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## HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE COLD WAR

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Scholars interested in human rights during the Cold War are increasingly producing innovative new work on the issue.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, human rights has not yet warranted serious, sustained consideration by those writing survey accounts of the Cold War. For example, John Lewis Gaddis' *The Cold War* mentions human rights in connection with only four subjects: the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, Jimmy Carter's foreign policy, the United Nations, and the Helsinki Final Act.<sup>2</sup> Yet, human rights mattered to international relations at far more points in the Cold War. We can think of the Cold War as bookended by two major human rights developments – agreement to the 1948 United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the influence of human rights and human rights advocacy on the end of the Cold War. In between, attention to human rights abuses internationally was inconsistent and often overshadowed by the perceived stakes of the Cold War in political, military, ideological, and economic terms. Existing scholarship on human rights in the Cold War has repeatedly pointed to two human rights “booms” – one in the late 1940s and one in the 1970s.<sup>3</sup> This chapter, however, will argue that the pattern was more undulating and that moments might be a more useful framework for understanding when human rights emerged as a priority in international relations.<sup>4</sup>

### **Human Rights during the Early Cold War**

Building upon the UN Charter's affirmation of respect for human rights, the UN Human Rights Commission began drafting a document that outlined international human rights norms and protected individual freedoms in 1947.<sup>5</sup> Members of the Human Rights Commission considered the devastation of World War Two and former United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt's call for a postwar world dedicated to the preservation of four freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear, to be the foundations for their undertaking. They struggled for many months, in the context of increasing East–West tension and rising conflict in other parts of the world, to formulate a declaration to which everyone would be morally bound. The Human Rights Commission initially intended to produce a declaration or bill of rights and a covenant with a means of implementation. In the end, however, it formulated only a declaration of principles with no mechanism for enforcement.

The UN General Assembly adopted and issued the UDHR on December 10, 1948, establishing an international human rights standard. The declaration includes thirty articles that enumerated specific rights. The first article declares “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” The remaining articles address three broad classes of rights: the integrity of the human being, or freedom from governmental intervention against the person; political and civil liberties; and social and economic rights. The first category includes “the right to life, liberty and security of person,” and specifies the freedom from slavery, torture, arbitrary arrest or detention. The political and civil freedoms outlined include the right to own property and freedom of religion and expression. The declaration also addresses economic and social rights such as the right to employment, education, housing, medical care, and food.<sup>6</sup> Forty-eight countries voted in its favor and eight, including South Africa, Saudi Arabia, the Soviet Union, and its allies, abstained. No delegations opposed the declaration outright.

Consent to the declaration was an important step for the promotion of human rights internationally, but it did not guarantee that its provisions would be fulfilled consistently. Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of its 1948 adoption, the record of implementation of the UDHR was uneven as the issue of human rights became increasingly politicized.<sup>7</sup> In the 1950s, the attention of policymakers turned away from human rights declarations and institutions to waging the Cold War. In the United States, this was fueled by the Bricker Amendment controversy, which built upon fears that international human rights treaties could undermine the constitution.<sup>8</sup> Postwar recovery, the end of American atomic monopoly, the Chinese Civil War, the outbreak of war in Korea, and Third World nationalism all warranted greater attention. Nonetheless, the UDHR expressed a commitment to uphold certain principles that retained a type of “soft power” throughout the Cold War.<sup>9</sup>

Renewed attention to human rights internationally was heavily influenced by the establishment of Amnesty International in 1961, which directed international attention toward the plight of political prisoners and violations of human rights more broadly. Amnesty International was a participatory organization that worked to advance the cause of human rights despite the political context of the Cold War. Under Amnesty’s model, fees-paying members formed groups that adopted specific prisoners of conscience; these were in turn overseen by a national section. Over the subsequent decades Amnesty International’s members drew attention to the issue of political imprisonment through letter-writing campaigns to secure the release of political prisoners. Every group adopted three prisoners, one each imprisoned in the developing, communist, and Western blocs. Amnesty’s one–one–one adoption model was intended to delineate human rights activism as outside the Cold War framework and to demonstrate that low-level individuals could still make a difference in an era determined by high-level power politics. Amnesty International groups were then tasked with securing their prisoners’ release through individual and group activism. Most often, group members wrote letters to the officials responsible for imprisoning their adoptees, pleading for the easing of their conditions and release. Besides working for the release of political prisoners, Amnesty was also devoted to ensuring that trials were impartial and speedy and that prisoners were spared abuse and unjust treatment. As Amnesty International evolved from an initiative begun in the United Kingdom, chapters were established in Switzerland, Italy, France, and the United States, among other countries. In historian Samuel Moyn’s view, Amnesty International was able to attract so many members because it offered an alternative outlet to those disappointed by the intransigence of the Cold War.<sup>10</sup> Amnesty International’s development fitted into broader trends of growing concern about human rights, incarceration, and racial discrimination as well as the rise of a global civil society in those years.<sup>11</sup>

