

*Transforming the Politics of International Law: The Advisory Committee of Jurists and the Formation of the World Court in the League of Nations*

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The book is about League of Nations committees, particularly the Advisory Committee of Jurists (ACJ), in shaping the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) and the League of Nations (LoN). The first part of the book explores the historical origins of the ACJ and its mediation through civilisations, politics, and scholars. In Chapter 1, Jakob Zollmann discusses one of the most contentious phrases in international law, "civilised nations," and its politics and persistent relevance. Acknowledging the critique against the phrase as a colonial relic, the author argues that exclusion from the "civilised nations" category was based on behaviour rather than race or civilisation.

Chapter 4 traces the work of the ACJ entrusted with drafting the PCIJ statute; however, it focuses on critiquing the presence and articulation of the sources of international law. The chapter was critical of the sources 'scholarly writings' and the seemingly deliberate attempt at its non-articulation in detail. Morris suggests a social constructivist approach to understanding this phenomenon. Chapter 5 delves into Edouard Deschamps, a champion of peaceful dispute resolution. Critical of Deschamps's lack of a comprehensive vision for the normative framework of arbitration, prioritising practicality over reconciling state sovereignty with international interests, Saskia Millman notes that international arbitration did not necessitate formal governance or extensive scholarly resources to address the issue of sovereignty.

Part II of the book focuses on other unofficial members and their influential work in forming the PCIJ and the LoN. Chapter 6 vividly portrays the work of James Brown Scott and his efforts to locate a Judicialist perspective of the international order, deeply rooted in the self-righteous paradigm of American exceptionalism. Scott strategically positioned the United States as a central player within the PCIJ and LoN through his instrumental role in shaping Article 34 on compulsory jurisdiction and the procedure for nominating judges through the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Chapter 7 maps the contribution of Dionisio Anzilotti, a staunch advocate for the collective will of the states, and his compelling role in shaping the Statute. Specifically, his influence on Art. 34(1) membership of state parties, Art. 14 political and legal issues, and Art. 31(4) the appointment of Judge Ad Hoc. Chapter 8 examines the profound impact of Nicolas Politis, a humanist and pacifist, and his invaluable contributions to the sources of international law, specifically the general principles of law (Art. 38(3)). Further, it analyses his proposals concerning the election of judges (Art. 2 & 9) and the incorporation of separate opinions (Art. 57).

Chapter 9 outlines the contribution of Léon Bourgeois, a Solidarist and a radical political scholar whose French vision of *Société des Nations* served as a precursor to the LoN. Finally, Chapter 10 sheds light on the role of the Scandinavian states in developing the PCIJ, especially the process behind the ingenious *optional clause* under Art. 36 overseen by Francis Hagerup.

This book is highly recommended for scholars and enthusiasts who are avidly interested in the discipline's historiography and political critique. The book offers a complex interaction between politics, law, and international affairs inherent in international law's theoretical and practical realms.