

A note from the Editor

Just for once, the *Review* is devoting an issue almost entirely to the International Committee of the Red Cross and its activities in behalf of war victims.

Professor David Forsythe's article examines one of the most important aspects of the ICRC's mandate by analysing its recent assistance operations for civilian populations in distress. He considers the issues involved and draws attention to existing problems and to those which are bound to arise in the near future. His analysis does not spare the ICRC, and he raises several questions that will give the reader food for thought.

André Durand opens a page of ICRC history with a biographical essay on Gustave Moynier, one of the founders of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and President of the ICRC from 1864 to 1910. The author describes the somewhat paradoxical relationship between the organizations advocating pacifism and the Red Cross.

Turning now to official documents, the *Review* is publishing the new rules governing access to the ICRC's archives. Underlying this information is a significant change in the institution's policy in such matters: historians and other individuals interested in ICRC activities may henceforth consult files that have been closed for fifty years, as is the case in many national archives.

Despite the passing years, the memory of the Second World War remains alive, as may be seen from the current controversy about property deposited in Swiss banks at the time by victims of Nazi persecution. In the wake of the accusations levelled against Switzerland and its banking secrecy, the ICRC has also come in for criticism, and this issue of the *Review* contains the institution's preliminary clarification of the issue.

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