

NEWS OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES

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

France

Events in honour of the Red Cross took place at Meaux from April 5 to 12, 1964. Extremely well organized by the town Red Cross Committee, under the direction of Dr. Jean-Louis Happert, its Vice-President, in co-operation with the authorities, the press and the local population, they could certainly serve as an example for other enterprises of a similar nature.

A considerable amount of care had gone into preparing the programme. A number of articles had appeared in the press announcing a "Red Cross Day" with a series of events in commemoration of the work of the Red Cross, including the inauguration by Medical Inspector-General Debenedetti, Vice-President of the French Red Cross, of Henry Dunant Avenue, a stirring ceremony in front of the war memorial, with the presentation of a flag to the first-aiders of Meaux and the reading out of citations recalling the devotion of those who had died "in the service of the Red Cross".

Nothing bearing on the Red Cross was forgotten at the exhibition which opened shortly afterwards.¹ Photographs and a large number of documents illustrated the history of the Red Cross, from its origins to the present day, with its activities in time of war, from the Schleswig-Holstein conflict in 1864 to the struggle in the Yemen which is still continuing, as well as relief actions in cases of natural disaster.

¹ *Plate.*

The work of the Central Tracing Agency was clearly shown by photographs, letters, prisoners' cards and a variety of other material. The tasks accomplished by the National Societies throughout the world in relief matters also held an important place. Insignia, banners, posters, photographs and publications emphasized the universality of the Red Cross, also illustrated by a remarkable philatelic exhibition. The action of the French Red Cross in all spheres naturally occupied an important place and the Val de Grâce Museum had made available some most interesting documents to the Meaux Committee.

A temporary post-office, provided with a special post mark, was open throughout the first day of the exhibition. A souvenir card, published by the Meaux Committee, was on sale, as well as publications produced by the ICRC, the League and the French Red Cross. The end of « Red Cross Day » was marked by a demonstration organized on the River Marne by first-aid workers of the Red Cross, in co-operation with Breton hospital rescuers, civil defence services and the Meaux and National Gendarmerie. Helicopters, fast rescue craft and frogmen took part in a rescue operation. The manoeuvres which had attracted large crowds on both banks were carried out with precision and speed which did credit to the first-aiders of the Meaux Red Cross Branch.

Mention should also be made of the part played by information media in the events which took place at Meaux. In addition to advertisements, press articles, posters and emblems displayed in a large number of shops, a Red Cross games competition was organized, as well as a cinema festival at which a showing was given of the film " Red Cross on White Ground ", made especially for the occasion of the Centenary and which the *International Review* has described in a recent issue.



The Meaux Committee of the French Red Cross organized an exhibition of which these are two examples.

