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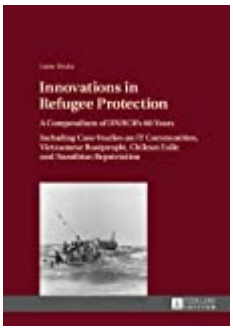

Luise Druke. *Innovations in Refugee Protection: A Compendium of UNHCR's 60 Years. Including Case Studies on IT Communities, Vietnamese Boatpeople, Chilean Exile and Namibian Repatriation.* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH/Wien, 2013. 564 S. ISBN 978-3-631-63450-9.

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L. Druke: Innovations in Refugee Protection

In 2014 the number of refugees around the world crossed the threshold of fifty million persons, for the first time since the end of the Second World War. For a synopsis of this UNHCR report See: The Guardian Friday June 20th 2014 available at: `http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/20/global-refugee-figure-passes-50-million-unhcr-report.` Forced migration has come to embody one of the most characteristic attributes the global age, as the bidirectional process of flows and controls, plays out with ever-growing force since the end of the Cold War. The United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is at the epicenter of this global phenomenon, being the mandated international organization officially in charge of protecting and caring for persecuted migrants. As Luise Druke explicitly states in her introduction to *Innovations in Refugee Protection: A Compendium of UNHCRs 60 Years*, she aspires to demonstrate how innovation has been integral to the work of UNHCR over the past six decades, since its establishment in 1950.

The book suffers from a significant discrepancy between its title and its content. Rather than being a compendium of UNHCRs sixty years, it is in fact largely an autobiographical account of Ms. Drukeâs own work as a senior UNHCR official and later country representative, during her long and distinguished UN career. The four case studies examined in the book, of UNHCRs partnership with the IT communities, and the three country cases of Namibia, Vietnamese boat people in Singapore and Chile, are all connected as Ms. Druke took a significant part in their administration on behalf of UNHCR.

Each case study comprises of a long introduction, providing the context to each conflict which in turn created the refugee crisis discussed in that part. This is followed by a detailed explanation of UNHCRâs actions in each case, being the policies actually implemented, and their resulting consequences. This is followed by the insertion of extensive primary source documents, materials, photos, and tables, presented in an unedited manner into the book (the first case study material consists of 60 pages of annexes, within a case study covering 130 pages!).

In addition to the long and unedited annexes of the

case studies, the last part of the book is an overview explaining what UNHCR is (a so called âbackground noteâ) and a teaching annex for practitioners (75 pages in total). While Drukeâs explanatory paragraphs about the development of policies within UNHCR do shed new light as to how these were developed internally in the organization, the bulk of the chapter consists of UNHCR documents which are largely available and downloadable from UNHCRâs and the Reliefweb websites. One wonders as to the rational of reprinting these open-source documents in a somewhat pricy hardbound publication. The compilation of these 4 case studies, followed by UNHCRâs policy guidelines, produces a book which often reads more as a haphazard collection of policy papers, and less as an overview of UNHCRs activities elapsing its six decade.

The good passages of the book, and the ones this reader would have wished were favorably enlarged, are the passages containing the reflections and personal perspectives of the author. Her career spanned over 40 years within UNHCR, paralleling some of the most important developments of this important humanitarian institution.

Ms. Druke belongs to that rare breed of humanitarians who can justly credit themselves with the positive changing of lives of hundreds of thousands of persecuted people the world over, as they delivered assistance and ultimately helped them secure asylum. The best passages in the book are those of Drukeâs personal recollections and non-mediated experiences, where her true love of humanity comes alive and receives its well merited focus.

These passages are found in both the case studies of Chileâs refugees who fled the Pinochet dictatorship, and even more so â during the work on the Vietnamese boat people crisis around Singapore. There is little doubt that in this latter refugee crisis, UNHCR did in fact come up with a rather diplomatically innovative approach (pp. 185-191) to help alleviate this crisis. A concrete reading of this crisis evidently results in a high tribute to Ms. Drukeâs own innovation in articulating and implementing UNHCRs policies during this crisis in the late 1970s. Indeed a significant underlying reasoning underpinning UNHCRâs success in this crisis came in the first place from Drukeâs own activities and diplomatic innovation, both underpinned by her humanitarian commitment.

One is hard pressed to separate Drukeâs professional push for innovative policy/diplomatic solutions to the humanitarian troubles of refugees, and her own true love of humanity, which probably explains her untiring efforts, and unwavering commitment to the betterment of lives of the people she was charged to care for. Yet overall the book is overburdened with the policy driven documents, unedited source materials, photos and documents. All these come at the expense of Drukeâs personal experiences and thoughts. The latter would have served the reader infinitely better, if only because the technical data regarding these specific case studies could be obtained by any researcher interested in these cases at the UNHCR archives. On the other hand, Drukeâs personal memoires, thoughts, and unrecorded experiences, which would have significantly advanced our understandings of forced migration, these are provided in too short a supply in this book. Given the exponential growth of the already overcrowded realm of publications on refugee issues and studies, one would have wished for much more of these personal perspectives.

Contrary to the availability and accessibility of the policy papers presented in the book, Ms. Drukeâs memories, both personal, and moreover â as part of the human institutional memory of UNHCR country representatives, cannot be found in any archive, since they rest within the beautifully human personality and sharp diplomatic mind of the author. After almost 600 pages of policy papered case studies, as the reader searches (sometimes in vain) for those precious passages of Drukeâs own reflections, one ends up being disappointed from their scarceness, as the book is overclouded with a cumbersome unedited collection of documents.

At 39 Euro, this is an overwhelmingly expensive book, for the limited amount of meaningful insights it entails. One hopes for a radically different book by this author, and one which really does delve into the personality and experiences of this admirable humanitarian. In this alternative book, one would also wish for the rigorous work of an experienced editor- something bitterly missing in this publication.

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