

PINA. Teresa. 2018. *Direitos humanos: o que está por fazer no século XXI*. Editora Temas e Debates.

I. INTRODUCTION

The most important moment in the history of human rights was, in the post-World War II period, giving rise to the creation of the United Nations (UN) and the proclamation of the Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948.

Despite its extreme importance, the Declaration of Human Rights does not legally bind all Member States, which has often lead to its lack of effectiveness.

Thus, almost 70 years after the Declaration of Human Rights, the difficulty in protecting them led the Secretary General of Amnesty International in 2016, Salil Shetty, to question the efficacy of the current system of human rights protection in the world, since it has proven incapable of solving problems such as the migration crisis in Europe, police violence, prisoners of conscience, the right to privacy and freedom of expression among others.

On the 70th anniversary of the Declation of Human Rights many of these difficulties are masterfully addressed by Teresa Pina, in the book.

The author is a law graduate. She was a journalist for “Sic Notícias” for almost ten years. She holds a Master’s degree in Human Rights from Birkbeck College, University of London, where she collaborated with the International Secretary of Amnesty International. In Portugal, she was the Executive Director of the Portuguese section of Amnesty from 2012 to 2016 and is a PhD student in Public Policy at ISCTE in Lisbon.

With the certainty that human rights are not guaranteed, Teresa Pina’s book provides a comprehensive, up-to-date narrative account of human rights, showing both mistakes and successes in the performance of Amnesty International, indicating paths for the future.

Teresa Pina reflects on important themes and recent historical events such as the “Arab Spring” and political prisoners, the right to privacy and freedom in *online* reality, economic rights when austerity policies are ad-

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opted by the Member States for the recovery of economies, and racism, and the problem of refugees.

With a narrative that grips the reader from the first to the last page, the author makes the reader reflect on the need to extend the concept and protection of human rights beyond the rights of political prisoners or refugees.

The author portrays the setbacks that have occurred in recent decades, exemplifying and personifying these, giving face and name to the violations through their humanization. Thus, far from sticking to data and statistics, she manages to convey the humanity underlying human rights and their violations today.

II. THE BOOK

The book is organized into three parts. The first, in three chapters, presents the important theme of freedom of expression in the digital age. The second, in two chapters, relates human rights to economic and social rights and the social economic crisis. The third and final part, also in two chapters, deals with discrimination and refugees.

Finally comes the conclusion, in which the author returns to the themes addressed in the preceding chapters, in the order in which they were introduced, presenting the issues in a succinct way, seeking possible solutions and paths, with a national (Portugal, in this case) and European agenda to broaden and make effective the protection of human rights in the 21st century. After the conclusions is the bibliography of the work.

In total, the book has seven chapters of 322 pages. At the end of each chapter are the notes indicating the depth of the research, although the flow of the text does not resemble an academic text.

The book begins by recounting the arrest, hunger strike and release of Luaty Beirão, who writes the preface to the book. Rapper and Portuguese-Angolan activist, Luaty was sentenced to six years in prison for organizing a peaceful demonstration in favor of human rights in Angola. The situation exposes the limits to human rights and their violations in Angola, where the case has become a real matter of life and death.

On the basis of this example, the author reflects on the delicate issue that is sometimes ignored by many, namely the existence of prisoners of

conscience in the 21st century throughout the world. In the second chapter, Raif Badawi narrates the account to explain the movement known as the “Arab Spring” and its outcome in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Syria and Saudi Arabia. The activist and blogger was arrested and sentenced in Saudi Arabia in 2014 to 10 years in prison with 1.000 lashes, on charges of insulting Islam through electronic means.

Through this example, the author demonstrates how the technological revolution; the use of mobile phones with *Internet* and social networks, mobilized society and threatened dictatorial governments in North Africa and the Middle East. She recalls that the opportunities brought about by technology have also made it possible to track people by digital means.

The author links this to the third chapter of the book, which introduces the theme of freedom of expression and *online* privacy and their relationship with serious human rights violations. Once again personifying and humanizing the issues, the author recounts the story of Edward Snowden.

Snowden was a systems analyst, a former CIA systems administrator and former NASA contractor, who became famous for making public, details of programs that revealed a global NASA surveillance system vis-à-vis the U.S. and world citizens.

