

The International Human Rights Movement - A History

By Aryeh Neier

Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012, 357 pages,
ISBN: 9780691135151.

The history of international human rights law and the human rights movement has been an attractive topic for many authors writing in this field. Aryeh Neier's recent publication, *The International Human Rights Movement – A History*, stands out from the others, largely due to his background. Having been trained as a lawyer in America, Neier worked for many years as an executive director of Human Rights Watch. He was also the president of the Open Society Foundation and the national director of the American Civil Liberties Union. In addition to his administrative tasks, he teaches human rights at leading universities. His approach to the field utilizes a combination of legal knowledge and substantial experience.

The first chapter sets out the underlying theme of the book: “the driving force behind the protection of human rights worldwide, today and for roughly the past thirty-five years, has been the nongovernmental human rights movement” (p. 7). The author examines the campaigns of nongovernmental organizations and human rights activists for the adoption of major treaties, such

as the 1997 Treaty to Ban Landmines and the 1998 Rome Statute. Throughout the book the author addresses the accomplishments of the human rights movement up until now, the issues at present, and the challenges in the upcoming years.

The author's personal observations are one of the book's strengths, particularly concerning the relationships between dominant countries during the Cold War. His informative depiction of the history of the human rights movement demonstrates that although many were the victims of persecution, the Cold War magnified the importance of citizen efforts to promote human rights.

The book has a total of 13 chapters, two of which them center on the leading human rights organizations in the world: Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Neier argues that the Cold War context played a crucial role in the establishment of Amnesty International in 1961. Great credit is given to Amnesty International due to its capacity to survive through the help of its supporters and its impact on human

rights policies globally. As the founder of Human Rights Watch in the 1970s, the author notes that the new organization came into being because of the weak presence of Amnesty International in the United States, and it filled the gap of Amnesty's own narrow mandate in the field. Many other human rights organizations operating worldwide are discussed in another chapter. Neier lists only a few countries (including North Korea, Burma, Saudi Arabia, and Turkmenistan) where authorities do not tolerate the emergence of human rights organizations.

It is not only nongovernmental organizations that have pushed states to promote and protect human rights, but also international organizations and national and supranational judiciaries. To underline this fact, Neier pinpoints the influence of the European Union on human rights practices in countries that aspire to full membership. As the author notes, the rulings of the American Supreme Court, the European Court of Human Rights, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights have played an important role in the application of human rights standards at the local level.

The establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court to prosecute and punish those accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide is covered in detail in

the section "Accountability". The author once more shares his personal experience concerning the efforts of some states to undermine the legitimacy and the authority of the International Criminal Court. Even though he is a strong defendant of the International Criminal Court, he expresses doubts about its future capability to carry-out investigations against the leaders of powerful countries.

Neier's book is about the tireless history of the human rights movement. The author carefully analyzes the role the movement has played in protecting the basic human rights of those accused of terror crimes in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and the significant role of human rights activists during the Arab revolutions. Moreover, in the final pages of the book, the author points out future challenges that the movement will face in the coming decades.

All in all, one should not assume that the book is only about the development of the international human rights movement. Neier takes the opportunity to use his legal knowledge to comment on certain disputed concepts and subjects in international human rights law, such as "self-determination", "independence", "universal jurisdiction", "humanitarian intervention", "the responsibility to protect", "preventive detention", "enforcing second generation rights

by courts”, “the connection between developments and rights”, “suspending *habeas corpus* when countering terrorism”, and “the application of international humanitarian law to asymmetric conflicts”.

I would like to conclude with my sole critical remark, which is that, although the title suggests that the book is about the international human rights movement, more than half of the information provided in each chapter concerns developments that took place in the United States. Even a quick look

at the index pages demonstrates that the majority of the names of individuals, institutions, and cases that are listed have American affiliation. Nevertheless, this in no way undercuts the value of the work in contributing to the field of human rights.

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Küyerel Dönüşümler: Küreselleşme, Zihniyet, Siyaset (Glocal Transformations: Globalisation, Mentality, Politics)

By Nurullah Ardiç and Sevinç Alkan Özcan (eds.)

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Globalisation has become the central point of world politics. Developments in technology and communication have made it easier and faster for people to be in contact with each other and to engage in cultural interaction. Globalisation is often described as the interaction of people living in different regions of the world in the context of a social, economic and cultural circulation of goods, labour and services. It can thus be argued that the globalisation process

has started to affect every field. However, the concept of globalisation has become cloudy because it has been used as an explanatory tool for incongruous processes. Conversely, academia has tried to define the globalisation process in order to prevent the concept from being used to explain everything. This book, *Küyerel Dönüşümler: Küreselleşme, Zihniyet, Siyaset (Glocal Transformations: Globalisation, Mentality, Politics)*, edited by Nurullah Ardiç and Sevinç