## **Human Rights in the 1960s**

Decolonization was also a significant factor in directing increased attention to human rights. In particular, historian Brad Simpson has emphasized the extent to which anti-colonial movements saw self-determination as the “first right” that must be secured and from which other human rights would flow.<sup>12</sup> As decolonization expanded the number of UN member states, these newly independent countries brought with them an interest in certain human rights.<sup>13</sup> As an outgrowth of the increasing African membership in the United Nations, two new committees were established in the early 1960s: the Special Committee on Decolonization and the Special Committee on Apartheid. Importantly, in contrast to the Commission on Human Rights, both of these committees could listen to petitions and initiate investigations.<sup>14</sup>

One particularly significant moment in the wave of decolonization that focused international attention on human rights was Rhodesia’s unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) from Great Britain on November 11, 1965, which was intended to prevent black majority rule. In response, the United States, Great Britain, and others put in place an embargo to pressure the white minority regime to reverse course. The UN Security Council acted as well, passing Resolution 217, which disavowed the UDI and pressed Great Britain to resolve the crisis. The following year, the Security Council implemented economic sanctions against the regime. Independent African countries were particularly active in opposing Rhodesia’s racially discriminatory regime.

Cold War politics intersected with the international response to the UDI in a number of important respects.<sup>15</sup> First, the United States and others were attentive to black Africans’ attitudes and wanted to attract newly independent states to the Western bloc. Disavowing Rhodesia’s UDI and racially discriminatory policies was one measure intended to garner their support.<sup>16</sup> Ian Smith, the leader of the Rhodesian regime, however, sought to use the Cold War and his firm anticommunism to his advantage, suggesting that the country could be an important bulwark against the spread of communism in Southern Africa.<sup>17</sup> The ongoing controversy, which was not resolved until 1980, focused considerable attention on racial discriminatory regimes.

A similarly important moment was the April 21, 1967 Greek coup; the junta’s human rights violations drew international attention, particularly given popular conceptions of Athens as the birthplace of democracy.<sup>18</sup> The United States, Amnesty International, and members of the Council of Europe each acted to express their concerns about political prisoners, island concentration camps, and the use of torture in the months that followed. As in many cases, however, revulsion at Greece’s human rights abuses was balanced against Cold War and security concerns. Greece’s position as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and strategic location in the Eastern Mediterranean muffled high-level recriminations. Nonetheless, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway all initiated action against Greece before the European Commission on Human Rights.

Importantly for marshaling international condemnation of the Greek regime, Amnesty International documented the torture of Greek political prisoners. Reports from its December 1967 and March 1968 visits to the country identified “torture as a deliberate practice” of the Security Police and Military Police.<sup>19</sup> In the United States, particular concern surrounded the fate of political prisoner Andreas Papandreou, a Greek politician with longstanding ties to the American academic community. There, the U.S. Committee for Democracy in Greece developed, organized by many well-known Washington-based liberals. The nongovernmental organization (NGO) was part of a broader network of groups and individuals in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Great Britain, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States, all of whom were opposed to the Greek regime.<sup>20</sup>

As in other instances in which concern for human rights intersected with Cold War politics, the instincts of high-level officials to ignore reports of abuses were complicated by several factors. Concerned citizens, international human rights groups, and ad hoc NGOs succeeded in keeping attention on human rights violations in Greece.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Greece's location in Europe and history meant that human rights abuses there were harder to overlook. Concerns about human rights violations in Greece persisted until the country returned to democracy in July 1974.

