

## Great illusions or great transformations?

Dunne, Tim; Wheeler, Nick

DOI:

[10.1177/0047117819851256](https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117819851256)

License:

None: All rights reserved

*Document Version*

Peer reviewed version

*Citation for published version (Harvard):*

Dunne, T & Wheeler, N 2019, 'Great illusions or great transformations? Human rights and international relations a hundred years on', *International Relations*, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 338-356.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117819851256>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

### **Publisher Rights Statement:**

Dunne, T., & Wheeler, N. J., Great illusions or great transformations? Human rights and international relations a hundred years on, *International Relations*, 33(2) 338–356. Copyright © The Author(s) 2019. DOI: 10.1177/0047117819851256

### **General rights**

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

### **Take down policy**

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact [UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk](mailto:UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk) providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

# **Great Illusions or Great Transformations? Human Rights and International Relations a Hundred Years On**

Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler

## **Abstract**

Human rights have been in the practice of international relations, but they have not been central to academic thinking on International Relations (IR) for most of the century since the discipline became institutionalized in 1919. We suggest two related reasons for this relative neglect by the IR community. First, the US heartland of IR prioritized other institutions of international order during the 1950s and 1960s, primarily the balance of power, diplomacy, and arms control. Second, human rights were treated with suspicion by realists in particular given their view that morality in foreign policy was potentially disruptive of international order. If the emergent discipline of IR largely ignored the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, so did the rest of the world according to the revisionist history of human rights offered by Samuel Moyn. He challenges the idea that the birth of the regime was the culmination of a 150-year struggle that began in the minds of Enlightenment thinkers and ended with a new globalized framework of rights for all. While IR was slow to come to human rights, the pace in the last three decades has quickened considerably; the area of protecting the basic right of security from violence being a case in point, where several IR scholars have been pivotal in the development of action-guiding theory. Developing a critical theme in Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939* we consider whether these institutional developments represent great illusions or great transformations in international relations in Carr's terms.

## **Keywords**

Human rights; Universal Declaration of Human Rights; utopia; basic rights; realism; Helsinki process.

‘Ethics must be interpreted in terms of politics; and the search for an ethical norm outside politics is doomed to frustration’.<sup>1</sup> This insight by E.H. Carr, in his classic *The Twenty Years’ Crisis 1919-1939*, captures the troubled entanglement of human rights norms in international politics. Carr’s idea of a constant tension between realism and utopianism is helpful to understand why human rights have become a powerful symbol of an emerging cosmopolitan community that seeks to protect individuals from avoidable harms, irrespective of considerations of identity or statehood. At the same time, we must acknowledge that the combined impact of all the human rights proclamations, declarations, conventions, and resolutions has fallen well short of the hopes of countless intellectuals and activists; for them, the human rights regime has failed the millions of victims of human wrongs.<sup>2</sup> Such an observation takes us back to our earlier work on human rights in the 1990s.<sup>3</sup> As we sought to evaluate whether intervention for humanitarian purposes was becoming a legitimate practice in international society, we were often reminded of international society’s moral failures. All these declarations ‘yet the bodies keep piling up’.<sup>4</sup>

### **Human rights in IR**

Human rights have been a central part of the story of international relations for most of the last one hundred years, but arguably they have only been squarely *in* International Relations (IR) since the 1980s; the first book length treatment of the subject that had a significant impact on the field did not appear until 1986 when R.J. Vincent published *Human Rights and International Relations*.<sup>5</sup> This could lead one to arrive at the premature and incorrect conclusion that IR is a backward discipline with respect to the evolution of human rights theory and practice. Instead, we argue that this relative silence is indicative of the fact that

the major figures of IR, during the Cold War in particular, were drawn to issues and questions that they believed to be a higher priority than human rights. One way of expressing this priority is in terms of the importance – to theorists like Hans J. Morgenthau, John Herz, and Martin Wight – of primary institutions such as the balance of power, diplomacy, great power management, limited war, and international law. Secondary institutions such as the organs of the United Nations and the evolving human rights regime were seen as peripheral to the challenge of managing nuclear order between the superpowers.

Historians came even later to the study of human rights; only in the last decade or so have historians writing about world history made the turn away from national and imperial histories towards historicising the international. However, historians like Mark Mazower have subsequently emphasized the limited impact of human rights. Writing in the context of the League of Nations, Mazower reminds us that Japan famously fought and lost a diplomatic battle with the major powers to have the principle of racial equality included in the Covenant.<sup>6</sup> Minority rights had a different fate. They were ‘guaranteed’ by the League as a condition of the international recognition of the successor states in Central and Eastern Europe. In reality, these minority protections were at best half-hearted, as the Great Powers had no desire to weaken the new states that they had brought into existence; and the rise of Nazism ended this experiment when Hitler’s Germany used the rationale of protecting German-speaking ethnic minorities to justify territorial annexations.

While the inter-war antecedents of the emerging human rights regime deserve a closer reading than we are able to give them in this article, the dialogue between IR accounts of human rights and those of other disciplines – such as history and law – feature prominently in the conjunctural analysis that we provide. By conjunctural analysis we mean

an approach that seeks to capture the relationship between intellectual ideas, institutional change, and social mobilization or resistance. In what follows, we explore the possibilities and limits of human rights conjunctures as they appeared in three key historical moments: the late 1940s, the 1970s, and the early to mid-2000s.

The late 1940s is the first of these moments as the Human Rights Commission of the newly created United Nations was tasked with drafting, for approval by the UN General Assembly, what became in December 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Many regard this declaration as the foundation of the modern human rights regime, as though it had ‘crystallized 150 years struggle for rights’.<sup>7</sup> This progressivist reading of 1948 has been contested by Samuel Moyn who argues that the UDHR was ‘belated and uninfluential’ and ‘did very little to portend a post-national solution to either immiseration or inequality’, by which at its most ambitious he meant a commitment to ‘a global program of equality’.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly, the commitment to a more just world order was never taken seriously by the ‘haves’ (the term Carr used in *The Twenty Years’ Crisis* to describe those states which wielded considerable power). Carr was a more significant figure in the human rights and IR story than many have given him credit. He chaired an important committee sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that was tasked with producing a report on the ‘theoretical bases of human rights’. In 1946 and 1947, the Committee consulted with leading intellectuals of the day including representatives from different academic disciplines. The three conclusions that Carr draws in his memorandum to the Committee of June 1948<sup>9</sup> are so poignant we include them in full at the beginning of each section below.

