

Biographical Note

In Memoriam Doctor John Kish (1936–1994)

John Kish was born János Ferenc Kiss on 11 October 1936 in Budapest, Hungary, into a distinguished Jewish family: his father was an economic adviser to the Hungarian Finance Ministry, and there were five generations of lawyers in his mother's family. In 1944 his father was sent to a labour camp by the Nazis, but he and his mother were lucky to be numbered among the "Wallenberg Jews" – they were saved from deportation to the extermination camps by the intervention of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish special humanitarian envoy to Budapest.

Unlike many other survivors of the Holocaust, János Kiss chose to remain in Hungary after the war. In 1958 he gained his Doctorate from the University of Budapest and immediately began teaching Public International Law there. He held his Lectureship at the University of Budapest until 1965, when he was appointed Legal Adviser to the Hungarian Navy. It was while serving in this capacity that, having participated in several conferences on International Maritime Law and Space Law at Athens, Paris, Beirut, Alexandria and London, he decided to leave Hungary permanently and emigrated in 1966 to the United Kingdom; it was at this point that he anglicized his name to John Kish, as his original name proved to be a source of amusement to Anglo-Saxons. At the same time he enrolled to study for a Ph.D. at Cambridge University under the tutelage of Professor Robert Jennings; he also benefitted from the support of Professor Rosalyn Higgins, with whom he was to enjoy a warm friendship for the rest of his life.

After gaining his Ph.D. with a thesis on *The Law of International Spaces*, which was published as a book by Sijthoff International, Leiden, in 1973, John Kish taught Public International Law at St. John's and Pembroke Colleges, Cambridge, until 1974 when he moved to the University of Kent at Canterbury. There he became the resident international lawyer in the Kent Law School, specialising primarily in the law of international spaces and setting up a specialist course on International Diplomatic Law, the first of its kind to be established at a British university. He made broadcasts for BBC

Radio about Prisoners of War, and also participated between 1986 and 1990 in the Channel Tunnel Research Unit established jointly by the University of Kent and the Centre de Recherches Administratives, Politiques et Sociales of the University of Lille. In this last capacity he concentrated specifically on the designation of the international frontier within the Tunnel and its implications for consular activities, writing papers and contributing enthusiastically to the Research Unit's Seminars.

John Kish died suddenly and prematurely while working at his desk at the University of Kent, on 7 April 1994. He is survived by his Finnish wife, Hanna.