

These, of course, are not all the difficulties the U.N. has been up against ever since its birth. But these are some of them. They are enough, we believe, to suggest that although there have been U.N. failures - plenty of them - its achievements, in the light of its difficulties, have been considerable.

These are days of world upheaval. That is so obvious, and has been said so often, that many do not listen when it is said again. The efficient functioning of the U.N. has been badly handicapped by the various forces let loose by the world upheaval. They will continue to affect and to some degree hamper its operations as long as any who read these words remain alive. But the thing which impresses us as we study the record is that, through these wild eight years past, the U.N. has kept alive; it has grown in membership; it has been called on by the nations to deal with increasingly difficult and dangerous issues; and little by little the United Nations has moved toward becoming an indispensable factor in world affairs. "A sheer necessity," President Eisenhower called it.

One who knew the record well summed it up in these words: "One hour after Trygve Lie arrived in the United States as Secretary-General of the United Nations, in March 1946, the Ambassador of Iran handed him the complaint of his country against the presence of Soviet troops in its territory. From that moment the United Nations has lived in constant crisis - Iran, Greece, Indonesia, atomic energy, Palestine, Berlin, Korea, China. In every crisis there were plenty of voices to say: either you settle this one quickly or the organization is dead. It is still alive and still in the midst of crisis." Probably for all the years of this generation the United Nations will continue to live in the midst of crisis. Perhaps for as long as it exists.

Where the U.N. Has Failed

"The United Nations is a failure." That's the verdict some Americans pass on it - flat, sweeping, final. Is it a reasonable verdict? Would it not be more in accord with the record to say that the U.N. has failed to do some things we wish it had done? The staunchest supporters of the U.N., including members of its Secretariat, will agree that the organization has had failures as well as successes. In evaluating the worth of the body, however, the relative importance of these is what needs to be considered. Have the failures outweighed the accomplishments? You be the judge.

A year ago Walter W. Van Kirk, who is known to millions of American churchmen as the man who has done more than any other to interpret world affairs to the churches, wrote a straight-shooting booklet on the U.N. As executive director of the Department of International Justice and Goodwill of the National Council of Churches, Dr. Van Kirk did a fine job of telling "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" about this world body as he watches it close at hand and every day. He said without hedging: "The U.N. has had its failures. Otherwise the fear of a Third World War would not be so widely prevalent." That is a just conclusion.⁶

Dr. Van Kirk listed four major failures which must be set down on the debit side of the U.N. balance sheet. The first was its failure to stop the cold war. It still hasn't