Carr used the opportunity presented by chairing this important committee to argue that human rights had to advance the cause of social justice and egalitarianism. His revisionist position was articulated at the moment of the creation of the UDHR. In recent years, Moyn has told a more in-depth revisionist account of the origin story. Rather than seeing 1948 as being pivotal, he argues that it is only in the 1970s, partly as a result of mobilization by newly established NGOs such as Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch, that human rights secured a place in policy-making.<sup>10</sup> Our discussion of this second conjunctural moment concedes much to his revisionist account of the human rights revolution. The view that it was only in the 1970s that the human rights project managed to effect political change provides an explanation for the late arrival of human rights in IR. Here the work of Vincent is critical to the final conjuncture considered in the article, namely, the debate that was triggered at end of the millennium as to whether the rules and institutions of international society could evolve to protect individuals and peoples at risk of suffering existential harm. International society has tried to respond to Carr's injunction a half century earlier that any declaration of rights must be balanced by correlative responsibilities. Yet with respect to Carr's other conclusion regarding the centrality of economic and social rights to the legitimacy of the entire human rights regime, international society continues to show itself to be weak and fragmented – prompting speculation not about the beginnings of the regime, but perhaps its ending.<sup>11</sup>

The catastrophic consequences of the failure to take distributive justice seriously is a position we accept; however, we believe international society has become more 'solidarist' in adopting the 'responsibility to protect' framework aimed at galvanizing collective action, principally and most importantly through the UN, in cases where mass atrocity crimes are being committed.<sup>12</sup> In his 1966 essay, Hedley Bull had argued that the solidarist conception

had proved a 'premature' one.<sup>13</sup> We argue that Bull's verdict was too harsh and sweeping when it comes to the human rights project, and that the first solidarist moment was the signing of the UDHR.

### **The UDHR and the Entry of Human Rights into International Society**

*'that any declaration of rights and obligations of the individual in society should at the present stage be regarded as a declaration of intention or as a standard to be aimed at rather than as an internationally binding engagement'* (italics added, Carr, UNESCO, 1948).<sup>14</sup>

How far was the UDHR a moment of great transformation in the story of human rights in international relations? Certainly, as we discuss below, for those who came together in the Human Rights Commission from their different political, religious, and philosophical positions, 1948 was a foundational moment when the claims of humanity were recognized as a legitimate voice in the diplomatic dialogue.<sup>15</sup> The Commission established a smaller eighteen member drafting committee and within this body, four individuals played a pivotal role. Charles Malik, the Lebanese representative to the Human Rights Commission, the Chinese diplomat and philosopher Peng-Chun Chang, the French jurist René Cassin, and perhaps the most important figure in the story, Eleanor Roosevelt who chaired the Human Rights Commission and was a key figure in the drafting committee. In a recent book, the international lawyer Francesca Klug, described the UDHR as 'the first such Declaration that applied to everyone everywhere, that placed humanity over citizenship and that made "duty holders", in the ethical sense, out of us all'.<sup>16</sup>

For those who see 1948 as a 'great transformation', two underlying themes shape their thinking. The first is that the UDHR was not a liberal project imposed by the major

Western states on the Soviet bloc and non-Western states. Rather, it was, in the words of the Preamble, addressed to 'all members of the human family'.<sup>17</sup> Its sources lie as much in the activism of diplomats from the Global South<sup>18</sup> as it does in the ideas advanced by Roosevelt and other Western diplomats who pressed these ideas forward at the UN. As Malik explained in his memoir, the declaration was 'constructed on a firm international basis wherein no regional philosophy or way of life was permitted to prevail'.<sup>19</sup> This is accurate, but perhaps a little overstated because discussions over the foundations of human rights quickly became bogged down in intellectual stalemate. As Mary Ann Glendon shows in her detailed authoritative history of the UDHR, there was no final consensus on these philosophical questions, and Jacques Maritain, a member of the UNESCO group that Carr chaired, had opined in response to a question as to how it had been possible to reach agreement on a list of fundamental rights that, 'Yes, we agree about the rights but on condition no one asks us why'.<sup>20</sup> There was agreement on the universality of human rights, but the members of the drafting committee, and the wider UN bodies, were all too conscious that the meaning and interpretation to be given to these universal moral principles would be filtered through the prism of cultural and religious particularities.<sup>21</sup> This tension between the universal and the particular in the human rights story is one of the abiding continuities of the debate.

The second theme that explains how the UDHR became possible in 1948 is the profound effect that the barbarism of the Nazi death camps had on those who drafted the document. From the statements of the members of the drafting committee of the UDHR, and their later reflections, it is evident that those who created the Declaration believed they were articulating moral universals to try to ensure that humanity would never again succumb to the horrors of Nazi ideology, and more generally the policies of racialised



extermination of which it was a manifestation. As Glendon reflects, the framers of the UDHR were conscious of just how low human beings could fall in their barbarity, but they were also capable of imagining brighter futures where, as Chang put it, the goal was to 'build up better human beings, and not merely to punish those who violate human rights'.<sup>22</sup>

Set against these transformational claims, Moyn argues that the human rights revolution did not take off as quickly, or in the way intended, by the architects and supporters of the declaration. His explanation for this is that it was not in fact as universal as its framers claimed it to be. 'Far from demonstrating the multicultural character of the document', the UDHR shows 'the existence of a global diplomatic elite, often schooled in Western locales, who helped tinker with the declaration at a moment of symbolic unity'.<sup>23</sup> In addition to what he saw as the façade of universalism, he argued that the language of human rights was widely coopted by diplomatic elites for the pursuit of political purposes, including post-colonial nation building.<sup>24</sup> For Moyn, decolonisation was about sovereignty and not about human rights.<sup>25</sup>

The problem with Moyn's argument, as Sikkink and others have pointed out, is that the UDHR and the language of individual human rights were important aspects of the struggle for national self-determination and the achievement of racial equality.<sup>26</sup> For example, Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere's 'Arusha declaration' of 1967 invoked the UDHR in its call for individual rights.<sup>27</sup> To dismiss this mobilisation of language on the part of Nyerere and other postcolonial leaders as cynical window-dressing is to lose sight of how this language was used by human rights activists in the Global South, and other governments and international NGOS, to hold governments accountable for their human rights records. That said, it is true that the universalist promise of the UDHR was almost immediately limited by diplomatic practice.