At the international level, the UN General Assembly's unanimous decision in 1963 to designate 1968 the International Year for Human Rights (IYHR), in honor of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, also raised the profile of human rights. The UN hoped its member states would celebrate the year with postage stamps, pamphlets on the Declaration, radio programming, and human rights prizes.<sup>22</sup> The year culminated with the International Conference on Human Rights, held in April 1968 in Tehran, Iran.<sup>23</sup> There was a degree of irony in the International Conference's location, given that the event's host, Shah Muhammad Pahlavi, did not respect civil liberties and that many of the other states represented at the conference did not have exemplary human rights records. Those attending focused primarily on economic development and national liberation rather than on individual human rights.<sup>24</sup> In historian Roland Burke's critical view, delegates from the Third World and even UN Secretary General U. Thant undermined the UDHR in their interventions at the Conference. In the assessment of the International Commission of Jurists, United States delegate Bruno Bitker, and others, "the conference was a failure."<sup>25</sup> Despite such dire assessments of the Conference, it was a moment at which international attention focused on human rights.

### **Human Rights in the Soviet Bloc**

In Eastern Europe, the Warsaw Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia disillusioned many about the possibilities for progress and reform under the Soviet system.<sup>26</sup> The invasion prompted a small group of Soviet human rights activists to protest in Moscow's Red Square. Those present were part of a movement that began in 1965 with a protest to commemorate the anniversary of the UDHR and carried forward with the establishment of the Initiative Group to Defend Human Rights in the USSR and the Moscow Human Rights Committee in subsequent years.<sup>27</sup> An important strand of those advocating for greater rights in the Soviet system were Jews who sought religious freedom and, barring that, the right to emigrate to Israel. Anatoly Shcharansky, one of the most prominent "refuseniks," as those denied the right to emigrate were called, described his religious awakening as coming in the wake of Israel's victory in the June 1967 war, suggesting the international connections underpinning many of these human rights developments.<sup>28</sup> The plight of Jewish refuseniks inspired considerable international sympathy.<sup>29</sup> One of the movement's most prominent supporters was Senator Henry Jackson (D-WA), who proposed legislation in 1973 to restrict Soviet-American trade, in an attempt to pressure the Soviet Union to issue more exit visas to Jews. The Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which became law despite opposition from the administration, angered Soviet leaders, who reduced rather than increased immigration. Furthermore, during these years, Soviet authorities remained effective in suppressing dissent.

A significant burst of human rights activism followed the publication of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act in Soviet newspapers.<sup>30</sup> The international agreement, signed in Helsinki, Finland on August 1, 1975 by Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and thirty-four other world leaders, inspired the formation of human rights monitoring groups across the Soviet Union and

Eastern Europe. The first was the Public Group to Promote Fulfillment of the Helsinki Accords in the USSR, which was formed by eleven Soviet dissidents on May 13, 1976. Known in the West as the Moscow Helsinki Group, it monitored Soviet compliance with the Helsinki Final Act, with particular attention to the USSR's record on civil and human rights. The group's eleven founding members represented different strands of Soviet dissent, including Jews denied the right to emigrate to Israel, human rights activists, and representatives of national minorities, such as the Ukrainians. Yuri Orlov, a physicist who was barred from working in his field due to his human rights activism, became the group's leader. Other prominent members were Shcharansky, Yelena Bonner, and Ludmilla Alexeyeva.

The group was under pressure from Soviet state security even before its formation was formally announced. Thereafter, group members monitored the Soviet record; they based their reports on interviews, fact-finding missions, and other available evidence. They compiled numbered documents detailing instances of Soviet noncompliance, addressing issues as varied as national self-determination, the right to choose one's residence, emigration and the right of return, freedom of belief, the right to monitor human rights, the right to a fair trial, the rights of political prisoners, and the abuse of psychiatry.<sup>31</sup> In time, the group reported on the arrests of its own members.

The Moscow Helsinki Group's establishment was critical to the development of the transnational Helsinki network, which shaped East–West diplomacy in subsequent years. Groups such as the Moscow Helsinki Group dramatized the plight of dissidents and Helsinki monitors in Eastern Europe, inspiring many others to join in pressing for Helsinki implementation and, through their sacrifices, exemplifying the harsh repression of the communist regimes. Additional monitoring groups subsequently formed in Soviet republics such as Georgia, Ukraine, and Lithuania as well as beyond Soviet borders. The Charter 77 movement in Czechoslovakia was one of a number of other human rights initiatives inspired by the Moscow Helsinki Group.

