Introduction
Human Rights, Empire, and After

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In the space of a decade, the history of human rights has been transformed by a wave of scholarship revisiting its origins, evolution, and conceptual bounds. In the place of optimistic and well-settled narratives of human rights, characterized by a deep chronology, inclusive definition, and evolutionary progress, a new human rights history has posited the collapse of empire and the place of anti-colonial nationalism as one of the premier issues.[1] The contention has centered on the relationship between international and national ideas of rights. On the one hand, a global human rights discourse proclaimed individual rights above and beyond the state. On the other, an older rights language from the French Revolution bestowed, or promised, rights inhering primarily in national citizenship.[2]

[1] Samuel Moyn has published the most influential of these "revisionist" accounts. See Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2010). The principal revisionist target is Paul Gordon Lauren's survey work, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen* (Philadelphia: University Pennsylvania Press, 1998), which develops its narrative in this gradual and incremental mode, where anti-colonialism is positioned primarily as an era for the extension of rights, and the amplification of norms, as opposed to a radical discontinuity.

[2] For an illustrative set of these debates, which are now voluminous and intricate, see Eric D. Weitz, "Samuel Moyn and the New History of Human Rights," *European Journal of Political Theory* 12, no. 1 (2013): 89–91; Seyla Benhabib; "Moving Beyond False Binarisms: On Samuel Moyn's *The Last Utopia*," *Qui Parle* 22, no. 1 (2013): 81–93; Philip Alston, "Does the Past Matter? On the Origins of Human Rights," *Harvard Law Review* 126, no. 7 (2013): 2043–81; Jenny Martinez, "Human Rights and History," *Harvard Law Review Forum* 126 (2013): 221–40; Christopher McCrudden, "Human Rights Histories," *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 35, no. 1 (2015): 179–212; Sarita Cargas, "Questioning Samuel Moyn's Revisionist History of Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (2016): 411–25; Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, "Human Rights and History," *Past & Present*, no. 232 (2016): 279–310; Samuel Moyn, "The End of Human Rights History," *Past & Present*, no. 233 (2016): 307–22; Lynn Hunt, "The Long and the Short of the History of Human Rights," *Past & Present*, no. 233 (2016): 323–31. Addressing the relationship between these phenomena across a slightly different axis of the historiography, see the appraisal from Robert Brier, "Beyond the Quest for a 'Breakthrough': Reflections on the Recent Historiography on Human Rights," *European History Yearbook* (2015): 155–74; Roland Burke, "'How Time Flies': Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the 1960s," *International History Review* 38, no. 2 (2016): 394–420.

New histories of human rights have argued that the newly independent nation-states of the 1950s and 1960s momentarily combined the aspirations of citizenship and the "rights of man" with the more maximal universalism exemplified by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Postcolonial constitutions, generally in the form of uneasily agreed compromises between nationalist and imperial elites, often invoked the UDHR or other universal human rights concepts directly, conferring on their citizenries the political, economic, and social freedoms enumerated therein.[3] The provenance of these rights was typically described by nationalist elites as both the promised fruit of sovereignty and the birthright of universal humanity.[4] These interlaced rights traditions exposed tensions within postwar human rights languages and practices, which aspired to transcendent, suprastate standards while relying on the state to protect and deliver rights.[5] By the 1970s, however, the revolutionary vehicle of citizenship rights via national emancipation receded, seemingly discredited by the failures of new states to live up to their promises and their faltering parallel project for global economic redistribution.[6] In their place, an influential new human rights vision, advanced mostly by politicians in the United States and a cresting wave of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), emerged as an internationally situated discourse. This version of human rights, born in pessimism, was

[3] On the evolution of these constitutional provisions in British colonial settings, see Charles Parkinson, *Bills of Rights and Decolonization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), and the initial study from Stanley de Smith, *The New Commonwealth and Its Constitutions* (London: Stevens & Sons, 1964); on the wider question of international human rights cited within postcolonial constitutions, see Hurst Hannum, "The Status of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in National and International Law," *Georgia Journal of International and International Comparative Law* 25, no. 1 (1996): 355–77.