Despite the hopes of those individuals and organizations who had pressed at San Francisco for human rights to be a founding principle of the UN, the only references to human rights are in the Preamble to the Charter and Articles 55 and 56.<sup>28</sup> There is no mention in the UN Charter of the legal enforcement of human rights and nor is there any discussion of how human rights are to be protected if states abuse them. The subordination of human rights to sovereign rights in the UN Charter and UDHR is manifested most explicitly in Article 2 (7) of the UN Charter that 'Nothing contained in the Present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the Present Charter'.<sup>29</sup> Thus, while it is true that the wording of the Preamble to the UDHR identifies the 'Peoples of the United Nations' as having a moral responsibility to promote the 'dignity and worth of the human person',<sup>30</sup> it is also the case that the protection of these rights depends critically on states.

Significant developments in the institutional architecture of human rights would follow in subsequent decades, contributing to a sense that a great transformation was underway. The development of regional human rights legal instruments to complement and support the UDHR, such as the European Convention on Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' rights, and the Intergovernmental Human Rights Commission of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN),<sup>31</sup> were aimed at providing regional mechanisms that governments could be held accountable to by their own citizens and international public opinion. Nevertheless, there was no mechanism for enforcement beyond that of governments living up to the principles in the UDHR. In short, while the universality of human rights was recognized in 1948, and in the regional human rights instruments that followed, these rights depended on

sovereign states living up to their non-binding responsibility to implement them. The guardians of human rights had no one to stand guard over them.

A critical issue that has not figured in historical accounts of human rights is the almost universal neglect of the UDHR by leading IR thinkers in the early Cold War years. The reason for this neglect stemmed from the belief that human rights should not become a divisive factor between East and West. For a range of major writers about IR, writers such as Hans J. Morgenthau,<sup>32</sup> Herbert Butterfield,<sup>33</sup> John Herz,<sup>34</sup> and Raymond Aron,<sup>35</sup> order between the contending Cold War nuclear antagonists depended on recognizing that the promotion of human rights should not become a basis for interstate conflict. For example, when the Soviet Union invaded Hungary in 1956 to quell a nationalist uprising against the Soviet-backed government, the options to do anything about it on the part of Western states and the United Nations Security Council were non-existent, absent a willingness to risk nuclear war.<sup>36</sup>

### **President Carter, CSCE, and the Diplomacy of Human Rights**

*'any declaration of rights which would be felt to have any validity today must include social and economic as well as political rights'* (italics added, Carr, UNESCO, 1948).<sup>37</sup>

The 1970s have always been seen as a pivotal decade for human rights and international relations. There are two reasons for this. First, there was growing recognition, given its most explicit acknowledgement in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, that there was a relationship between the protection of human rights and international security. Second, human rights became a major foreign policy priority in 1976 after the election in the United States of Jimmy Carter as President.

The Helsinki Final Act<sup>38</sup> became possible because of the process of détente that developed between the superpowers in the late 1960s and the opportunity this afforded the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) for rapprochement. It took two years of multilateral diplomacy to negotiate the Helsinki Final Act through the mechanism of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Western governments vigorously argued in the drafting of the Helsinki Final Act that human rights were a matter of international concern, and the Soviet Union accepted this as a *quid pro quo* for the West's acceptance of the legitimacy of the borders of the GDR. The CSCE established a monitoring mechanism to review state compliance with the Final Act, and at subsequent review conferences in Belgrade and later Madrid, the Soviet Union and its East-European allies were censured for their failure to live up to their commitments to protect civil and political rights. Faced with this moral censure, Moscow sought to invoke the principle of non-intervention which was also a founding principle of the Final Act, and of course the fundamental constitutive principle of the UN Charter as stipulated in Article 2 (7). The Soviet Union did not reject the idea that human rights were a legitimate subject of international concern, but it claimed that it was not the West's right to monitor how it implemented its commitments under the Final Act.<sup>39</sup>

What is more, and against the backdrop of the ideological divide of the Cold War, the Soviet Union sought to turn the language of human rights against the West by pointing to their failure to protect social and economic rights. The latter had been recognized, along with civil and political rights in the two 1966 UN covenants, which finally came into force in 1976. But as with the UDHR, the UN's Economic and Social Council had not been prepared to go any further than encourage states to report on their performance in meeting the human rights commitments they had promised.

In retrospect, it is evident that neither the Soviet Union nor Western states ever expected the human rights provisions in the Helsinki to have the catalytic consequences they did. The salience of Helsinki was not simply that it gave Western states a stick with which to beat their communist adversaries with; instead, of lasting significance was the manner in which the Helsinki accords legitimated dissidents and activists who were engaged in a long and dangerous struggle for liberation in central and eastern Europe, and even in the Soviet Union itself. Helsinki monitoring groups emerged in Moscow, Poland, Hungary, and perhaps most famously, the Charter 77 movement in Czechoslovakia, led by Václav Havel. Through everyday resistance to Communist rule, these movements kept alive the spirit of an open society and paved the way for the heroic struggle that was to delegitimize and eventually cause the surrender of the Soviet-controlled regimes. The revolutions of 1989 depended upon the change in Soviet attitudes towards its East European allies under the reforming Soviet leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev. Put differently, human rights activism from below, legitimated by Helsinki, coupled with superpower détente from above, enabled a 'great transformation'. The aspirational promise of human rights in 1948, which the Soviet Union had feared would erode its sovereign control, had now become concretised into political actions that led to the privileging of individual rights over collective rights, at least in the moment of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The demands for human rights emanating from dissident intellectuals in the East were part of a wider movement of growing transnational activism for human rights in the 1970s. The activism had been inspired by the formation in 1961 of Amnesty International, an NGO with a mission to pressure governments to end political imprisonment and torture.<sup>40</sup> Yet human rights would not have secured the place they came to occupy by the end of the 1970s without the intervention of Jimmy Carter.<sup>41</sup> But President Carter's human

rights policy was flawed in two respects: first, the United States looked for allies – whatever their human rights records – to contain what the Carter administration perceived as an increasingly expansionist Soviet Union. Second, and echoing Carr's point cited at the beginning of this section, Carter's human rights policy was silent on the need for social and economic rights.

