

## Book Reviews

The second part of volume I is devoted to the centenary of the Conference. It contains a list of all delegates who ever participated in the diplomatic sessions of the Conference.

Volume II is concerned with the Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption. The topic was not new to the Conference. In 1965 the Conference concluded the Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law and Recognition of Decrees Relating to Adoptions, which, in its thirty years of existence, was only ratified by Switzerland, Austria and the United Kingdom. But the problems of intercountry adoption, as well as the public's sensitivity to the matter, have increased dramatically in recent years. In drawing up the Convention of 1993 the Conference made a second try. The task was particularly difficult because the rules of private substantive law governing adoption vary significantly from one country to another. Therefore, the idea of a *loi uniforme* as well as the classical techniques of private international law had to be abandoned. Instead, the Convention is restricted to setting criteria and to improving practices and procedures for intercountry adoption by establishing a system of Central Authorities on the model of the Hague Child Abduction Convention. Although the institutional weight of the Central Authorities as well as the administrative costs might be criticized, the Convention has been a remarkable success. As of November 1996, the Convention had been signed by twenty-eight states and has been ratified by eleven, namely Mexico, Romania, Sri Lanka, Cyprus, Poland, Spain, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, Burkina Faso and the Philippines.

In volume II, the reader finds a number of preliminary documents, including a general report on intercountry adoption by J.H.A. van Loon (50 pages). Following this report are the working documents, the minutes, the text of the Convention, and the explanatory report by Professor G. Parra-Aranguren, which constitutes an autonomous commentary on the Convention.

On the whole, volume II is an indispensable source for research on intercountry adoption.

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Cassese, Antonio. *Inhuman States: Imprisonment, Detention and Torture in Europe Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996. Pp. ix, 141.

This slender, elegantly-written volume is an excellent translation of a book that appeared in Italian in 1994. It describes the author's experience during his five years as the first President of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, established by a Council of Europe Convention and endowed with unique on-site inspection powers. While the work of the Committee is confidential, Cassese cannot resist the urge to 'repeat what the establishment wishes to keep hidden from the public eye'. He reconciles this with his 'vows' by omitting the names of the countries and towns visited, except where such information is already in the public domain. Much of the action, but by no means all, is clearly set in Turkey. This is a moving and highly readable account of the dilemmas of being an internationally sanctioned human rights monitor with limited powers, confronted by a deep-rooted tradition of torture and abuse of detainees that is still remarkably commonplace throughout Europe.

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Prémont, Daniel (ed.). *Droits intangibles et états d'exception. Non-Derogable Rights and States of Emergency*. Brussels: Etablissement Emile Bruylant, 1996. Pp. xxvii, 644. 2,550 BEF.

This completely bilingual, multi-authored collection is divided into four parts: general themes, international instruments which provide for derogation, those that