[4] On the genealogy and boundaries of the category of humanity, see Paul Betts, "Universalism and Its Discontents: Humanity as a Twentieth-Century Concept," in *Humanity: A History of European Concepts in Practice from the Sixteenth Century to the Present*, ed. Fabian Klose and Mirjam Thulin (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 51–70; Ilana Feldman and Miriam Ticktin, "Introduction: Government and Humanity," in *In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care*, ed. Feldman and Ticktin (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 1–26; Thomas Laqueur, "Mourning, Pity, and the Work of Narrative in the Making of 'Humanity,'" in *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*, ed. Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 31–57. On the lasting ambiguities of the categories of citizen and human, see Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship, Inequality, and Difference: Historical Perspectives* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 1–14.

[5] Roland Burke, "Human Rights Internationalism," in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, ed. Patricia Clavin, Sunil Amrith, and Glenda Sluga (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 287–314.

[6] The atrophy of social and economic equality as a meaningful feature within human rights, and its implications, serves as prime subject for Samuel Moyn, *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

less inclined to regard the state as a repository for hopes. While at least as universalistic as the early postwar in its terrain of concern, and more energetic in proselytizing global norms, the balance of these norms was shifted and repartitioned. Human rights began to operate, in vernacular terms, without the expansive vision of social and economic rights that it had held when wielded by nationalists and postwar social democrats.[7]

As the revisionist historiography has observed, human rights "broke through" in the 1970s, particularly in the West. The precondition of this transformation for North American and European publics was a degree of narrowing of human rights: the excision of utopian optimism and disruptive, transformative promise. The admirable NGO activism of, say, Amnesty International, was predicated on a conception of *international* human rights as civil and political rights claims against authoritarian and totalitarian states. For the many NGOs, this was mostly an artifact of pragmatic and tactical choices and dynamics: the feasibility of mass mobilization in those places where there was some prospect of success, and where there existed sufficient knowledge to document abuses with precision.[8] For others, particularly in the emerging neoconservative movement, the campaign to capture and define the term was more openly ideological, notably in US NGO Freedom House, and in a cohort of US Congressional leaders that exalted the right to emigrate (from the Soviet Union) as the most foundational freedom of all.[9]

Likewise, anti-colonialism lost its place in the Western minimalist redefinition of human rights that occurred across the 1970s, when so many of its priorities were written out of the sparing agenda of Amnesty International, though anti-communists continued to launch broadsides against the Soviet Union for violations of the right to self-determination. But human rights triumphed over anti-imperialism less by the exhaustion of the latter than by the former's appeal to a new cohort of Western middle-class supporters attracted by the rhetoric of exerting righteous pressure abroad rather than effecting reform at home. NGO successes were dramatic, but they were enabled by an equally dramatic focus away from transformative and optimistic horizons.

[7] Moyn, *Last Utopia*, 84, 87–9, 98; cf. Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), and extended substantially by Steven Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonization, and the Reconstruction of Global Values* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[8] Roberta Cohen, "People's Republic of China: The Human Rights Exception," *Human Rights Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1987): 447–549.

[9] Carl Bon Tempo, "From the Center-Right: Freedom House and Human Rights in the 1970s and 1980s," in *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History*, ed. Petra Goedde and William Hitchcock (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 223–43.

This revisionist historiography has raised two further lines of inquiry that our authors undertake in this volume. First, while the broadest arc of anti-colonialism and human rights has been traced, contested, and recontested, the question of the relationship between actor categories and postcolonial policies that, in retrospect, have been classified as human rights measures is of signal importance.[10] Postcolonial actors engaged in policies and endeavors that certainly conformed to the substance of securing human rights for their citizenries. Embryonic efforts to establish welfare state provisions were widely attempted in South Asia. Systems for government accountability and citizen remedy were devised, notably in the Tanzanian Ombudsman experiment. Land redistribution plans, and women's economic and social advancement, were variously outlined across every continent, typically sponsored from above, but often enacted with community initiative. Whether, and how, these kinds of measures constituted human rights activity is an intricate question, reflecting as much about the definitional vernacular of "human rights" as it does the national projects involved. These were major reforms, typically with some emancipatory effects, while not necessarily being emphatic in their invocation of language itself, or wholly animated by a philosophy that expressed faith in the inherent agency and equality of individuals. As the chapters in this book demonstrate, their subjects commonly invoked other rights traditions and languages – national rights, indigenous rights, treaty rights, civil and political rights, and so on – in justifying political reform.[11] Rather than assume a stable meaning of human rights and "discover" these phenomena decades later, we ask: How did various rights languages intersect and morph through social and political contests and transitions? When, and how, did human rights language find form in the substance of policy, advocacy, or political transformation?

