds and members of the Red Cross Central Committee.

Finally, to bring this splendid day to a fitting close, a theatre show was put on in the evening. Many leading figures, including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Public Works and several members of the diplomatic corps, were present. Following a programme of songs and dances, a local company put on a play produced by the author.

The new ICRC Regional Delegate for West and Central Africa, Mr. Tschiffeli, who had just arrived at Yaoundé, and who had been invited to these various celebrations, was also present.

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## Czechoslovakia

*Last December, the International Review reported the fiftieth anniversary of the Czechoslovak Red Cross and the celebrations that took place in Prague. Since then we have received an article from Dr. Zdenek Gazdik, Secretary General of the National Society, entitled: "Half a century of work well done". We are pleased to be able to give you the conclusions he draws. The author first traces the constant growth of the Czechoslovak Red Cross and its constant need to adapt itself to modern development, and from the history of half a century draws a lesson for the future:*

The Czechoslovak Red Cross has become a vast organization, of which almost one citizen in ten is a member. It has had many ups and downs, but is one of the rare national organizations that has managed to ensure its continuity in present-day Czechoslovakia. And it can look back on its activities over the past years with satisfaction. It has been able to maintain its honourable position in today's socialist society in Czechoslovakia. Its work is very much

appreciated and has the support of the political and governmental authorities, as was demonstrated last year by the ceremonies on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, in which both representatives of the highest authorities in the country and Red Cross activists of long standing took part. They received a number of high distinctions from the State, among which was one conferred by the President of the Republic on the Czechoslovak National Red Cross Society, for its important contribution towards the Nation's education in social security and the health and education of the people.

Let us now look at one important fact. The active founders of the Czechoslovak Red Cross are still with us to take part in the fiftieth anniversary of the Society. This is proof positive of their rare, even priceless faithfulness and of the real existence of this organization! They are—as we have just said—people who, half a century ago, started the Red Cross in conditions diametrically different from those in which present-day society and they themselves now are. They came from different social strata, which in the past were of different, even opposite, political persuasions. In spite of everything, they have, for many years without interruption, carried out their duties voluntarily and with self-denial for the benefit of their fellow-citizens and their country. Their activities, at first glance, seemed insignificant, and therefore frequently underestimated. Through their faithfulness to the ideals of the Red Cross—to which many decades before, they had acceded in entirely different external circumstances—the majority of these people gave true examples of civic conscientiousness, by putting into practice, without emotionalism or vulgar theoretical declarations, the unwritten code of civic virtues, based mainly on their individual recognition of their responsibility towards the destiny of society.

Thus, with respect to the example given of the fifty year “metamorphoses” of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, practical experience has shown that the concept of the Red Cross is beyond time, that it is not determined by the structure of society, and that it is, therefore, to the letter, the quintessence become practical reality of this “eternal mankind”, “das ewig Menschliche” as Goethe would have said.

Such are the premises we must start from in order to define the new concrete tasks which, naturally, in the decades to come will be different from those of past decades. However, the substance of humanitarianism and the pressing need to create suitable conditions for the transformation of interhuman relations remain and probably will remain the same as when, after the battle of Solferino, the women of Lombardy uttered these simple but unforgettable words: " Tutti fratelli ". It was in this spirit that the ceremonies marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Czechoslovak Red Cross also took place, so that the conclusions of such an experience, given shape precisely by the specific and complex development of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, have, indubitably, been of general value.

## Lebanon

*In March 1970, the Lebanese Red Cross celebrated its 25th anniversary. This extract from the Beirut press rapidly runs through the magnificent history of this National Society, with which the ICRC has maintained excellent relations since its foundation.*

Between 1945 and the end of 1969, over 2,342,000 patients have been treated and nearly 885,000 medicines distributed. A number of sections have been created to carry out these tasks. The school for nurses began with 7 pupils. Since then, 303 diplomas have been awarded. Another school for nurses has been created in Tripoli. For the year 1969-70, there are 61 pupils in Beirut and 25 in Tripoli.

The school for assistant nurses at Saida (Sidon), set up in 1968, has already awarded 15 diplomas and has 8 pupils at present.

The section for first-aiders, set up in 1947, had awarded 1,963 diplomas by the end of 1969. The teams of first-aiders began functioning only in 1965, although courses had been taking place since 1947. After 3 months of practical and theoretical training, the teams are assigned to sectors under their team leaders. Over them is a monitor. This year, 896 first-aiders took part in 213 operations. They treated 1,087 cases over 19,506 hours of voluntary labour.