Two years after the Moscow Helsinki Group's establishment, in the context of increasing international attention to Soviet and Eastern European compliance with Helsinki commitments and growing activism by non-state actors on human rights, a United States-based monitoring group made up of private citizens was formed – Helsinki Watch. Helsinki Watch supplemented the developing transnational network devoted to implementation of the Helsinki Final Act. As it later expanded its coverage to Latin America, Africa, and Asia, the organization took on a new name, Human Rights Watch, and now, with Amnesty International, is one of the two most prominent human rights organizations internationally.

Helsinki Watch was effective in focusing international attention on violations of human rights in Eastern Europe by writing comprehensive research reports that were relied upon by policy makers, journalists, and others involved in the cause. The group succeeded in reaching mainstream audiences and elite actors by issuing press releases, writing op-eds, and speaking out publicly. The organization also influenced Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) diplomats by establishing an ongoing, visible presence at CSCE meetings.

Like Amnesty International, Helsinki Watch offered support to monitoring groups and individuals in Eastern Europe, which strengthened its transnational connections with human rights activists there. In addition, Helsinki Watch facilitated the formation of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF), an umbrella organization of Helsinki monitoring groups, in 1982. The IHF strengthened links with individuals and groups active on Helsinki implementation in Western Europe, enhancing the weight of monitoring groups' criticisms with CSCE diplomats and Eastern European political leaders. It also ensured that Helsinki activism would persist at a time of increasing repression in the Soviet bloc.

## Human Rights in the Global South

Throughout much of the Cold War, there was an important distinction between the human rights violations faced by those residing in the Global North versus the Global South. Although abuses such as torture, the denial of civil and political liberties, and impingements on religious freedom affected individuals indiscriminately, those in the Global South faced far greater levels of abuses, racial discrimination, and challenges to their self-determination, due to colonialism.

General Augusto Pinochet's violent overthrow of democratically elected Chilean President Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973 and the abuses that followed shocked those concerned with human rights. Allende's death by suicide during the coup was followed by the murders of around 1,500 of his supporters in the first six weeks of the new regime. Overall, it is likely that 3,200 political opponents were killed, with tens of thousands more imprisoned, tortured, or exiled. Historian Patrick William Kelly writes, "The Pinochet junta effected a tremendous growth in a global human rights-inflected consciousness as solidarity activists concerned with rights abuses in the Americas began to latch onto the rhetoric and ideology of human rights as a means to galvanize the world against state repression."<sup>32</sup> The testimonies of opponents of Pinochet's regime gained an international audience and circulated widely. The rapid transmission of information drove attention to the Chilean case, and the use of evocative testimony enhanced solidarity for those suffering in Chile and elsewhere.

Although, in political scientist Kathryn Sikkink's view, the Cold War impeded or delayed efforts to press for human rights in Latin America, widespread concern at human rights violations in Chile presented a moment at which many moved beyond traditional concerns about communist infiltration in Latin America.<sup>33</sup> According to Sikkink, regional and international indignation was prompted both by the brutality of the coup, including bombings of the presidential palace and the public nature of the military's repression including mass imprisonment of political opponents in the national stadium, as well as by the socialist experiment abruptly cut short under Allende.<sup>34</sup> Attention to human rights abuses perpetrated by Pinochet's regime increased scrutiny of military dictatorships in Brazil and Uruguay.<sup>35</sup> In later years, the "disappeared" in Argentina and victims of paramilitary death squads in Central America would complicate traditional Cold War alliances.<sup>36</sup>

Beyond Southern Rhodesia, one of the most significant examples of racial discrimination was the repressive system of apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid garnered international attention and condemnation when, in June 1976, around 12,000 secondary school students from Soweto, a township in South Africa, marched to protest the requirement that they be educated in Afrikaans, which was the language of their white oppressors. The hardline police response led to widespread rioting, casualties, and property destruction. It also riveted international attention on South Africa's system of racial discrimination, apartheid. Internally, the riots signaled more militant anti-apartheid activism. Regionally, the South African response prompted isolation. Internationally, South Africa was subject to widespread condemnation, including an arms embargo imposed by the UN Security Council. Even United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, no strong supporter of human rights, expressed his hope that apartheid would end in the riots' aftermath.<sup>37</sup> The Soweto riots and the subsequent death of Steve Biko, an anti-apartheid activist, in police custody galvanized opposition to the regime.<sup>38</sup> External actors sought to exert pressure through reduced sports contacts, limiting economic links, introducing codes of conduct, and imposing sanctions.<sup>39</sup> Although the Soweto riots and the government's response marked an initial burst of international attention, unlike other human rights moments in the Cold War, they prompted prolonged and sustained anti-apartheid activism in subsequent years.