[10] On the potential delta between grand and less grand scales as an optic for human rights history, see Meredith Terretta, "From Below and to the Left? Human Rights and Liberation Politics in Africa's Postcolonial Age," *Journal of World History*, 24, no. 2 (2013): 389–416; '"We Had Been Fooled into Thinking that the UN Watches over the Entire World': Human Rights, UN Trust Territories, and Africa's Decolonisation," *Human Rights Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2012): 329–60; Samuel Moyn, "The Recent Historiography of Human Rights," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 8 (2012): 123–40; and the essays from Mark Bradley, "Writing Human Rights History," *Il Mestiere di storico* 3, no. 2 (2011): 13–30; William Hitchcock, "The Rise and Fall of Human Rights? Searching for a Narrative from the Cold War to the 9/11 Era," *Human Rights Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (2015): 80–106.

[11] Additional exploration of renovated approaches in this field of history is elaborated in Steven L. B. Jensen and Roland Burke, "From the Normative to the Transnational Methods in the Study of Human Rights History," in *Research Methods in Human Rights: A Handbook*, ed. Bård A. Andreassen, Hans-Otto Sano, and Siobhán McInerney-Lankford (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2017), 117–40.

Second, recent research has been largely confined to the Atlantic world with diffusionist assumptions of non-Europeans learning human rights from their colonial administrators or the UN; this book is a contribution to globalizing the history of human rights in the age of decolonization.

The pressing need, then, is for granular case studies written by specialists based on a careful examination of primary sources extending beyond the orthodox complement of Western government and NGO archives. Accordingly, the contributors to this collection draw on overlooked historical materials as well as more conventional archival sources to reconstruct the rights politics of an array of figures with divergent aims and worldviews: colonized and colonizers, activists and diplomats, policymakers in postcolonial states and the leadership of Western NGOs involved in both rights and humanitarianism. Accounting for such variegated perspectives affords a greater comprehension of the alternative rights languages available to, say, colonized peoples whose leaders looked to political independence while contending with the late colonial state. What did they mean by human rights if and when they invoked them, and how was this language adapted to local circumstances? Our authors' investigations draw out the implications for the relationship between rights and empire as it changed over the course of the closing half of the twentieth century by reconstructing how it was enacted and reshaped by a diverse collection of actors. Their subjects articulated and deployed the discourses of anti-colonialism and rights, including human rights, as they were encountered in the field, the street, and from within sites of institutional power.

The new research showcased in this volume does not bear out the thesis that the anti-colonial mobilization of self-determination and other emancipatory claims marginalized human rights.[12] It demonstrates the difficulty of identifying any singular moment of "breakthrough" as

[12] These arguments are most advanced most notably by Reza Afshari, Jan Eckel, and Samuel Moyn. See Afshari, "On Historiography of Human Rights Reflections on Paul Gordon Lauren's *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen*," *Human Rights Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2007): 1–67; Eckel, "Human Rights and Decolonization," *Humanity* 1, no. 1 (2010): 111–35; Eckel, *The Ambivalence of Good: Human Rights in International Politics since the 1940s*, trans. Rachel Ward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), ch. 5; Moyn, "Imperialism, Self-Determination, and the Rise of Human Rights," in Goedde and Hitchcock, *Human Rights Revolution*, 159–78; Moyn, *Last Utopia*, ch. 3. For counterpoints, see Stephen L. B. Jensen, "Decolonization: The Black Box of Human Rights?" *Human Rights Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2019): 200–3; Brad Simpson, "Self-determination and Decolonization," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire*, ed. Martin Thomas and Andrew Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), ch. 19; Meredith Terretta, "Anti-Colonial Lawyering, Postwar Human Rights, and Decolonization across Imperial Boundaries in Africa," *Canadian Journal of History* 52, no. 3 (2017): 448–52; Andrew Thompson, "Unravelling the Relationships