Carter and his principal advisors sought to put human rights at the centre of US doctrine in a series of landmark speeches in 1977, beginning with his inaugural address. He announced in the latter that, 'Our commitment to human rights must be absolute'.<sup>42</sup> Carter backed up these words by reaching out to Soviet dissidents, despite the opposition of the Soviet Union to such diplomatic moves.<sup>43</sup> The President was personally committed to transcending the Cold War strategy of containment in US foreign policy by promoting a new cooperative relationship with Moscow that went well beyond the Nixon-Kissinger détente policy which was preoccupied with stabilizing the strategic nuclear competition.<sup>44</sup> Carter wanted the United States and the Soviet Union to work together as joint custodians of world order. However, he saw no contradiction between the idea of the superpowers as co-managers of global security and attacking the Soviet Union for their treatment of political dissidents. From the perspective of the Kremlin, the President's advocacy of human rights, and his meeting of Soviet dissidents, was a direct assault on the legitimacy of the Soviet state.

The perverse consequence of Carter turning the ideal of human rights against America's adversary was the deterioration of superpower relations and an escalation of the competition for influence in pivotal states in Africa and Asia. Carter accepted the counsel of his national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who argued that ending the abuse of

human rights by military dictatorships in the Third World should take a backseat to coopting them as clients of the United States in the face of rising Soviet power.

The second limitation of Carter's human rights policy was its failure to deliver on economic and social rights. We say 'deliver' because Carter and his Secretary of State Cyrus Vance made keynote speeches in 1977 that recognized the importance of justice and equity in world politics, and there was a fusion of rights and basic needs in these speeches.<sup>45</sup> Carter, for example, recognized the importance of fairer terms of trade<sup>46</sup> and Vance claimed that human rights should embrace 'food, shelter, health care, and education'.<sup>47</sup> How far this was virtue signalling rather than a serious attempt to meet the demands for a 'New International Economic Order' (NIEO) is open to debate. What is evident is that the Carter administration did not go very far beyond rhetoric in its commitment to a basic needs approach.<sup>48</sup> Certainly, there was no endorsement of the kind of global economic restructuring that would have met the NIEO's claims for justice and equity.

Given the above context, it is not surprising that some leading intellectuals in the West at the time advanced cosmopolitan theories that questioned why the state is the limit of political community. Princeton was at the heart of this project, with Charles Beitz applying John Rawls' theory of distributive justice,<sup>49</sup> Peter Singer advancing a form of utilitarianism that set limits on the accumulation of wealth and power,<sup>50</sup> Richard Falk leading a 'world society' perspective which was transformative in terms of its rejection of conventional IR,<sup>51</sup> and Henry Shue pioneering an original argument to reconceive human rights as 'basic rights'.<sup>52</sup> It was Shue's idea of basic rights and the potential for their incorporation into international society that inspired Vincent's pioneering contribution to the debate.

## **The Right to Security from Violence and the Responsibility to Protect**

*'no declaration of rights which does not also contain a declaration of correlative obligations could have any serious meaning'* (italics added, Carr, UNESCO, 1948).<sup>53</sup>

Carr's concern was that the protection of rights depended upon duty bearers. This finds an echo in Vincent who argues that for human rights to have any hope of realization, attention must be given to three correlative duties: 'duties to *avoid* depriving, duties to *protect* from deprivation and duties to *aid* the deprived'.<sup>54</sup> Vincent took from Shue the idea that basic rights constituted a 'moral minimum' and argued that protection of these rights could be reconciled with an international society built on principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention. Vincent described the provision of basic rights (which he defined as a right against arbitrary violence and minimum subsistence rights) as 'a floor under the societies of the world'.<sup>55</sup> He claimed that the moral responsibility of international society is to safeguard basic rights and that the principle of non-intervention could not be invoked as a shield against collective action to uphold this 'moral minimum'. He argued that the moral value of international society should be questioned if it enabled sovereign states to harm their citizens with impunity. What had changed during the decades after 1948 was the increased willingness of governments and human rights NGOs to scrutinize and hold accountable the conduct of state leaders and their coteries holding high public office. For Vincent, the way a state treated its own citizens was no longer restricted to the domestic jurisdiction of the state, and this normative change had shifted the balance in favour of human rights against the rights of states. At the same time, he argued that the legitimacy of the state as a moral project would be strengthened if it co-opted the doctrine of universal human rights, and



that such a process of co-option was underway in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>56</sup>

Exposing to scrutiny the internal treatment of a state's citizens may be a modification of the settled norms of a pluralist international society, but it falls short of the solidarist ethic to defend innocents abroad. However, the problem as Vincent recognized with a doctrine of unilateral humanitarian intervention is that it continues to lack legitimacy in international society as UN member-states fear that unilateral intervention would dangerously erode two other cardinal norms of international society, the principles of the non-use of force enshrined in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter and that of non-intervention.<sup>57</sup> The conflict between forcibly protecting endangered peoples on the one hand, and respect for the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention on the other, prompted UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to ask in his 2000 Millennium Report, 'We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', 'if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica – to gross and systematic violation of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?'<sup>58</sup> The answer that member-states of the United Nations came up with was the concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which was the title of the report published in 2001 by the Canadian sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS).<sup>59</sup>

The Commission responded to Annan's challenge by reframing the issue. Instead of focusing on the 'right' of intervening states to break the rule of non-intervention, the Commission made the case for considering the responsibilities that attached to *all* states to prevent, or respond, to genocide and other crimes against humanity.<sup>60</sup> In a landmark agreement, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted the norm of the

responsibility to protect in its 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. Despite their sensitivities at what some states in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) viewed as a potential erosion of the norm of non-intervention, there was a widespread consensus among both the great powers and smaller states that the UN needed to adopt a framework that could better prevent and end mass atrocity crimes.<sup>61</sup> As with the UDHR, R2P was not imposed by Western states on the smaller powers; instead, there was active support for this groundbreaking normative development from many states in the Global south, especially from African leaders determined to prevent future Rwandas on their continent.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, a key reassurance for those governments that were suspicious that Western states might use R2P as a stalking horse for humanitarian intervention was the requirement that any use of force be authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, thereby not only ensuring the protection of the veto for the great powers and their allies, but also giving the non-permanent members of the Security Council a potential blocking veto since Security Council resolutions require nine affirmative votes.