One of the most egregious violations of human rights during the Cold War was the Cambodian genocide, which was facilitated in part by the geopolitical dynamics of the late Cold War. In the aftermath of its seizure of Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital, on April 17, 1975 the Khmer Rouge revolutionary movement declared the establishment of Democratic Kampuchea. By cutting Cambodia off from the world, the Khmer Rouge inhibited international awareness of the devastation there, and thus the years of genocide in Cambodia did not attract as much international attention as they arguably should have done.<sup>40</sup> In the course of a massive restructuring of Cambodian society, approximately 1.7 million Cambodians died, out of a total population of around 7 million.<sup>41</sup>

US officials and others found stories of atrocities in Cambodia hard to believe but also maintained that little could be done to address the crisis.<sup>42</sup> Kissinger and United States President Gerald Ford spoke out against the “bloodbath” and “atrocities of major proportions” taking place in Cambodia, but their pronouncements were treated with skepticism, given the administration’s credibility and the earlier US record in the country.<sup>43</sup> Jimmy Carter’s administration, which might have been expected to respond more forcefully to the genocide, prioritized normalization with China over criticizing Cambodian human rights abuses.<sup>44</sup> Carter did call the Khmer Rouge the “worst violator of human rights in the world today” but did not take action to match that rhetorical condemnation.<sup>45</sup> Self-imposed isolation made it difficult for external actors to influence the Cambodian regime. Fresh memories of the costs of intervening in Southeast Asia also limited the scope of action considered. The Khmer Rouge’s killings were stopped only by a Vietnamese invasion in December 1978, which began the Third Indochina War.

### **The Promise of Jimmy Carter**

A high point for those who hoped human rights violations would be taken more seriously at the international level was United States President Jimmy Carter’s 1977 inaugural address, when he declared that the United States’ commitment to human rights must be “absolute.”<sup>46</sup> In this famous pronouncement, Carter made respect for human rights a central element in his foreign policy, asserting that during his presidency, the United States would pay greater attention to the issue in its foreign relations. He followed up his inaugural address with several high-profile actions, including corresponding with Soviet human rights activist Andrei Sakharov and admonishing Eastern European governments over their repressive activities.

Carter was motivated by a range of political and moral impulses. Faced with an eroded domestic foreign policy consensus, Carter believed that championing human rights could help him to gain political support.<sup>47</sup> In the wake of the war in Vietnam, American international prestige had suffered, and Carter concluded that support for human rights could change the United States’ reputation. The issue could also serve as an effective rhetorical tool in the Cold War struggle with the Soviets. Finally, Carter’s commitment was grounded in his religious and moral worldview.<sup>48</sup>

Carter sought to pressure states to improve their respect for human rights through reduced economic aid and reduced assistance from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Inter-American Development Bank. Under previous administrations, the United States had overlooked the poor human rights records of its allies in the Philippines, South Korea, Chile, Brazil, and Argentina, to name a few. Carter’s inaugural address seemed to presage a new approach to United States foreign relations, one which would no longer be captive to a Cold War framework when considering foreign governments’ human rights records. Historians David F. Schmitz and Vanessa Walker argue that Carter intended to create a “post-Cold War foreign policy” with his emphasis on human rights.<sup>49</sup>

Despite Carter's rhetoric and several early steps to institutionalize attention to human rights in United States foreign policy, his commitment to the issue was overcome by recognition of the limits of American power, arms-control negotiations, and other Cold War priorities. His more muted approach can be identified as early as the July 1977 adoption of a Presidential Review Memorandum (PRM) that outlined a more circumscribed human rights policy than had been pursued initially, in part because the latter had complicated American relations with many governments.<sup>50</sup> After adoption of its human rights PRM, the Carter administration was more careful not to single out particular countries and emphasized the global nature of its focus. Nonetheless, Carter's attention to the issue captivated the American public and others, making it difficult for subsequent administrations to abandon his commitment completely.<sup>51</sup>

