

## Books and reviews

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### HUMANITY FOR ALL

#### *The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*<sup>1</sup>

When Hans Haug presents us with another book, his friends and acquaintances know they can look forward to something special. Their certainty is based not only on Haug's personality and lifelong experience of the Red Cross (he has held almost all the senior positions one man possibly could — Secretary General and President of an extremely active National Society, Vice-President of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,<sup>2</sup> member of the International Committee of the Red Cross) but also on his comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter and, last but not least, his polished prose and unflinching presentation of essentials with clarity and precision.

But even for this unparalleled authority on the Red Cross and Red Crescent, presenting the entire Movement between the covers of one book is a literary *tour de force*. Only very few authors accomplish such a feat in their own specialized domain. Hans Haug is the first to have ventured — and succeeded — on the topic of the Red Cross. His 1966 book *Rotes Kreuz: Werden; Gestalt; Wirken* probably stood him in good stead as preparatory work. But this new book has a loftier aim. In his introduction, Haug says that the real purpose of the book is to rally many more people in all countries, all sectors of society and all age groups to the rewarding cause of the Red Cross.

In his preface, ICRC President *Cornelio Sommaruga* points out that the book reflects the many forms the author's commitment to the Movement's universal message has taken, and he thanks his friend for his masterly work. The Federation President, the Venezuelan *Mario Villarroel Lander*, praises Haug's versatility, his contribution to the development of the Red Cross, his legal scholarship and above all his intellectual honesty.

This voluminous work is divided into seven chapters. Chapter I relates the origins of the Red Cross. The history of the horrors of war, and of humanity in war, unfolds before us. Examples are given of both, from Antiquity to the mid-nineteenth century; they are followed by the actual story of how the Red Cross was founded. Especially impressive is the characterization of the

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Haug, *Menschlichkeit für alle — Die Weltbewegung des Roten Kreuzes und des Roten Halbmonds*, Henry Dunant Institute, Verlag Haupt, Berne and Stuttgart, 696 pp. (currently being translated into *English*).

<sup>2</sup> Now the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

founders themselves, the “Committee of Five”. All five are vividly portrayed, with Henry Dunant, of course, described in particular detail.

The second chapter, which is almost 400 pages long and is the main part of the book, presents the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the National Societies and the League.

Strange as it may seem, misunderstandings about the ICRC are rife to this day. Even the most well-intentioned explanations can create an aura that only serves to obscure it. Haug helps clear up these misunderstandings by sticking to the essentials in what is a purely factual presentation. His historical review of ICRC activities from 1863 to 1990, in particular during both World Wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945), is one example. Of great interest even to long-standing Red Cross members is Haug’s detailed description of the roles, duties and activities of the ICRC, showing not only the extensive possibilities of Red Cross work but also its inherent limits. Indeed, much of the criticism periodically directed at the ICRC arises from ignorance of those limits. The section on the institution’s “characteristics” lets us take a glance behind the scenes. Here Haug deals with such key topics as the choice (by cooptation) of the Committee members, their Swiss nationality, the ICRC’s governing bodies and administration, financial matters, its specific independence, neutrality and impartiality, which go beyond those of the National Societies, and its legal nature. Anyone who frequently has occasion to speak about the ICRC in public will recognize these subjects as those which arouse particular interest in any discussion.

The next section gives examples of recent activities and was written by *Françoise Perret*, a research officer at the ICRC. She gives a series of carefully compiled examples of ICRC protection and assistance operations in the second half of this century. The reader will come across familiar names, such as Algeria, Hungary, Israel and the Arab States, and be disappointed by the absence of others: Vietnam and Cambodia, for example. This is inevitable whenever a selection has to be made.

Chapter II then moves on to the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, another major part of the book. Most of this section consists of the profiles of 16 National Societies chosen to represent all parts of the world, small and large Societies and their manifold activities.

The third main part of Chapter II deals with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The outline is identical to that used for the ICRC — development, roles, activities and characteristics — making comparison easy. Again, the general observations are followed by examples of recent activities, written in this case by *Jean-Pierre Robert-Tissot*. For many years head of the League’s Relief Department, Robert-Tissot was in charge of numerous assistance operations and hence writes from first-hand knowledge.

The fourth main part of Chapter II looks at the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as a whole. A historical overview and a study of the Movement’s legal nature are followed by a discussion of the Movement’s statutory bodies, in which the author quite understandably focuses on the International Red Cross Conferences. His description of them alone is a small masterpiece.

This essential chapter ends with an analysis of the relationship between the ICRC and the League, and a description of the Henry Dunant Institute.

Chapter III is a study of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Although Haug has often written or spoken about the Principles, individually or as a whole, in this book he gives a newly conceived and integrated analysis of them. Haug follows the line taken by Max Huber and Jean Pictet, enhancing their thoughts with his own reflections, which are deeply rooted in ethical considerations.

The fourth chapter is on international humanitarian law. Although Haug is an eminent expert on the subject, he entrusted the task of writing this part of the book to the ICRC's legal adviser *Hans-Peter Gasser* to ensure that the Red Cross point of view would be taken into due account. Not content simply to summarize the existing provisions of international humanitarian law, Gasser also looks at certain complex questions such as the relationship between the law of Geneva and the law of The Hague, at wars of national liberation and at peripheral issues such as internal unrest, disturbances and tension. He also makes constant reference to human rights in general.

The final three chapters deal with topics which have for some time been the subject of intense discussion within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

In Chapter V, Haug gives us a thoughtful analysis of the Movement as a factor of peace. Although it has long been agreed that the Red Cross and Red Crescent play a key role in fostering world peace, opinions differ on the basis for that role and the best means of filling it. Hans Haug was closely involved in the relevant discussions from the outset and is therefore particularly well placed to explain the current situation.

Chapter VI looks at cooperation between the components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other national and international organizations. The Movement's partners are revealed in all their bewildering variety. Yet, however much cooperation varies in form in each individual case, there is nevertheless a clear general tendency to believe that, while the Red Cross and Red Crescent can usefully and indeed must cooperate with all these institutions, it must at the same time preserve its specificity; it cannot merge with or become subordinate to them. This also holds true for the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Haug calls on the National Societies as well to observe this limit when cooperating with other organizations.

In the book's final chapter, Haug considers the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and human rights. He starts by listing the various human rights treaties and examining their applicability and possibilities for successful implementation. The need for close interconnection between international humanitarian law and human rights treaties notwithstanding, Haug rejects the idea of integrating international humanitarian law and human rights agreements, or even only grouping them together under the general heading "international humanitarian law". By doing so he takes the position adopted by the ICRC, for example by Pictet and Schindler, and which most accurately reflects actual practice. He emphasizes the need, on the other hand, for the

Red Cross and Red Crescent institutions to call for stronger human rights agreements and to work for their implementation. He ends the book with four conclusive reasons for doing so, and thus indicates the future course to be taken.

I shall end with a word about the book's appearance: it is attractively bound, the print, on high quality paper, is easy to read, and the illustrations are clear and well-chosen. In short, it is highly recommendable from every point of view.

*Anton Schlögel*

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