

Overall, the 88-page book offers clear and agreeable reading. It strikes a balance between in-depth legal analysis and generality, and as such it can only be recommended to any academic scholar or UN practitioner wishing to have a quick and updated reference work on a topic which is definitely destined to supplement the indexes of legal literature for many years to come. The book's principal merit consists neither in some original *conceptualization of the legal issues nor in any fresh ideas, but rather in the subtle and orderly way in which stock has been taken of this long-standing debate.*

One or two minor criticisms can be made: namely, the occasionally cursory, rather descriptive analysis of certain issues which risks leaving the well-versed reader unsatisfied; and the often elementary, not to say poor bibliographical support of various points of law and fact about which the work provides little information (however understandable it may appear to someone writing amidst a steady stream of the latest news, the monograph could only have gained in quality by avoiding the frequent references to daily newspapers and focusing instead on scholarly writings). Admittedly, the reason for this may only be the extreme topicality of the events covered in the study, and in this sense the author should already consider the possibility of updating his study by commenting on further developments such as the currently unfolding IFOR operation in former Yugoslavia, a truly pioneering experience which only confirms — if need be — that the maintenance of international peace involves *inter alia* an unrelenting exercise in legal resourcefulness.

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**A.P.V. Rogers, *Law on the Battlefield*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1996, 170 pp.**

This 170-page book meets most of the needs of the military commander in the field. It is about the legal rules that should be known and incorporated into the military decision-making process by all officers holding command responsibility, before they issue orders to their subor-

dinates. *Law on the Battlefield* is not a manual, it is not a legal treatise, it is not a handbook. Although the author, Major General A.P.V. Rogers, is himself a lawyer in the British armed forces, the precise and concise language of this "Vademecum for the military commander" is written in language understandable to all. It has the merit of shedding light on some rather obscure aspects of the law of armed conflict, without becoming too technical for the non-lawyer.

The book does not cover all aspects of the law of armed conflict. The author has tried to single out those rules that are relevant on the battlefield, as indicated in the title. Therefore the emphasis has been placed on "Hague-type law". "Geneva-type law", i.e. the law protecting the victims of armed conflict, has been left out.

If only one page of this book were to be spared in the event of fire, I hope it would be page 70, in the conclusion to Chapter 3, "Precautions in attack". That page gives a most useful "checklist" of principles of law that should be engraved in every commander's mind. At least all professional soldiers should know the eight listed rules by heart. Much human misery and hardship and many political and also military difficulties could then be avoided. All those who read this little book will come to the conclusion that peace and war must be subject to certain rules if there are to be no further Rwanda or Yugoslavia.

Although *Law on the Battlefield* seems to be meant for the practitioner, the lawyer (civilian or military) and the interested layman will also find plenty of useful information, references and historical examples that illustrate problems encountered by military commanders in recent history, including the 1990-91 Gulf war.

Maybe a chapter summing up the customary rules governing the conduct of hostilities would have been useful in view of the various types of present-time conflicts that very often are but marginally covered by international humanitarian law. Some thoughts of the author about military operations under the umbrella of the United Nations might have been interesting as well.

In conclusion, I feel that General Rogers has written a most useful book. Perhaps the chapters devoted to cultural property and the environment are somewhat too technical and some remarks about the problems related to the use of mines might have enriched this publication, which should nonetheless find its place in every military unit.

For any military readers who are short of time I recommend the "General Principles" and all the conclusions to the chapters. If they

assimilate this information, incorporate it in their daily military duties and pass it on to their subordinates, maybe the judges of the international criminal tribunals currently being set up will have some spare time to listen to Franz Schubert's music, which the author seems to cherish...

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**Rony Brauman, *Le dilemme humanitaire. Entretien avec Philippe Petit*,<sup>1</sup> Éditions Textuel, Paris, 1996, 106 pp.**

What is very stimulating about Rony Brauman is the free-thinking approach, whether spontaneous or reflective, that he adopts in order to gain a clearer picture of the purpose of humanitarian action in today's world. In this short collection of interviews with the journalist Philippe Petit, the former President (1982 - 1994) of MSF-France<sup>2</sup> gives the reader a generous insight into his thought and creativity as he talks about the way humanitarian action has evolved and the main challenges it has to face. Compared with the current trend of stereotyped thinking, there is true delight to be found in this philosophical exercise offered by an accomplished practitioner of modern philanthropy, who at his best proves to be brilliant at demolishing generally accepted ideas.

With conventional "stamps of approval" excluded by definition from the conversation, the exchange of questions and answers spotlights the errors and shortcomings of humanitarian players against the setting of this century's major tragedies. We take a look back at the Second World War and the ICRC's deathly silence on the Jewish question, which Rony Brauman interprets as a logical consequence of all that remained unspoken from 1938, when the German Red Cross expelled its Jewish members in

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<sup>1</sup> *The humanitarian dilemma. Interview with Philippe Petit.*

<sup>2</sup> MSF: *Médecins sans frontières.*