### **Human Rights and the End of the Cold War**

The 1980s were not characterized by widespread improvements in human rights as apartheid persisted in South Africa, Poland declared martial law to repress the trade union Solidarity, and widespread extrajudicial killings marked civil wars in Central America.<sup>52</sup> The moment that garnered the greatest international attention, in part due to the presence of international broadcasters, was the Chinese crackdown on protesters in Tiananmen Square. Chinese students gathered in Tiananmen Square to mark the death of popular Chinese leader Hu Yaobang on April 15, 1989. The ongoing demonstration became a forum to protest for various freedoms and reforms, and the crowd swelled to as many as tens of thousands. Protests, including several hundred hunger strikes, were heightened by Mikhail Gorbachev's state visit. After his arrival on May 15, the crowd in the square may have exceeded one million.

On the night of June 3 and 4, the People's Liberation Army stormed the Square with tanks, crushing the protests with terrible human costs. It remains difficult to establish how many were killed in the crackdown. The Chinese government has asserted that injuries exceeded 3,000 and that over 200 individuals, including 36 university students, were killed that night. Western sources, however, remain skeptical of the official Chinese report and most frequently cite the toll as hundreds, and perhaps thousands killed. The crackdown was widely reported in the international press and covered to particularly dramatic effect by CNN, the Cable News Network. The image of a lone man facing a line of tanks resonated widely as an archetypal picture of the repressive nature of the Chinese government.

Although the United States was willing to quickly move beyond Tiananmen, for the sake of other aspects of Sino-American relations, other countries were more hesitant to return to normalcy in their relationship with China. Before Tiananmen, attention to human rights in China was episodic, such as in response to 1987 protests on Tibet, or focused on long-term issues such as religious freedom and the use of torture.<sup>53</sup> After Tiananmen, the Chinese human rights records garnered closer and more sustained attention by governments and NGOs alike.

A more positive, and even triumphal, story has been told about the significance of human rights to international relations in the other critical sphere of communist control at the time: Eastern Europe. The influence on the peaceful end of the Cold War of human rights activism and attention to human rights by high-level political actors linked the two stories more closely in the popular imagination. Efforts, in particular to improve the lives of those living in the Soviet bloc, had a long history but finally came to fruition on January 19, 1989. On that date representatives at the CSCE agreed to the Vienna Concluding Document, which included legitimate commitments to enhance religious freedom, facilitate the spread of information, and address human rights and human contacts in three subsequent conferences. The reforms



implemented during the course of the meeting and its culminating agreement signaled a fundamentally new approach to East–West relations.

In the months that followed, protest movements inspired in part by Helsinki principles; reforms formulated in part to comply with Helsinki commitments; and new leaders, many of whom were active in Helsinki groups, all came to the fore. The influence of the Helsinki process was both direct and indirect. Indirectly, ideas about human rights shaped Soviet and Eastern European reform.<sup>54</sup> Directly, internal and external forces advocated for a new relationship between the state and society in Eastern Europe, one that respected the rights and freedoms of the people who lived behind the Iron Curtain.<sup>55</sup> In particular, Western leaders such as United States President Ronald Reagan, Secretary of State George Shultz, and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as well as prominent foreign communists, Gorbachev's advisers, and even Soviet dissidents shaped Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's program of reform. In addition, Pope John Paul II's 1979 and 1983 visits to Poland, his anticommunism, and the Vatican's traditional support for religious freedom all influenced the course of reform in Eastern Europe.

One of the most important ways in which the Helsinki process enabled the revolutions in Eastern Europe was through the development of a "second society" in the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere.<sup>56</sup> This "second society" was comprised of people committed to a wide range of political and social causes, including human rights activism, in which their participation uniquely prepared them to implement change and partake in post-communist governance in meaningful ways. Western states, organizations, and individuals supported these movements until Gorbachev's process of liberalization offered the opportunity for reform in Eastern Europe. Once a movement for reform began, organizations, activists, and structures already existed to replace the Communist Party.