Despite its failings in practice, most notably the cases of Syria and Libya, R2P is an attempt to address Carr's injunction to take correlative obligations seriously. A key component of the R2P framework is to establish a differentiated set of responsibilities for different actors. There is a generalized responsibility in the R2P regime that falls on each state to prevent its population from experiencing the four crimes of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. According to the text of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, member states 'accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it.'<sup>63</sup> What measures are required to fulfil this responsibility are unclear, though it is understood to include an obligation to 'prevent and punish' these crimes (obligations which were first set out in the 1948 Genocide Convention). Additionally, the

2005 World Summit codified the collective responsibility that falls on the international community 'to take action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council . . . on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations'.<sup>64</sup>

By affirming that any coercive action needs the endorsement of the Security Council, the R2P framework allocates a 'special responsibility'<sup>65</sup> to the UNSC's Permanent Members who could otherwise use their veto to block a resolution that was deemed to be contrary to their national interests. So while a particular organ of the United Nations is specified in the 2005 World Summit, it is also the case that the assignment of responsibility to *individual* states is absent, thus making the character of the obligation an 'imperfect duty'.<sup>66</sup>

The evolution of the R2P framework is clearly consistent with what Vincent envisaged in 1986 with regard to the project of reforming international society to meet the challenge of safeguarding individuals from the use of arbitrary violence. What has emerged since 2005 is a diplomatic framework that has achieved the following: a clear definition of what counts as mass atrocity crimes; the assignment of responsibilities for taking action – including military force – that is consistent with the UN Charter; a growing recognition that conflict prevention has to be central to the global protection regime; and that sovereign states have the primary and most important responsibility for the protection of all peoples in their jurisdiction. Together these principles suggest that international society has at least managed to identify what constitutes the 'floor' of human wrongs in IR beneath which no state can fall without it triggering an international response from other governments and NGOs. What is clear is that it is becoming increasingly difficult for governments to hide gross violations of human rights, and even harder for the society of states to defend inaction in

the face of such crimes, on the grounds that UN action would constitute a breach of state sovereignty.<sup>67</sup>

Martin Wight wrote that 'the notion that diplomacy can eradicate the causes of war was part of the great illusion after 1919'.<sup>68</sup> One hundred years on, is R2P another 'great illusion'? Whatever progress has been made in building a consensus about what constitutes 'the floor', the same cannot be said for international society's record in preventing and punishing acts of genocide and other crimes against humanity. The fate of peoples in Syria, the DRC, South Sudan, and Burma/Myanmar have been daily reminders that the enforcement potential of R2P depends crucially on the Great Powers working together in the UN Security Council to mobilize political action whether this takes the form of moral censure, economic and political sanctions, or even ultimately the use of force. R2P will avoid becoming a 'great illusion' if it can, in the next phase of its evolution, be harnessed to the idea that the Great Powers have a special responsibility to act decisively and in concert.

The lack of collective action by the Security Council is not all that clouds the R2P agenda. An important criticism that has been levelled at both R2P and the International Criminal Court (ICC) by Stephen Hopgood is that there is hubris on the part of Western governments in believing that there is continuing international support for these normative regimes. According to him, the ICC and R2P 'are institutions with only an imagined constituency beyond activists and advocates'.<sup>69</sup> For example, the United States passed a law in 2002 that protects US military personnel from prosecution by the ICC and there has been selectivity in the operation of the court in that it has only indicted African leaders so far.<sup>70</sup> With regard to R2P, Hopgood argues that advocacy for the norm has been critically tied to US power and that as this power diminishes in the face of non-Western challenges from China and Russia, US advocacy of 'the humanist international' can be expected to similarly

decline.<sup>71</sup> Hopgood graphically captures how the ideals of the human rights movement had to be harnessed, however uncomfortably, to the concrete realities of US power when he writes, 'To move from pity to intervention, from moral to political authority, from the spiritual to the material, was to drink from the well of power. This is as far as human rights can go'.<sup>72</sup> We disagree with Hopgood here on two grounds. First, he exaggerates how far the norm of R2P is tied to US power because the norm has gained important political traction in the Global South since it developed in the first half of the last decade, and as Alex Bellamy and Edward Luck show, there is growing transnational advocacy in support of the norm as well as increasing enmeshment in domestic political systems. Second, Hopgood focuses on the use of force dimension of R2P, neglecting the success of the norm in galvanising Security Council efforts at civilian protection that are hard to imagine gaining Russian and Chinese support, as well as other R2P sceptics, in the absence of the norm.<sup>73</sup>

A key theme running through this article has been international society's failure to meet Carr's injunction that social and economic rights must be given their due. We have shown how Carter's energizing of the human rights agenda in the 1970s fell victim to this exclusion of social and economic rights. Carter was quick to close down any notion that this should lead to a global redistribution of wealth.<sup>74</sup> This was far too incendiary an idea for a United States that was reeling from the shock of economic crisis caused by Nixon suspending the convertibility of the dollar, the 1973 oil shock, defeat in Vietnam, and the crisis of presidential authority as a result of Watergate. In the view of his critics, and indeed most of his supporters, Carter was elected in 1977 to clean up America's moral reputation not redistribute its wealth.

By contrast, Vincent recognized that if there was to be a serious moral commitment on the part of international society to the provision of subsistence rights for all then this

‘may itself imply a radical reshaping of the international economic order’.<sup>75</sup> He did not elaborate on how to do this, but it is a clear recognition from the first theorist in IR to systematically study human rights that achieving the moral minimum of subsistence rights for all may require a maximal commitment to work towards global equality.

