

INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS. By J. J. Lador-Lederer. [Leyden: Sythoff. 1963. 403 pp. D.fl. 38.50.]

Until the Charter of the United Nations acknowledged their significance in the humanitarian field. *International Non-Governmental Organizations* were not a matter for serious consideration. The Charter, however, recognized that they might have a rôle to play in the work of the Economic and Social Council, with which a large number now enjoy consultative status. It is one of the few defects of Dr. Lador-Lederer's interesting study of these bodies, which he regards as being largely responsible for, as well as the emanation of a 'new' international law, that he does not provide any list of those NGO's which enjoy this special status — a reference in the bibliography to the Yearbook of International Organizations, "listing all NGO's registered [with the Union of International Association], giving the essential data concerning each one of them", is hardly a substitute. Another defect is the absence of an index — the reader wishing to refresh his memory as to the learned author's definition of international law must re-read the early pages: "International Law, once a law of inter-State relations only [has] become the law of all those relations which, not being localized nationally and functionally within the boundaries of a

specific State, and of one State only, involve intercourse among nations and organizations created by them, as well as with organizations which exist in the interstium between States, and are created independently of States.”

Although NGO's were known before 1914, the traditional view of international law as a law between States left them in the shadows. With the rise of the International Labour Organization in the twenties, and the concern with the rights of man since Hitler, there has been a realization that such an approach to international law may be somewhat too narrow. While the individual may not himself be a subject of that legal system, international institutions often are, and, even when they are not governmental in their membership, their status and functions are often conditioned by international law. Particularly is this so in the case of those which, like the International Red Cross, the International Maritime Committee or the Institut de Droit International, frequently play a leading part in the evolution and drafting of international conventions.

While it is useful to draw attention to the function of these organizations, care must be taken not to exaggerate their significance. Similar caution is necessary when estimating the importance of 'declarations' relating to the individual. It is perhaps somewhat sanguine to confer upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "the character of international statement of the general principles of law as practised by the civilized nations".

Perhaps the most telling point made by Dr. Lador-Lederer in regard to the significance of *International Non-Governmental Organizations* is that unlike States which tend to favour conservative *immobilisme*, NGO's favour change, and may well serve the purpose of "better international integration, cooperation, consultation, and equilibrium". This tendency becomes particularly clear if one's approach and analysis rests on a functional basis: "It is not the personality which makes a function international, but it is a function which which confers legal internationality on the entity which is engaged in such activity."