

## Dissemination Among Youth of Knowledge of the Geneva Conventions

One of the most effective methods of making the Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions known is action at school level. It was for that reason that the ICRC undertook to distribute widely a textbook entitled *The Red Cross and My Country* (in English and French) which the *International Review* has mentioned in several previous issues<sup>1</sup>. This large scale information campaign was started in Africa in the autumn of 1967. Since then many governments have agreed to the distribution of the manual in their schools. At present there are 230,000 copies—published and donated to the relevant authorities by the ICRC—in use in primary schools in twenty-one African States.

The International Committee is now directing its efforts also towards Asia and a book intended for that continent has been edited this year. In July 1969 the ICRC submitted a draft of this school textbook and of a "Teacher's Manual" to seventeen governments and National Red Cross Societies in Burma, Japan, Cambodia, Ceylon, Republic of Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of Vietnam.

Applying a method which has proved its worth already, the International Committee sent with each of these draft copies two detailed questionnaires on the expediency and effectiveness of such an undertaking and inviting criticism and suggestions which the States concerned might wish to make on the substance and the presentation of the book. Such a large scale information campaign on the Geneva Conventions and the humanitarian principles would be inconceivable without close and active co-operation between the relevant authorities and the ICRC.

---

<sup>1</sup> See, in particular, *International Review*, October 1968.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

At the end of November nine countries had replied. Burma, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, approved the drafts. Japan, which is very active in diffusing the Geneva Conventions among youth stated it would base its programme on the drafts, whilst Ceylon and India expressed the wish for an edition better adapted, if possible, to these countries.

In addition, during preliminary discussions, the delegates of Cambodia, Laos and the Republic of Vietnam conveyed their agreement in principle with this new action for the diffusion of the Geneva Conventions.

Some countries have declared their intention of translating the books in their local languages. Practical possibilities for translation and publication will soon be studied in direct co-operation with the Ministries of Education in the countries concerned and with the National Red Cross Societies.

It is planned to print some 250,000 copies for Asia; they will be donated by the ICRC. Needs however are very considerable and it must be foreseen that the International Committee will not be able to finance additional copies and that the expense of printing more will have to be borne by the Governments.

---