### **Conclusion: humanity’s landings?**

*‘there is no greater barrier to clear political thinking than failure to distinguish between ideals, which are utopia, and institutions, which are reality’.*<sup>76</sup>

Few contemporary academicians in the field of IR would be surprised to see Carr feature so prominently in a reflective article about the discipline after one hundred years. What many might be surprised to read is that Carr was an important figure in the human rights story – not just in the wider sense of his contribution to the pathologies of the global order continuing to leave us ‘nowhere to hide’<sup>77</sup> – but also in the direct way in which he contributed to the UNESCO-led dialogue on the meaning and understanding of human rights. We believe that Carr’s submission to the UNESCO Committee lays bare fundamental questions that continue to frame how we think about human rights and international relations.

Carr argued in the 1940s that the addition of economic and social rights was critical to the legitimacy of the human rights regime. Those who regard 1948 as a ‘great transformation’ in the evolution of human rights would probably argue that Carr was setting the bar too high if he thought that a socialist belief in collective rights could be compatible politically with a Western liberal conception of individual rights flourishing within open societies. The early period of the Cold War made it almost unthinkable to risk nuclear order

between the superpowers by according primacy to the rival conceptions held by East and West regarding the universality of human rights. Moreover, as those who consider the UDHR to be a great illusion argue, the document had little impact upon the welfarist model that Western states were already building after the Second World War. However, the claim that elites in the developing world could safely ignore the declaration's template, secure in the knowledge that there was no mechanism to enforce this vision, fails to recognize how far the language of human rights was invoked by human rights activists in the Global South to advance the cause of both individual rights and national self-determination.<sup>78</sup> Without the moral aspirations and commitments in the UDHR, and their institutionalisation in the years that followed in the UN and regional human organizations, the language of human rights would not have been available to those individuals – and the social movements they formed to defend these rights (for example, women's rights, the rights of LGBT people, and the right not to be tortured) – that sought recognition of their common humanity.

At the heart of the critique of the UDHR as an illusion is skepticism about the possibility that a world of sovereign states could be capable of pursuing, in Bull's phrase, 'purposes beyond itself'.<sup>79</sup> Harold Laski, a contemporary of Carr's, who was also a member of the UNESCO Committee and contributor to the report, captured this argument well in 1947 when he argued that the entire edifice of the UN Charter was 'built upon the preservation of the national sovereign state, and bound, therefore, to be an unsatisfactory compromise disproportionate to the scale of the problem it was intended to meet'. To which he added that, it had already become clear 'how narrow is the room for manoeuvre permitted by this limitation'.<sup>80</sup>

We have shown that 'the room for manoeuvre' widened in the 1970s, which we represent as the second conjunctural moment in the story of human rights since 1919. The

language of human rights was pressed into service by political groups in the Soviet bloc seeking to break free of communist state control and by newly formed NGOs that sought to bear witness to human rights abuses. But what propelled human rights to centre-stage in the late 1970s was President Carter's re-evaluation of foreign policy priorities and the centrality of human rights to this. Carter's failure to translate his moral aspirations into political realities should not blind us to how transformative it was for the leader of the United States in the context of the US-Soviet competition to articulate a new moralism founded on the conviction – deeply rooted in America's liberal internationalist tradition - that US foreign policy should promote universal moral principles.

By the 1980s, human rights were becoming the subject of increasing interest by academics in IR. Vincent's work was the catalyst for new writings on the evolving normative basis of international society and the extent to which the ending of the Cold War opened up opportunities for taking human rights seriously. Whether or not Moyn is correct to argue that the movement to prevent genocide in the late 1940s was both distinct and independent from the human rights revolution,<sup>81</sup> what is apparent from the 1980s and 1990s is how the two movements were brought together. International society's capacity to collectively punish regimes that commit mass atrocities was becoming an important measure for a wider normative argument about the moral possibilities and limits of the prevailing international order.

Our discussion of the turn of the century focused on the innovations inside the United Nations to develop a modified framework for distributing responsibilities for responding effectively to crimes against humanity. Critical to this diplomatic shift was the re-balancing of rights and responsibilities, in line with Carr's injunction that rights are bereft of meaning 'without correlative obligations'. The checkered history of R2P since the World



Summit does not enable a definitive answer to the question whether international society has matured sufficiently to put a mass atrocities-protection and prevention 'floor' in place such that sovereignty cannot provide either a license to kill (as perpetrator) or an excuse for inaction (as bystander).<sup>82</sup> Critics argue that the 'golden age of international humanism' has been a sham.<sup>83</sup> They point to the selectivity and double standards at the heart of the record of Western states. Some even go so far as to assert that Western leaders have committed war crimes that have gone unpunished, notably the claim that US and UK leaders launched an illegal war against Iraq in 2003. On this view, power always creates a self-serving morality discourse. Even when interventions that are consistent with R2P occur, such as Cote D'Ivoire in 2011, it is hard to avoid the charge of selectivity when many of the worst atrocities of the last decade go unpunished.

What is to be done? As Carr tells us, ideals cannot change political practice until they are concretized into political institutions, but these will inevitably fall short of the ideals, and this is why Moyn regards 1948 as a great illusion. But the problem with his critique of the human rights regime, and others like Hopgood, is that the systematic failure of governments to live up to their promises and commitments in the various UN and regional human rights institutions does not in itself empty those commitments of meaning and purpose.

The responsibility that rests on those diplomats and state leaders who want to base statecraft on more than pure realism is to harmonize moral principle with politically workable institutions. This was the promise of 2005 when governments managed to graft the framework of R2P onto UN institutions and values. This echoes the achievement of 1948 with the crucial caveat that the moral imagination has now expanded such that the society of states sets clear normative and legal limits to the exercise of state sovereignty. Moyn argues that human rights are 'the last utopia', but we are more inclined to Carr's view that

there is never a last utopia. As Oscar Wilde once said, 'A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing'.<sup>84</sup> Each of humanity's landings that we have considered in this article – 1948, 1975-77, and 2005 – indicate that the human rights project continues to offer the hope of moving towards a global order characterized by greater justice and equity.

---

<sup>1</sup> E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001 with a new Introduction by Michael Cox), p.19.

<sup>2</sup> See Ken Booth, 'Human Wrongs in International Relations', *International Affairs* 71(1), 1995, pp. 103-126.

