

yet have such a service, and the means of making the role of the Red Crescent and Red Cross and the underlying principles of the Geneva Conventions widely known; respect of the red crescent emblem; and the translation of ICRC publications into Arabic.

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### REASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE RED CROSS

*In an article published in the review La Croix-Rouge Suisse (Berne, 1973, No. 1), Professor Hans Haug, President of the Swiss Red Cross and Vice-President of the League, deals with fresh problems that are now confronting the Red Cross movement. After mentioning that the attempts to reassess Red Cross duties, structures and methods and instruments of work have multiplied in the national and international fields, and that in a number of countries cultural and other foundations serving the public interest have provided funds to allow of a careful study being made, he goes on to say:*

The world Red Cross movement, which was launched in 1863, is obviously facing a great many problems which from year to year are looming ever larger and more acute. In the developed countries, National Red Cross Societies are wondering whether they can go on playing the traditional role of "auxiliaries to the public authorities" in States where social welfare is very advanced or in the context of total defence, and whether any gaps remain to be filled in the performance of their humanitarian duties. The traditional role of Red Cross Societies in providing relief for the victims of disasters and conflicts has also been shaken, either because the State itself and its powerful organizations (the army, civil defence, disaster relief bodies) render that aid, or because other private aid bodies, denominational bodies for instance, are increasingly active in that field. In developing countries, the reverse is usually the case: for want of financial resources and

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qualified personnel, young Red Cross Societies are often unable to fulfil the many urgent tasks before them or to find the right solution to a problem. It is therefore imperative to give those Societies effective aid in their development.

Red Cross problems are no less formidable in the international sphere. Relief and protection for victims of conflicts are hampered by the fact that war within a State or between States is constantly assuming new forms, and that recourse to violence may lead to total warfare (to nuclear warfare for instance) or to guerrilla warfare and acts of terrorism and piracy. As regards aid for the victims of conflicts and disasters, the Red Cross is being increasingly confronted by other international assistance bodies, above all by the United Nations, which through its auxiliary organs and specialized agencies is becoming ever more committed in the humanitarian sector. The recent appointment of a "United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator" shows that, besides concerning itself with respect for human rights and development aid, the United Nations proposes to render aid in emergencies. . .