definitive of human rights and its ascent as the premier moralism in the postcolonial world. Rather than a sequential relationship of human rights breaking through after the waning legitimacy of revolutionary self-determination as a creed in the West, the chapters here show the persistence of diversity among and within human rights rhetorics into and after the 1970s. National liberation, notionally supplanted and replaced in the "breakthrough," often remained a central lodestar in these rights constellations.[13] From the outset across the anti- and postcolonial worlds, political demands coalesced around human rights as a language of preference because they were more capacious than competing utopianisms of classical political liberalism, doctrinaire socialism, and essentialist nationalism, and more capable of accommodating the specific configuration of myriad struggles, ambitions, and grievances. Anti-colonial campaigns could deploy them to dissent and to indict abuses, or to inspire when framing the aspirations of new societies, or mapping out major realignments in the international system. Human rights became a perennial aspect of anti-imperial and postcolonial phraseology not for its conceptual clarity, but for its versatility as a language with all-purpose emancipatory potential.

In other words, human rights were appealing as a maximal utopia across imperial and postcolonial worlds. Among "Third World" peoples, rights were often connected to local struggle, and operated in a key defined by expansiveness, optimism, and radical potential. There was no finer example than the rapid inscription of the right to self-determination as a foundational human right in the early 1950s, an early Third World project, and one that implied a much more radical vision of rights than the otherwise impressive catalogue produced a handful of years earlier by the General Assembly. Later initiatives on the "permanent sovereignty over natural resources" and a right to economic self-determination, were more revolutionary still, with sequelae that would define much of the North–South human rights fracture across the 1960s.[14] The cumulative

between Humanitarianism, Human Rights, and Decolonization: Time for a Radical Rethink?," in Thomas and Thompson, *Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire*, ch. 20; Eric D. Weitz, "Self-determination: How a German Enlightenment Idea Became the Slogan of National Liberation and a Human Right," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 2 (2015): 462–96.

[13] A. Dirk Moses, "Human Rights and Genocide: A Global Historical Perspective," Gerald Stourzh Lecture on the history of human rights and democracy, University of Vienna, May 21, 2014, www.univie.ac.at/gerald-stourzh-lectures/2014.pdf

[14] On earlier contestations within the field of international law over imperial claims to property rights and sovereignty over colonized territories, see Andrew Fitzmaurice, *Sovereignty, Property and Empire, 1500–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

effect of the book's chapters, then, question the proposition that human rights were marginal to decolonization.

From the Rights of Nations to Human Rights

More than half a century after the peak era of decolonization, the incompatibility of formal empire and human rights may seem axiomatic. Since the catastrophic failure of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in the 2000s, the flirtation between empire and human rights, manifested in muscular interventionist idealism advocated by liberal hawks and neoconservative crusaders, has fallen into disrepute. Those liberal imperialists who envisioned colonialism as a vehicle for the advancement of the liberties and welfare of colonized peoples have mostly passed from the scene, or migrated to other discourses. In the seemingly endless catalogue of abuses practiced by colonial administrations, the appeal of nationalism as the emancipation of first resort has been well established.[15] Since Wilsonian and Soviet ideas of collective rights captivated anti-colonial politicians in the early 1920s, the rights of nations or, as a salvage position, nominated ethnic minorities within them, seemed the avenue of greatest promise for national liberation.[16] Before 1945, those occasional international human rights declarations issued by American and European notables mostly ignored nations.[17] The 1929 Declaration of the International Rights of Man, led by the Russian émigré jurist André Mandelstam, exemplified a briefly renascent cosmopolitan tradition and spoke of "sovereign individuals."[18] Even Lord Sankey's Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1940, endorsed by Indian independence leader

[15] See notably, "Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Nations," adopted by the American Institute of International Law, Washington, DC, January 6, 1916, reproduced in Elihu Root, *American Journal of International Law* 10, no. 2 (1916): 211–21.