A range of groups in Eastern Europe made up this "second society," such as the German Democratic Republic's Initiative for Peace and Human Rights. Ecoglasnost, a Bulgarian NGO, organized protests during a meeting on the environment in Sofia, in late 1989, that undermined the regime. In Czechoslovakia, Charter 77 and the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee led protests for increased political freedom that quickly gained wider adherents. Václav Havel, a human rights activist and playwright who had risen to political prominence through his involvement with Charter 77, became a leader of these protests, and subsequently president of Czechoslovakia after the end of communism there. In Poland, Solidarity transformed into a political party and its leader, Lech Wałęsa, eventually became president of the Republic of Poland. Activism devoted to labor rights, peace, the environment, and national identity also shaped Eastern Europe as it transitioned from communist rule.

The end of the Cold War raised considerable hope among those in the human rights community that the issue would no longer be overshadowed by geostrategic concerns. Similarly, those disillusioned with or exhausted by Cold War competition anticipated a more moral approach to international relations that privileged concerns about individual human beings. A former Human Rights Watch researcher wrote, "The optimism unleashed by the end of the Cold War ushered in a period of expansion in human rights organizing."<sup>57</sup> In the aftermath of the Cold War, transnational advocacy networks took up new issues. One example was the campaign to ban antipersonnel land mines, which was made possible in many ways by the end of the Cold War. In addition, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch gained greater geographic spread than ever before, significant financial resources, and considerable media attention. Yet, the end of the Cold War has not ushered in a radically different approach to human rights. Important disparities exist among non-state human rights actors in terms of access to resources, communications expertise, and influential political figures.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore,

financial considerations and fears of international terrorism have replaced Cold War priorities as the concerns that now trump high-level attention to human rights.

## Notes

- 1 The most important volume in this respect is Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde and William I. Hitchcock, eds. *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), which brings together fifteen new contributions to the field.
- 2 John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War* (London: Penguin, 2007).
- 3 See for example, Barbara Keys, "Anti-Torture Politics: Amnesty International, the Greek Junta, and the Origins of the Human Rights 'Boom' in the United States," in Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde and William I. Hitchcock, eds. *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 201–21; Kenneth Cmiel, "The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States," *The Journal of American History* 86:3 (December 1999): 1231–50; Mark Philip Bradley, "Approaching the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," in Iriye, Goedde and Hitchcock, eds. *The Human Rights Revolution*, 327–43; Kirsten Sellars, *The Rise and Rise of Human Rights* (London: Sutton Publishing, 2002), 113; and Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).
- 4 Moyn's book has raised questions about the connections between the 1940s and 1970s "booms." I will not engage directly with his thesis but will suggest that the 1960s and early 1970s prompted more attention to human rights than has been previously recognized. Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 3–8. Sellars also sees "moments" as a useful way to examine the influence of human rights. Sellars, *The Rise and Rise of Human Rights*, xiii.
- 5 The most important book on the drafting of the UDHR is Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York: Random House, 2001).
- 6 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, [www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html) (accessed April 6, 2006).
- 7 For further discussion of how Cold War tension increasingly overshadowed the promise of the UDHR and the UN, see Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5; and Glendon, *A World Made New*, 198–9.
- 8 For a recent take on the Bricker Amendment controversy, see Elizabeth Borgwardt, "Constitutionalizing Human Rights: The Rise and Rise of the Nuremberg Principles," Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde and William I. Hitchcock, eds. *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 73–83.
- 9 Roger Normand and Sarah Zaidi, *Human Rights at the UN: The Political History of Universal Justice* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 2; Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004); and Glendon, *A World Made New*, 236.
- 10 Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 130.
- 11 Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 112–13.
- 12 Bradley R. Simpson, "Denying the 'First Right': The United States, Indonesia, and the Ranking of Human Rights by the Carter Administration, 1976–1980," *The International History Review* 31: 4 (December 2009): 798–826. The explicit connection between nationalist, anti-colonial movements and human rights, however, is disputed. Moyn does not see a link between decolonization and human rights, arguing that "anticolonial activists rarely invoked the phrase 'human rights' or appealed to the Universal Declaration in particular." Samuel Moyn, "Imperialism, Self-Determination, and the Rise of Human Rights," in Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde and William I. Hitchcock, eds. *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 160–1.
- 13 Roger Normand and Sarah Zaidi, *Human Rights at the UN: The Political History of Universal Justice* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 141; and Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 1.
- 14 Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, 69.
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