

## [Human Rights and British Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future](#)

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British History / Studies, Diplomacy and International Relations, Human Rights, Law and Legal History, Political History / Studies

The history of human rights has emerged as a dynamic research field in recent years, with historians such as Samuel Moyn and Jan Eckel arguing that the 1970s - rather than the 1940s or the 1780s - constituted the 'breakthrough' decade for human rights in international politics. Yet Britain remains conspicuous by its absence in these narratives. Historians such as Barbara Keys have argued convincingly that human rights considerations began to exert an influence over US foreign policy formulation in the 1970s. Scholars such as Sarah Snyder, meanwhile, have challenged conventional narratives of diplomatic history by exploring the role of NGOs, civil society and international organisations in shaping ideas about human rights in US and Soviet foreign policy during the last two decades of the Cold War. In the British case, however, the introduction of human rights considerations into the foreign policy-making process is often attributed to the New Labour government in 1997, interpreted as a radical shift ushering in a "new era" of British diplomacy. This symposium - sponsored by the University of Liverpool and the Royal Historical Society, and supported by the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place - aims to address this myopia, providing a forum for interdisciplinary conversations between scholars who are studying questions concerning humanitarian intervention, anti-terrorism, overseas aid, and the role of NGOs in shaping governmental approaches to these issues from both historical and contemporary perspectives. To provide scholars with an opportunity to engage with policy experts, the symposium will also feature a closing roundtable of experts from advocacy groups and foreign policy think tanks - experts who are currently grappling with the implications of Brexit, and the future role that human rights considerations may play in the formulation and implementation of British foreign policy in a post-Brexit world.

Possible subjects include but are not limited to:

- The evolution of human rights concerns within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- The role of the international institutions in shaping British responses to human rights issues
- Human rights concerns within the context of overseas aid / development policy
- The influence of NGOs in shaping human rights policy
- The balancing of ethical and strategic considerations in British foreign policy
- The entangled histories of human rights and humanitarianism
- Media perspectives on human rights violations and humanitarian intervention
- Emerging technological challenges to international human rights law

□ The role of human rights in British foreign policy post-Brexit

Please send abstracts of 250-300 words with a short biography to [hsdgreal@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:hsdgreal@liverpool.ac.uk) by 16 August

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