

FOURTH REGIONAL MEETING OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES IN MEXICO

The fourth meeting of Presidents and Technical Personnel of the National Societies of North America, Mexico, Central America and Panama was held in Mexico City from 18 to 22 November 1969. Organized under the patronage of the League of Red Cross Societies, it followed on the meeting which took place in November 1967 in Guatemala and like the previous ones its purpose was to strengthen the personal contacts between leading members of the National Societies of that part of the world and draw up common programmes. There were thus four specialist seminars on first-aid, the Junior Red Cross, nurses and home care and women's voluntary work.

During the Presidents' meeting, at which Mr. Serge Nesi, ICRC delegate-general for Latin America, was present, various questions such as the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions, the history, principles and action of the Red Cross were the subject of resolutions some of which were as follows.

The recommendation was first of all made, that all National Societies make representations with their respective authorities for a course on the Red Cross to be introduced in school programmes as well as in military colleges (Resolution 2).

Submitted by the Guatemalan Red Cross, a document entitled "History of the Red Cross, its fundamental principles and the Geneva Conventions" and intended chiefly for the National Societies and military colleges, was accepted and will be presented for definite approval to the IXth Inter-American Red Cross

Conference which will be held in Managua in November 1970 (Resolution 3).

Two resolutions are of more particular interest for the ICRC. The one recommends National Societies to remind their governments of their obligations regarding dissemination of the Geneva Conventions (Resolution 11) and the other concerning ICRC activity for political detainees (Resolution 10). The following is the complete text of these two resolutions:

Diffusion of Geneva Conventions

The National Red Cross Societies of the United States, Mexico, Central America and Panama, bearing in mind the obligations incumbent on the Red Cross, in the event of armed conflict or internal disturbances, to protect conflict victims as effectively as possible,

- a) *recommend National Societies urgently to remind their Governments of articles 47 (I), 48 (II), 127 (III) and 144 (IV) of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, according to which " the High Contracting Parties undertake, in time of peace and in time of war, to disseminate the text of the present Convention as widely as possible in their respective countries and, in particular, to include the study thereof in their programmes of military and, if possible, civil instruction, so that the principles thereof may become known to the entire population, in particular to the armed fighting forces, the medical personnel and the chaplains ".*
- b) *recommend National Societies to inform the ICRC of the outcome of such action and of arrangements made to implement the articles in question.*

Political Detainees

The National Red Cross Societies of the United States, Mexico, Central America and Panama,

- a) *express their gratitude to the ICRC for its humanitarian action in various parts of the world for the benefit of persons deprived of freedom for offences or reasons which are political or ideological.*

- b) *recommend National Societies to give their support to future actions undertaken by the International Committee in this field and to seek to participate as much as possible and on a regular basis in that action and at the same time to request the ICRC's material assistance in case of need.*

HENRY DUNANT INSTITUTE

Can there be a more complex institution than the Red Cross?

Its activities are as numerous as the causes of man's suffering. Furthermore, they vary considerably from one country to another.

To face up to such divergent tasks both in time of peace and in war, the Red Cross has set up a large number of national and international bodies. Is it then surprising that the general public is lost in the maze? There are also many amongst the Red Cross who see no clearer.

To enable the Red Cross the better to explain itself and give a clear and simple general view of its functions, the Henry Dunant Institute has established three instructional aids.¹

There is first of all a folder in five colours which gives at a glance the main situations in which the Red Cross is called upon to act. By folding, one can see how the Red Cross intervenes in situations of distress and understand the task of the different Red Cross bodies and the methods they employ.

Great care has been taken in the lay-out and draughtmanship of this folder which is of attractive design.

For those having to give talks on the Red Cross, the diagrams illustrating the folder also exist in diapositive form.

The text of a model lecture of some forty-five minutes duration has been drawn up by Mr. Pierre Boissier, Director of the Institute,

¹ On sale at the Henry Dunant Institute, 3, rue de Varembeé - 1202 Geneva. Folder: 5 sw.frs. Diapositives (the set): 5.50 sw.frs. Lecture: 5 sw.frs. Lower charges for bulk orders.