

THE LEGAL PERSONALITY OF INDIVIDUALS*

BY DR. P. K. MENON**

I. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, international law was concerned with regulating relations between the independent States of Europe. Its scope was limited to dealing with diplomatic relations, conduct of war, delimitation of territory and the jurisdiction of States. This is no longer true.

International law has expanded, as international intercourse increased, both in terms of its scope and context. In the post World War II period, the community of nations has undergone many major changes which have a telling effect upon the nature and purpose of international law. The emergence of a large number of newly independent States in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific and their active participation in international relations have broken up the nature of international law which had in the past been the exclusive preserve of the Western Christian Powers forming the exclusive family of nations.

One of the most important changes is the massive horizontal expansion of the international society composed of independent Nation-States which are neither European nor Western. They represent former colonies or protectorates of the Western World with completely different social, economic and cultural backgrounds and their own form of legal values. These territories which were in the past no more than 'objects' of international law have now become subjects of that system.¹

Another major development is the phenomenal growth of international organizations as permanent institutions for the co-operation of states.² International organization is a product of the multi-state system. In several of the cities of the world, new centres of activity of international organisations have appeared on the skyline after World War II. In sharp contrast to the inter-war period when not more than 20 such centres could be counted, no less than 200 new organisations have been established since 1945.

A third important change is in the subject matter of international law which is at present becoming actively concerned with various vital topics affecting

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** Professor of Law, The University of the West Indies, Faculty of Law, BARBADOS. LL.B. (Bombay), LL.M. and J.S.D. from New York University.