<sup>3</sup> See Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, eds., *Human Rights in Global Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> This is a variation on a mantra that one of the authors (Wheeler) had written down on a piece of paper that he had pinned on his office noticeboard.

<sup>5</sup> R.J. Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> Michael Mazower, 'The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933-1950', *The Historical Journal* 47 (2), 2004, pp. 379-398.

---

<sup>7</sup> Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008). p. 205. See also Francesca Klug, *A Magna Carta for all humanity: Homing in on human rights* (London: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Moyn, *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World* (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2018), p. 61.

<sup>9</sup> Carr's submission to UNESCO Committee on 'A Collective approach to the problems of human rights', Paris, 25 July 1948. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001550/155041eb.pdf>, first accessed 8 November 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University), pp. 120-175. Kathryn Sikkink challenges Moyn's revisionist reading of 1948. She argues that in dismissing 'the importance of the 1940s, 1950s, and the 1960s', he fails to recognize how the human rights successes of the 1970s depended upon the pressing into service of the 'crucial resources' found in the UN Charter and other related human rights instruments. See Kathryn Sikkink, *Evidence For Hope: Making Human Rights Work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> See Stephen Hopgood, *The Endtimes of Human Rights* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> The solidarist approach belongs to an English school conception of international society. It is frequently counterpoised to that of the pluralist approach. By solidarism, we mean, following Hedley Bull's classic definition, that there is a solidarity among states with regard to the enforcement of the law and that in Bull's words, state leaders are 'burdened with the guardianship of human rights everywhere' (Hedley Bull, 'The Grotian Conception of

---

International Society', in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), p. 63. Pluralist international society theorists, by contrast, argue that states lack this solidarity with regard to the enforcement of the law, and that if they seek to enforce their individual conceptions of human rights, this will erode the foundations of international order which is built on the reciprocal recognition of sovereignty. For a discussion of these two ways of conceiving international society, see Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998) and Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Bull, 'The Grotian Conception', p. 73.

<sup>14</sup> Carr's submission to UNESCO Committee on 'A Collective approach to the problems of human rights', Paris, 25 July 1948. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001550/155041eb.pdf>, first accessed 8 November 2018.

<sup>15</sup> For an authoritative account of the making of the UDHR, see Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York: Random House, 2002). See also Sikkink, *Evidence For Hope*.

<sup>16</sup> Klug, *A Magna Carta for all humanity*, p. 68. Others converge with this view, albeit from very different theoretical vantage points. Seyla Benhabib, writing from a feminist post-colonial perspective, argues that the UDHR 'and the era of human rights that has followed it, reflect the moral learning experiences not only of Western humanity but of humanity at large' (Seyla Benhabib, *Dignity in Adversity: Human Rights in Troubled Times* (Cambridge:

---

Polity, 2011), p. 75). Ken Booth, reflecting from a critical security perspective, argues that 'the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights . . . in 1948 was a profound historical achievement'. Ken Booth, *Theory of World Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 379.

<sup>17</sup> Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948. Available at <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>, first accessed 9 November 2018.

<sup>18</sup> The role of human rights activists in the making of the human rights regime, especially from Latin America, is a key theme of Sikkink, *Evidence For Hope*.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Klug, *A Magna Carta for all Humanity*, p.25. See also Glendon, *A World Made New*.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Glendon, *A World Made New*, p. 77.

<sup>21</sup> As the Indian delegate Hansa Mehta expressed it, 'although different countries had different beliefs and political systems, they shared the same ideals of social justice and freedom . . . lessons could be learnt from the democracies of both the East and the West' (quoted in Klug, *A Magna Carta for all Humanity*, p. 38. See also Glendon, *A World Made New*, p. 69; Sikkink, *Evidence For Hope*, p. 65.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Glendon, *A World Made New*, p. 239.

<sup>23</sup> Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, p.66.

<sup>24</sup> Compare Sikkink, *Evidence For Hope*, p. 85, p. 87.

<sup>25</sup> Compare Sikkink, *Evidence For Hope*, Chapter 4.

<sup>26</sup> Sikkink, *Evidence For Hope*; Christian Reus-Smit, *Individual Rights and the Making of the International System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

---

<sup>27</sup> Julius Nyerere, 'The Arusha Declaration', 5 February 1967, <https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/nyerere/1967/arusha-declaration.htm>, last accessed 9 April 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Klug argues that it is wrong to think that the declaration took what Bhikhu Parekh called a 'statist' view of human rights because states were only one of three audiences to which the declaration was addressed. The other two being individuals, whose 'common understanding' is of 'the greatest importance' to the fulfillment of the rights in the UDHR and second, teachers, who have the responsibility to 'promote respect for these rights' (Klug, *A Magna Carta for all Humanity*, pp. 36-37; Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948. Available at <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>, first accessed 9 November 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945. Available at <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/>, first accessed 9 November 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948. Available at <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>, first accessed 9 November 2018.

<sup>31</sup> A good overview is Philip Alston and Ryan Goodman, *International Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1964).

<sup>33</sup> Herbert Butterfield, *History and Human Relations* (London: Collins, 1951).

<sup>34</sup> John H. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1959).

---

<sup>35</sup> Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson).

<sup>36</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau expressed this well: 'The United States is a great power with manifold interests throughout the world, of which human rights is only one and not the most important one, and the United States is incapable of consistently following the path of the defense of human rights without manoeuvring itself into a Quixotic position' (Hans J. Morgenthau, 'Human Rights and Foreign Policy', First Distinguished Council on Religion and International Affairs Lecture on Morality and Foreign Policy, (New York, CRIA, 1979), p.6. The authors are grateful to Will Bain for providing this source.

<sup>37</sup> Carr's submission to UNESCO Committee on 'A Collective approach to the problems of human rights', Paris, 25 July 1948. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001550/155041eb.pdf>, first accessed 8 November 2018.

<sup>38</sup> Vladimir Bilandzic, Dittmar Dahlmann, and Milan Kosanovic (eds.) *From Helsinki to Belgrade: The First CSCE Follow-up Meeting and the Crisis of Détente* (Leipzig: V&R Unipress, 2012); Nicolas Badalassi and Sarah B. Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies, and Human Rights, 1972-1990* (New York: Berghahn books, 2018).

