

## THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE RED CROSS

*The **International Review of the Red Cross** is 125 years old — an age which might well be called venerable, unless the term “honourable” is preferred, but in any case a surprising age for a publication.*

*Periodical publications which have lasted for so long are rare indeed, and the number of such international and multilingual reviews can be counted on the fingers of one hand.*

*Yet the phenomenon is less surprising when we bear in mind that the **Review** is the official publication of one of the oldest organizations with an international vocation and that it reflects the ideas and work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; in fact, it bears witness to the continuity of a Movement which has brought assistance and protection to suffering mankind for 130 years.*

*To leaf through the thousands of pages of the **Review** is to relive the history of the Movement, practically day by day; it is to discover how a perfectly simple idea, engendered by Henry Dunant’s humanitarian response, has given rise to a whole set of institutions now joined together in a Movement that has become universal; it is to understand how the policy and principles of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, those tenets which, according to Jean Pictet, have been hammered out by the rough school of life, have gradually imposed themselves on the international community; and finally it is to follow the fascinating adventure of international humanitarian law, to which the **Review** has given special attention since its first issue of October 1869, when Gustave Moynier was already appealing for the promotion and development of the Convention of 1864.*

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*From the **Review**’s many articles on the mission and activities of the various components of the Movement, the reader will be able to gauge*

*the extent to which the Red Cross has committed itself from the outset to promoting the welfare of humankind, how it has always borne the well-being of communities in mind by constantly adapting its mission and its tasks to their needs and how it has been the standard-bearer of progress in the struggle for human dignity and a peaceful world.*

*The **Review** is a reflection of this eventful history of ICRC protection and assistance and of the humanitarian law underlying it, a history well deserved by the delegates in the field, the legal experts and all staff members, known and unknown. By their initiative, their competence, their faith and their perseverance, they have helped to limit the effects of violence and hatred on the battlefield and to establish humanitarian rules for the benefit of combatants and non-combatants; they have tried to ensure that the law prevails in all circumstances, particularly by making it better understood in order that it may be better respected.*

*By focusing individually, in several special issues and series of articles over the past few years, on a wide variety of aspects of law, principles and humanitarian policy, by associating representatives of different schools of thought more closely with its studies and by increasingly assuming the role of a forum for ideas (since the Movement needs to listen to others), the **Review** has shown that it is indeed a valuable instrument for the dissemination of human values and that now as before it is contributing in its own way to the establishment of a culture based on solidarity and tolerance.*

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*On the occasion of this 125th anniversary, I should like to pay tribute to two exceptional people who have left their mark on the **Review**.*

*Jean Pictet, honorary Vice-President of the ICRC, is an exemplary "Red Cross man" who formulated the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and whose inspiration helped to bring the present Geneva Conventions into being. He has allowed the **Review** to be the first to publish a large number of his studies on various aspects of humanitarian law and principles, studies so masterly that they have become internationally authoritative. His pen has accomplished wonders, for by conveying his ideas and his profound convictions it has in turn convinced generations of diplomats, academics and members of the Red Cross.*

*Jean Pictet has just celebrated his 80th birthday, and we should like once again to express our enormous gratitude to him and to wish him health and happiness in tranquillity.*

*Jean-Georges Lossier guided the fortunes of the **Review** for over thirty years: he was the very soul of this publication, which he developed and adapted over the years, constantly upholding the tradition of quality in true respect for the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent.*

*He also enriched the in-depth coverage of the Movement and its work by his own reflections on solidarity and the spirit of service to others.*

*The **Review** owes much to these two great servants of the Red Cross. May it continue to draw inspiration from their message for a long time to come.*

*Long live the **International Review of the Red Cross!***

***Cornelio Sommaruga**  
President  
International Committee  
of the Red Cross*