His courage cost him forced exile in Moscow since he was considered a traitor in the United States. He denounced a veritable worldwide espionage system, committed not only by the United States but also by private companies.

The invasion of privacy and mass surveillance, often justified by the United States as a means of preventing terrorist attacks, has been condemned and considered by the UN a serious violation of human rights.

The second part of the book addresses the violation of human rights through world economic crises, relating them to the austerity measures adopted by the United States.

In an innovative approach, the author pays attention to the fact that austerity measures always reach the most vulnerable, poor and needy part of society, such as children, the elderly and minorities, citing, in the case of Portugal, the Roma community.

The author thus relates the management of public resources to human rights, emphasizing that the financial difficulties encountered by states in managing crises cannot result in the suppression of rights.

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Teresa Pina invokes the right to access justice as well as human rights since in the face of an economic and social crisis, every citizen should have the possibility to judicially demand from the state their right to housing, health and food.

The third and last part of the book is dedicated to discrimination and refugees, addressing the issues of racism of the descendants of Africans, foreigners and the Roma community.

At this point, it is worth making a minor criticism of the author's approach, which on several occasions relates racism to the violent action of the police in Portugal. With the focus on police violence, the author sometimes avoids the main issue of this chapter and addresses aspects which should not be deemed racist, such as acts of violence against journalists and demonstrators.

Pursuing this connection of racism with the police force, the author deals superficially with other types of discrimination, such as those pertaining to the Chinese, Ukrainians and Brazilians, without developing the subject.

Thus, the author misses the opportunity to express herself on other aspects of racial discrimination in Portugal and in the European community, not giving the theme the breadth and depth it deserves.

The seventh and last chapter of the book deals with the crisis of refugees in the European Union, when in 2015, it experienced the biggest migration crisis since World War II.

The author is right in leaving to the end of the book a question that is closely linked to human rights, showing that these are not only limited to the question of refugees, a theme which represents and illustrates the problem universally.

Teresa Pina explains in a clear and timely way the economic, political and social crises that Europe has gone through in recent decades, its relationship with the *Arab Spring* and the origin of the fugitives from war, clarifying that they are not only from Syria, but also from Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries.

The book conveys a little of the role of countries that have stood out, either to welcome refugees, despite serious consequences for their economy, such as Greece and Germany, and others that have not received a single refugee, such as Poland, and Hungary.

A parallel with other non-European countries is also drawn, such as Uganda, which has welcomed three times more refugees than those who crossed the Mediterranean towards Europe.

In this chapter, the lack of cohesion in the response of the European Community to the migration of refugees is addressed, whereby the EU did not know how to act as a bloc in providing humanitarian aid for a more effective solution to the problem.

As a result, intolerance and xenophobia has grown on the continent, not only with regard to refugees, but also with regard to minorities, a scenario that is aggravated by the economic crisis and the policies of austerity.

The author points out that the consequences of Europe's cohesive inaction in relation to the refugee crisis are in the rise and also in the victory of extreme right wing parties not only in Europe, but in the world, the Brexit victory in 2016 in the United Kingdom, and the return of populism and nationalism.

The book takes a critical position, not only of Portugal but also in relation to Europe regarding the lack of reception, asylum and relocation of refugees, as well as the lack of uniformity and cohesion in response the issue.

Finally, the last chapter of the book is dedicated to pointing the way towards a global human rights agenda, with the suggestion of measures to be adopted at national level (Portugal) as well as by the European Union, so that the human rights violations, addressed throughout this book, are more effectively dealt within the near future.

III. CONCLUSION

It is a topical and necessary book, which has the potential to be translated into other languages besides Portuguese, in order to reach a wider readership.

Although its main focus is on Europe and Portugal, with some references worldwide, it can be said that the issues addressed by the author are of global interest, requiring the reader to reflect deeply on this subject.

The author's approach to such harsh and serious human rights violations is recounted in a light, delicate, personified, humanized and coherent way.

With a portrait of the fragility of police relations between the countries of the European Union, which has led to human rights violations that we already thought were outdated, the author's reflections serve as a compass of what can happen and of what should be done in relation to human rights after the health crisis and its unfolding caused by the *Covid 19* pandemic, and other crises, that will certainly follow.

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