

DEVELOPMENT AND PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW ¹

The new work by Jean Pictet, former vice-president of the ICRC, which the Henry-Dunant Institute has just published jointly with Editions A. Pedone, Paris, is based on a series of lectures given in July 1982 in a course at the University of Strasbourg, organized by the International Institute of Human Rights.

After tracing the evolution of humanitarian thought and practice of the States from ancient times to the present day, the author gives an historical account of how the four Geneva Conventions and the additional Protocols were drawn up. This leads into a discussion of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, the principles common to humanitarian law and to human rights, and the principles applying to the victims of conflicts and to martial law. In the final section, Mr. Pictet answers some basic questions and criticisms that are often heard: Does the attempt to reduce the suffering inseparable from war weaken efforts to stop war? Is it possible to limit the evils generated by conflicts? Is this actually desirable? The author finally considers the profound nature of international humanitarian law and how it relates to the State and the individual.

Written in a clear, direct style and containing numerous examples from real life, this work is essential reading for all who are interested in humanitarian thought and law, or who seek a means of dissemination accessible to all.

Jacques Meurant

¹ Jean Pictet: *Développement et principes du droit international humanitaire*. Institut Henry-Dunant, Geneva, and Editions A. Pedone, Paris, 1983. 118 pages. Available in French only.]