

Preface

The creation of the International Labour Organisation brought a new dimension to the traditional concept of international law and relations not only because entities other than sovereign states were accorded representation in the Organisation on an equal footing with states, but also because of the nature of the functions and powers entrusted to the Organisation. These developments have been the subject of considerable literature by eminent international lawyers, but the International Labour Organisation continues to grow and develop, and its law and practice continues to be of great interest to lawyers, political scientists, trade unionists, and many others.

My fascination with the ILO and its constitutional law and practice dates back to the early 1970s when I was writing my Ph.D. thesis at King's College, University of London. That fascination became a practical reality when I joined the Office of the Legal Adviser of the International Labour Office in Geneva, Switzerland in 1974, and became involved for almost nine years with the intricacies of the operation of the ILO Constitution in all its ramifications. The present book is the result of my involvement in both the political and legal problems of the Organisation.

I have endeavoured to analyse in as simple a manner as possible some of the controversial provisions of the Constitution and the Standing Orders against the general background of the practice of the Organisation. However, the ILO Constitution is a complex document, and no person or authority can provide the answers to all the questions that arise. It is hoped, however, that the present study will be of some value to those international lawyers, political scientists, and students, who are interested not only in the evolution of law in international organisations, but also in its development and practical application by these institutions. I hope also that the delegates and advisers to the ILO and its various conferences and committees, as well as those in the national Ministries of Labour, will find the present study useful towards a better understanding and appreciation

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of the “complex and difficult” provisions of the ILO Constitution and procedures; and the basis for some of the controversial, and even “unpopular” decisions of the Organisation over the past few years.

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31 October 1983