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**Kathleen J. Hancock on Human Rights: International Protection, Monitoring, Enforcement by Janusz Symonides. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2004. 416pp.**

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At the international, regional, and state level, human rights laws and the practices protecting those rights have expanded and deepened since the founding of the United Nations. *Human Rights: International Protection, Monitoring, and Enforcement*, edited by Janusz Symonides, documents much of this progression. This is the third and final volume in a series of books sponsored by the United Nations Economic, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and is meant to serve as a “manual for teaching human rights” (preface, xiii). The volume is divided into three parts, covering first the United Nations system broadly and then four regional systems (Europe, the Americas, Africa, and the Arab states). It concludes with five chapters that (mostly) address means for strengthening human rights protections.

All of the authors have significant experience as human rights advocates. While some have worked solely as academics, most boast a wealth of hands-on experience in organizations such as UNESCO and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as Ambassadors, and with other major organizations working on human rights issues. Though the authors represent mostly Western states (Australia, France, Germany, Ireland, United States, etc.), others are from Argentina, Egypt, and Kenya, thus representing a greater than usual geographic range.

The United Nations chapters which open the volume make mostly for dry, legalistic reading. The authors enumerate the various treaties and other international laws that form the UN human rights system. The research appears exhaustive, providing plenty of detail. For example, in the opening chapter on United Nations mechanisms for promoting and protecting human rights, Zdzislaw Kedzia compares the difference between filing under the “1503 procedure” and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. One also learns about various problems such as states filing late reports, or failing to report at all. As those who have studied the UN procedures know, one can easily lose faith in the system when reading of continuous delays and reporting failures. In contrast to the first chapter with its dry language, Lee Swepston’s chapter on the International Labour Organization has a strong voice with a clear message: the ILO is an overlooked, under appreciated organization that nevertheless has the “most sophisticated supervising system in international law” (95). While the UNESCO chapter by Karl Josef Partsch and Klaus Hüfner also boasts of great successes, the authors provide no clear evidence of this. Indeed, the chapter demonstrates some of the classic squabbling within the UN over issues of jurisdiction. In sum, the first part of this book benefits those looking for detailed information on how the various UN institutions function. The first and third chapters, however, are rather dry for the average university student and perhaps best reserved for scholars and practitioners pursuing procedural information and insights into how the institutional structures compare.

The second part of the book focuses on regional regimes. By exploring each in turn, the authors enable readers to carefully compare the different regime types. For example, one can compare views on the death penalty within the respective European, American, African, and Arab regions. While human rights students will not be surprised to learn that Europe has the most entrenched regime, the Americas the most underused regime, and the Arabs a general hostility toward human rights organizations, many may be unfamiliar with what author Daniel D.C. Don Nanjira calls the “Spirit of Africa.” Like Swepston on the ILO, Nanjira, a Kenyan, does not shy away from using his distinct voice. He focuses first on colonialism for its many faults in destroying the “Spirit of Africa,” and

then turns his attention to those African leaders who failed their own people. Nanjira provides one of the more balanced defenses of communal human rights in the literature. In his defense of the unique African spirit, he refers to the “extended African family code,” and the need to balance between individual and communal rights: “Thus the right to life, inheritance and ownership of lands is just as important to an individual as it is to indigenous peoples or to ethnic and racial minorities” (222).

While their chapters lack the strength and engaging verbiage of Nanjira’s, authors Maxime Tardu (Europe), Hugo Caminos (the Americas), and Bahey el Din Hassan (the Arab states) provide clear descriptions of regional human rights protections. Notably absent is a chapter on Asian human rights. The editor notes only that “the populous Asian region has no regional or sub-regional procedures for the protection of human rights” (xv). Still, in the interest of full regional representation, the book would have benefited from a chapter discussing what actions have taken place in the region and the reasons for a lack of procedures.

The third part of the volume takes a turn from the others, moving away from a listing of laws and procedures to a more readable narrative style. The heading, “Towards Further Strengthening of Human Rights Protection,” sufficiently captures the disparate articles in this section. The first, by Jean-Bernard Marie, enumerates the various institutions that states ought to build or fortify in order to protect human rights at the national level. He includes some of the more unusual methods, such as creating an ombudsperson in the tradition of the Swedes. William A. Schabas’ chapter discusses the role of international law on human rights and the recent focus on war crimes against non-combatants. Katarina Tomasevski’s chapter points to the irony of economic sanctions meant to punish human rights abusers that actually harm the very population they are meant to protect. In one of the few chapters with a strong argument, she contends that just as laws governing war protect the civilian population from being targeted, so too should laws governing economic sanctions, which are, after all, just another form of warfare. In his chapter, Michael Kirby argues that simply adding up documents signed does not measure implementation. Analysts must move beyond what states do for symbolic reasons and instead investigate state institutions (as earlier suggested by Marie) and also specific policies. Kirby includes in this list policies on HIV/AIDS, an area in which he’s been particularly interested, as well as women’s empowerment, children’s protection from abuses, and environmental rights, an idea put forward by Barbara Rose Johnston. The final chapter, by Laurie S. Wiseberg, summarizes ways in which non-governmental organizations contribute to human rights protections. Unlike the others, she does not offer new approaches.

In the end, this volume is mostly a reworking or updating of articles written by major authors on human rights issues. Most chapters describe rather than argue. As with the majority of edited volumes, this one has many voices, leading to both a rich reading as well as one that appeals to varying audiences. The early, somewhat dry chapters will be of greatest use to scholars while the subsequent chapters appeal more to students early in their discovery of human rights protections at the international, regional, and national levels.

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