



The Politics of International Law

Martti Koskenniemi

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Today international law is everywhere. Wars are fought and opposed in its name. It is invoked to claim rights and to challenge them, to indict or support political leaders, to distribute resources and to expand or limit the powers of domestic and international institutions. International law is part of the way political (and economic) power is used, critiqued, and sometimes limited. Despite its claim for neutrality and impartiality, it is implicit in what is just, as well as what is unjust in the world. To understand its operation requires shedding its ideological spell and examining it with a cold eye. Who are its winners, and who are its losers? How - if at all - can it be used to make a better or a less unjust world?

In this collection of essays Professor Martti Koskenniemi, a well-known practitioner and a leading theorist and historian of international law, examines the recent debates on humanitarian intervention, collective security, protection of human rights and the 'fight against impunity' and reflects on the use of the professional techniques of international law to intervene politically. The essays both illustrate and expand his influential theory of the role of international law in international politics. The book is prefaced with an introduction by Professor Emmanuelle Jouannet (Sorbonne Law School), which locates the texts in the overall thought and work of Martti Koskenniemi.

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