<sup>39</sup> Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations* Press, pp. 66-68.

<sup>40</sup> Stephen Hopgood, *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2006).

<sup>41</sup> Hopgood, *The EndTimes of Human Rights*, p. 98.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, p. 155; Hopgood, *The EndTimes of Human Rights*, pp. 98-99.

---

<sup>43</sup> Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations*, pp. 69-73; Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, pp. 155-6.

<sup>44</sup> Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (London: Collins, 1982).

<sup>45</sup> Moyn, *Not Enough*, p. 144.

<sup>46</sup> Moyn, *Not Enough*, p. 143.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Moyn, *Not Enough*, p. 143.

<sup>48</sup> Moyn, *Not Enough*, p. 144. See also Hopgood, *The EndTimes of Human Rights*, p. 97.

<sup>49</sup> Charles R. Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979).

<sup>50</sup> Peter Singer, 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1972 1 (1), 1972, pp. 229-243.

<sup>51</sup> Richard Falk, *Human Rights and State Sovereignty* (Holmes and Meier Publishers: New York).

<sup>52</sup> Henry Shue, *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

<sup>53</sup> Carr's submission to UNESCO Committee on 'A Collective approach to the problems of human rights', Paris, 25 July 1948. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001550/155041eb.pdf>, first accessed 8 November 2018.

<sup>54</sup> Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations*, p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations*, p. 126

<sup>56</sup> Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations*, pp. 150-152.



---

<sup>57</sup> Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations*, p. 114, 126, 152. See also Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>58</sup> Kofi A. Annan, 'We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', Millennium Report, March 2000. Available at [http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/We\\_The\\_Peoples.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/We_The_Peoples.pdf), first accessed 9 November 2018, p. 48.

<sup>59</sup> *The Responsibility to Protect*, Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001. Available at <http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf>, accessed 9 November 2018.

<sup>60</sup> *The Responsibility to Protect*, Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001. Available at <http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf>, accessed 9 November 2018.

<sup>61</sup> 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, General Assembly, 24 October 2005. Available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/A-RES-60-1-E.pdf>, first accessed 10 November 2018, p. 30.

<sup>62</sup> For an authoritative account of how the UN General Assembly came to endorse R2P, see Alex J. Bellamy, *Responsibility to Protect: The Global Effort to End Mass Atrocities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

<sup>63</sup> 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, General Assembly, 24 October 2005. Available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/A-RES-60-1-E.pdf>, first accessed 10 November 2018, p. 30.

---

<sup>64</sup> 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, General Assembly, 24 October 2005. Available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/A-RES-60-1-E.pdf>, first accessed 10 November 2018, p. 30.

<sup>65</sup> The concept of 'special responsibilities' is explored in Mlada Bukovansky, Ian Clark, Robyn Eckersley, Christian Reus-Smit, Richard Price, and Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Special Responsibilities: Global Problems and American Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>66</sup> In Michael Walzer's words, an imperfect duty is one 'that does not belong to any particular agent' (*Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977, p.xiii).

<sup>67</sup> Key works on R2P are Gareth Evans, *The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and for All* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008); Bellamy, *Responsibility to Protect*; Ramesh Thakur and William Maley (eds.) *Theorising the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>68</sup> Martin Wight, *Power Politics* edited by Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition).

<sup>69</sup> Hopgood, *The Endtimes of Human Rights*, p. 141.

<sup>70</sup> Hopgood, *The Endtimes of Human Rights*, p. 18, 142.

<sup>71</sup> Hopgood, *The Endtimes of Human Rights*, p. 141.

<sup>72</sup> Hopgood, *The Endtimes of Human Rights*, p. 141.

<sup>73</sup> Both points are discussed and defended in Alex J. Bellamy and Edward C. Luck, *Responsibility to Protect: From Promise to Practice* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018).

<sup>74</sup> Moyn, *Not Enough*, p. 144.

---

<sup>75</sup> Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations*, p. 127.

<sup>76</sup> Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, p.

<sup>77</sup> Ken Booth uses this term to refer to ideas in IR that any serious student and scholar of the field cannot ignore in their work.

<sup>78</sup> See Sikkink, *Evidence For Hope*.

<sup>79</sup> Hedley Bull, *Options for Australia*, Australian Institute for Political Science, Proceedings of the 39<sup>th</sup> Summer School, Foreign Policy for Australia, Choices for the Seventies. Sydney, Angus and Robertson 1973, p. 137.

<sup>80</sup> Harold J. Laski, 'The Crisis in our Civilization', *Foreign Affairs*, October 1947.

<sup>81</sup> Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, p. 219.

<sup>82</sup> For two opposing views, see Aidan Hehir, *Hollow Norms and the Responsibility to Protect* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) and Bellamy and Luck, *The Responsibility to Protect*.

<sup>83</sup> As described by Hopgood, *The Endtimes of Human Rights* p. xii.

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Ken Booth, 'Security in Anarchy: Utopian Realism in Theory and Practice', *International Affairs*, 67 (3), July 1991, pp. 527-545.

## **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank the editors of *International Relations* for their guidance and feedback on earlier drafts. Additionally, we appreciate the helpful comments received from Alex J. Bellamy.

---

## Author biographies

Nicholas J. Wheeler is Professor of International Relations and Director of the Institute for Conflict, Cooperation, and Security at the University of Birmingham. His publications include: *Trusting Enemies: Interpersonal Relationships in International Conflict* (2018); (with Ken Booth) *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation, and Trust in World Politics* (2008) and *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (2000). He is co-editor with Professors Christian Reus-Smit and Evelyn Goh of the Cambridge Series in International Relations, Associate Editor of the *Journal of Trust Research*, and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Tim Dunne is Professor of International Relations at The University of Queensland, where he is also Pro-Vice Chancellor. He has written and edited many books, including *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (1998); *Human Rights in Global Politics* (co-edited with Nicholas J. Wheeler, 1999); *Worlds in Collision* (co-edited with Ken Booth, 2002); *Terror in our Time* (co-authored with Ken Booth, 2012); the *Handbook of the Responsibility to Protect* (co-edited with Alex J. Bellamy, 2016); *The Globalization of International Society* (co-edited with Christian Reus-Smit in 2017). He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, Australia.