

by Michael Barratt Brown

1. WORK OF VOLUNTARY SOCIETIES DURING THIS WAR.

- (a) The Red Cross organisations' work for prisoners of war has become known all over the world in providing parcels and a message service under the International Red Cross for prisoners.
- (b) The Greek Red Cross under the direction of the Swedish-Swiss Commission has been distributing the food sent through the blockade from Canada to Greece.
- (c) Near East Foundation was working in Greece right up to the German invasion.
- (d) Friends' Polish Relief Fund and other organisations have been caring for refugees from occupied Europe.
- (e) The Friends' Ambulance Unit and many other voluntary organisations in England assisted in air raid relief work in the air raid shelters, rest centres for the homeless, feeding and evacuation schemes in England.

2. WORK OF VOLUNTARY SOCIETIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

- (a) The British Red Cross and St. Joint War Organisation work in supplementing the medical services and in welfare work is wellknown.
- (b) The work of the welfare bodies Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Salvation Army, Toc H., etc., in hostels, huts and canteens, in assisting the Army welfare authorities is equally wellknown.
- (c) The Friends' Ambulance Unit in Army medical units and in village clinics in Syria and Ethiopia has supplemented official services and carried on work which would otherwise have not been done.
- (d) The Greek and American Red Cross societies have provided clothing, vitamin foods and medical supplies in refugee camps in Palestine, Egypt, Iran and Central Africa.
- (e) The Greek War Relief Association of America has provided funds for some of the work in these camps and personnel and supplies for stimulating occupations amongst the refugees.
- (f) Near East Foundation, Memnonite Central Relief Agency, British Red Cross, and Friends' Ambulance Unit have recently provided personnel for medical, hygiene, nursing, welfare, and other work in M.E.R.R.A. camps for Greek and Yugoslav refugees, at present a total of about sixty, of whom forty are getting the experience of work in camps as training for work in A.T.L. units in the Balkans.

3. THE CONTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTARY SOCIETIES can be categorised under the following headings in all this work:-

- (a) Speed and action in getting to the place where relief is needed and initiating work which is later taken on by official organisations.
- (b) Providing executive personnel willing and concerned to give personal service within official schemes, particularly in getting people on to their feet and working again.
- (c) Getting on with the job on the ground even while the political and military problems are argued out at the top.
- (d) Helping special categories of people who are not easily covered by official planning.
- (e) Ensuring a fair distribution of goods either from their own or from official sources.
- (f) Stimulating interest in the wealthier countries in the needs of distressed and displaced people, refugees, etc., and in carrying out the will of people at home in England and America with humanitarian concern.