[16] Mark Mazower, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights," *Historical Journal* 47, no. 2 (2004): 379–98; Mazower, "Minorities and the League of Nations in Interwar Europe," *Daedalus* 126, no. 2 (1997): 47–64; Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[17] For a treatment of the developments of the interwar, see Jan Herman Burgers, "The Road to San Francisco: The Revival of the Human Rights Idea in the Twentieth Century," *Human Rights Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (1992): 447–77; Jarna Petman, "Human Rights, Democracy and the Left," *Unbound* 2 (2006): 63–90.

[18] Philip Marshall Brown, "The New York Session of the Institut de Droit International," *American Journal of International Law* 24, no. 1 (1930): 126–8. For discussion of the 1929 Declaration and its context, see Lauren, *Visions Seen*, 114; Charles R. Beitz, *The Idea of Human Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15–16; Daniel J. Whelan, *Indivisible Human Rights: A History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 47–52.

Jawaharlal Nehru, was silent on any requirement for colonial self-determination.[19] The Cambridge law professor Hersch Lauterpacht, perhaps the most prolific writer on international human rights law in the early 1940s, was preoccupied with the difficulties that accompanied sovereignty as opposed to a benefit that accrued to individuals in securing it.[20] Although the 1941 Atlantic Charter famously affirmed "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they live," this aim was not explicitly coupled to any particular individual rights, nor was there agreement between its British and US signatories as to whether its application extended beyond Axis-occupied Europe.[21]

As World War II drew to its close, human rights arrived as perhaps the principal innovation of the postwar blueprint, at least rhetorically – and one that initially seemed distant in its potential disruptions to the older global architecture of empire.[22] The ambiguity of the phrasing of the relevant passages of the UN Charter, and their exhortatory inflexion, attenuated the perceived bite of undertaking to "promote" human rights. Despite professions of enthusiasm for self-government in the Charter, efforts to establish self-determination during the drafting process for the UDHR, predictably, went nowhere, even with the cynical sponsorship of the Soviet bloc, and, more persuasively and passionately, Asian and Arab legations.

More than anything else, the belief in race as an ordering system of the world cut through the universalist claims regarding human rights. White civilizational confidence, shaken somewhat, but seeking to reconsolidate its moral and material supremacy, was willing to embrace the idea as part of its global patrimony, and bestow it accordingly.[23] Ardent enthusiasts for imperialism thus proclaimed support for human rights with little appreciation of risk, most famously the South African Field Marshall,

[19] Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, 15–16.
[20] Hersch Lauterpacht, "The Law of Nations, the Law of Nature and the Rights of Man Author," *Transactions of the Grotius Society* 29 (1943): 1–33. The tension between popular sovereignty, implied in democratic nation-states, and individual right seemed a central issue in this period, presumably after the rise of totalitarianisms supposedly underwritten by the people, Hermann Friedmann, "The Rights of Man," *Transactions of the Grotius Society* 24 (1938): 133–45.
[21] Cf. Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 14–86.
[22] On the contours of the new postwar order in American thought, see Mark Bradley, *The World Reimagined* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); and, on its formulation, see Glenn Mitoma, *Human Rights and the Negotiation of American Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).
[23] Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Jan Smuts, who included the phrase as coauthor of the UN Charter's preamble.[24] And Smuts was far from alone; in the terminal period of imperial rule, when the language of trusteeship was in favor, human rights was readily included in the imperial vocabulary.[25] For European empires defending their rule of overseas territories at the nascent UN, the principle of equal agency for all humans was perhaps begrudgingly acceptable – just not yet.[26] When a more vigorous nationalist wind emerged, this easy formula ceased to be effective. A strategy of formalistic and rhetorical acceptance of norm in the abstract, and immediate dissembling and deferral of policy action to deliver it, rapidly lost credibility in the UN, and across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.[27]

Imperial embrace of human rights speaks not merely to expediency, but to the sheer capaciousness of the term and the tensions within it. For at least some liberal imperialists, and even a handful of francophone African nationalists, human rights may well have been understood as integral to the purpose of empire, interlaced as they were with the discourses of humanitarianism and notions of imperial citizenship.[28] In the late 1940s and into the 1950s, human rights drew

[24] Christof Heyns and Willem Gravett, "'To Save Succeeding Generations from the Scourge of War': Jan Smuts and the Ideological Foundations of the United Nations," *Human Rights Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (2017): 574–605; Saul Dubow, "Smuts, the United Nations and the Rhetoric of Race and Rights," *Journal of Contemporary History* 43, no. 1 (2008): 45–74; Bill Schwarz, *The White Man's World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 305–8; and the wider discussion of South Africa's negotiation of a reconfigured world in Ryan Irwin, *The Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[25] Kevin Grant, *A Civilised Savagery: Britain and the New Slaveries in Africa, 1884–1926* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 167–72.

