A Rose is a Rose is a Name:
Towards a Section of International Law

The American Bar Association first appointed a Committee on International Law in 1878. It added a Bureau of Comparative Law in 1907. In 1933 the Committee and the Bureau were merged to form the Section of International and Comparative Law, whose stated purpose was to promote "the two fields of international and comparative law."

A tidy phrase: "the two fields of international and comparative law." It echoes a solid, orderly, gold-watch-chain-across-the-vest world of unsinkable navies and unsplittable atoms, where every law student knew that International Law was divided into two water-tight compartments (neatly labelled "Public" and "Private") and foreign laws were exotic specimens to be regarded, remotely and with vague distaste, through an intellectual lorgnette called "Comparative Law."

Thirty-eight years and several cataclysms later, the compartments do not seem as watertight, or the specimens as exotic, as they did when our Section was formed. Distinctions have blurred. Are Amtorg's contracts and Rolls-Royce's refinancings "Public" or "Private?" Is "Comparative Law" a very useful cachet for the powerfully interimpacted swirl of conflicting legal systems that engulfs the urban West? And how to classify that vast new field, transnational business law, where most of us earn our bread?

In the working vocabulary of most members of our Section the phrase "International Law" has in fact come to include all transnational, supranational and international applications of law, public or private. Is it time to conform our name to contemporary usage? The Bard and Miss Stein to the contrary notwithstanding, do names make a difference? Judging by the response to our recent questionnaire, the Section thinks so; of the 1,215 who have replied at this writing, 800 approve a change to "Section of International Law," 250 oppose it, 160 are noncommittal and 5 advance other names.

At the July meeting in New York the Council will accordingly be asked to consider a by-law amendment changing our name to "Section of International Law." Your comments for or against will be welcome.

Ewell E. Murphy, Jr.
Section Chairman
"We have been advised that the International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA) is having its 1971 Congress in Washington, D.C. from 13 to 17 September.

"Among the subjects on the agenda of AIJA for this Congress is 'a study of the international laws affecting the conservation of natural resources in relation to the rapid advances of science and technology.'

"For further information, interested parties are referred to either of the following:

Matthew James Travers, Jr., Esq.
1000 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

R. Harrison Pledger, Jr., Esq.
c/o Messrs Pledger & Mahoney
925 Washington Building
Washington, D.C. 20005