

# IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

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## THE RED CROSS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

A meeting took place in San Salvador in January 1966, under the aegis of the League of Red Cross Societies, of the representatives of the following countries' National Societies : Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico and the United States.

The President of the Red Cross of El Salvador, Mr. R. A. Jimenez delivered an opening address in which he recalled that the Red Cross had existed in his country for 81 years and that it has taken deep root amongst the people. Like its sister Societies it is animated with the desire to serve, but efforts of aid are limited and necessarily invalid " unless technical methods are joined to sentiment. This is the reason for our meetings where we learn from others' experiences, as a result of which we can train capable personnel, recruited from among so many people of goodwill who want to serve the Red Cross."

The Minister of Health and Social Welfare of El Salvador welcomed the participants. " I wish to express my gratitude to all who serve our fine institution, in particular those volunteers always ready to help at any time or anywhere once their aid is required ".

Mr. Barroso Chavez, Chairman of the League of Red Cross Societies and President of the Mexican Red Cross, pointed out the necessity for the Red Cross to appeal to new forces by proposing to volunteers, women of the Red Cross, first-aiders, ambulance-drivers and others, a high ideal which will inspire them in their daily, most useful, tasks. " There are many who wish to serve others, but do not know how to do so. We must guide them and assure them of the effectiveness of their co-operation ".

At working meetings, each delegation explained all that it had accomplished in its own country since the last session of Latin

American Societies which took place at San José, Costa Rica. One of the principal activities is being pursued most effectively by the women's committees and held an important place in the discussions on first-aid.

Recommendations were then passed of which these were the most significant : Societies should be exempt from customs duty on products which they have to import—Courses on the Red Cross should be introduced into school programmes—In the case of natural disasters or conflict, Red Cross personnel should be able to go freely throughout Central America from one country to another—Junior Red Cross work should be intensified—National Societies must be able to count continuously on trained personnel and be provided with mobile equipment to ensure rapid communication.

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### Dominican Republic

The Dominican Red Cross is now producing a monthly publication, *Boletín Informativo de la Cruz Roja Dominicana*, whose first number in March 1966 contains interesting details on the National Society's present work and plans. Due credit should be given to this useful medium of information whose object is defined as "to enable our members and provincial and municipal committees to become acquainted with the tasks which have been accomplished and which are motivated by our fundamental principles. We call upon all volunteers who may wish to co-operate with us and we offer them the opportunity of discussing their projects, humanitarian work and ideals."

In an editorial followed by a study entitled "What the Red Cross is and what its principles are", mention is made of Solferino, of Dunant's book and undertakings, of the setting up of the Committee of Five and also of the first international meeting in Geneva in 1864 of delegates from 16 different countries. Another article deals with a subject which we know was discussed at length at the International Conference last year in Vienna, that of civil defence and the necessary intervention on the part of the State.