[26] For a compelling discussion of the emancipatory and utopian dimension of assimilation and "civilizational" ideas, see Saliha Belmessous, *Assimilation and Empire: Uniformity in French and British Colonies, 1541–1954* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[27] Timothy Parsons, *The Second British Empire: In the Crucible of the Twentieth Century* (London: Rowman, 2014), 8–12, 128–53, 237–41; for the later period, see Stephen Howe, "Crosswinds and Countercurrents: Macmillan's Africa in the 'Long View' of Decolonisation," in *The Wind of Change: Harold Macmillan and British Decolonization*, ed. Larry Butler and Sue Stockwell (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 252–6.

[28] There is abundant and compelling scholarship on humanitarianism and empire, see generally, Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Abigail Green, "Humanitarianism in Nineteenth-Century Context," *Historical Journal* 57, no. 4 (2014): 1157–75; Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, "Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40, no. 5 (2012): 729–47. See also the earlier work from Andrew Porter, "Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery, and Humanitarianism," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. III: *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Porter and Wm Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 198–221; and, in the American context, Kenton Clymer, "Humanitarian Imperialism: David Prescott Barrows and the White Man's Burden in the Philippines," *Pacific Historical Review* 45, no. 4 (1976): 495–517.

on nineteenth-century traditions of humanitarian and civilizational rhetoric, ideas that were well established in imperial understandings of their own enterprise.[29]

Humanitarian and imperial projects were very frequently interlocking and symbiotic. The moral capital of the former exchanged for the material resources of the latter, a transaction that at least in part animated the nineteenth-century British imperial campaign against the slave trade, which licensed the massive extension of the Royal Navy's writ to squeeze rival empires' slave-based economies.[30] Pretensions of humanitarian concern underwrote grotesque human rights abuses, most strikingly in Belgian King Leopold II's company state the Congo from the 1890s. Critics of Leopold did not oppose empire; they entreated a humanitarian European rule over predatory exploitation, believing that humanitarian work and imperial administration was happily synchronous.[31] Those features of Christianized paternalism that so often infused humanitarian movements of the early nineteenth-century were the showpiece of imperial legitimacy, and the substance of civilizational tutelage.[32]

Much as human rights would become in Western Europe and the USA in the 1970s, nineteenth-century humanitarianism was a doctrine oriented toward export.[33] Demands for overseas intervention, often against another malign empire, almost always drew on the language of a humanitarian duty and compassion, principally within Britain, which insistently cast its empire as uniquely humane.[34] These demands

[29] For further discussion, see Fabian Klose, "Human Rights for and against Empire: Legal and Public Discourses in the Age of Decolonisation," *Journal of the History of International Law* 18 (2016): 317–38.

[30] The literature on abolitionism and empire is vast, see notably Amalia Ribi Forclaz, *Humanitarian Imperialism: The Politics of Anti-Slavery Activism, 1880–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Derek R. Peterson, ed., *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010); Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Drescher, "The Shocking Birth of British Abolitionism," *Slavery & Abolition* 33, no 4 (2012): 571–93; Robyn Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights* (London: Verso, 2011).

[31] Anthony Webster, *The Debate on the Rise of British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Alice L. Conklin, "Colonialism and Human Rights: A Contradiction in Terms? The Case of French West Africa, 1895–1914," *American Historical Review* 103, no. 2 (1998), 419–42.

[32] Andrea Major, *Slavery, Abolitionism and Empire in India, 1772–1843* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 244–78.

[33] The affinities between old and new humanitarian interventionist mobilizations, particularly those of the 2000s, are discussed extensively in Jean Bricmont, *Humanitarian Imperialism: Using Human Rights to Sell War* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

[34] The durability of this self-mythologization, and its manifest inaccuracy, has been well demonstrated, see the recent work from Aidan Forth, *Barbed-Wire Imperialism: Britain's*