

The European Tradition in International Law: Alfred Verdross

Introductory Remarks

There was never doubt in our mind that Alfred Verdross should and would be one of the first scholars to feature in our series on the European Tradition in International law. This conviction, we believe, has been fully vindicated by the rich and illuminating contributions which appear in this issue. Those who have only heard of Verdross but are not familiar with his work will, we are convinced, be hugely enriched by this first encounter. Those who know Verdross and are familiar with his work will, we are equally convinced, see new facets to the man and his scholarly contribution.

It has been the custom in crafting these symposia to add a contribution with a personal note to the intellectual appraisal. Thus, for example, René-Jean Dupuy contributed a charming piece on Georges Scelle as did Roberto Ago on Anzilotti. We have followed the same format in relation to Verdross.

It is in this context that we decided to give some unflinching consideration to the position of Verdross the man and Verdross the scholar in relation to National Socialism and the *Anschluss*. It would have been easier to avoid the issue altogether. But the *Journal* decided that silence on this issue would speak louder than an honest appraisal. The thoughtful and measured piece by Anthony Carty is as illuminating as any other in the symposium.

Merely discussing these issues can be hard for those who were colleagues and students of Verdross and acutely painful to those to whom Verdross was mentor, even father figure. Of course some episodes we wish had never taken place; of course, especially with the wisdom of hindsight, some positions and expressions we wish had never been adopted. And of course, we wish, as we do in relation to so many of those who lived through those years, that more civic courage had been displayed more frequently. We wonder, as we should, if we would have behaved differently.

How to relate to that decisive and appalling chapter in the history of Europe and what to make of the vicissitudes of Verdross' personal and scholarly fate in that epoch is something on which we do not care to pontificate to our readers. Our conviction that Verdross deserves an honourable place in the European tradition of international law remains unshaken.

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of the Board of Editors