

17.523: Ethnicity and Race in World Politics-Fall 2005
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Lecture 14: The Emergence of International Human Rights

What are the issues between intervention and state sovereignty?

- State sovereignty=the state has ultimate say, there is no greater authority
- What is the thinking behind intervention?
 - Student: states don't always give their people the rights they deserve.
 - There might be a need for intervention which is in direct contradiction to state sovereignty.
- It's a contentious issue because humanitarian interventions are a new concept.
- 19th and early 20th century
 - The Armenian massacre (early twentieth century).
 - Slavery (16th – 19th centuries).
- Overall, there were many atrocities committed during late 19th and early 20th centuries that the world would now judge as bad. However, there were no interventions.
- The idea that we would consider an intervention because of an atrocity is an advancement in and of itself.
- When we think about international human rights, it isn't tied to an instrumental gain.
- Human rights are something that we all possess and ought not be violated.

Is there slavery in the world today?

- North Africa→Mauritania
- Sex slavery.
 - Women desperate to get out of Eastern Europe sign up to be “mail order brides.”
 - Some men say they will help women get jobs, but they essentially sell the women once in Western Europe.
 - It's a huge issue, and it's difficult for states to keep track of.
 - International cooperation along national lines is required to address this problem.

WWII is an important turning point, and more specifically the Holocaust, in introducing human rights on to the world stage.

- Nuremberg Trials
 - Top Nazis charged with crimes against humanity.
 - What were the Allied options in deciding what to do with the Nazis? (Roosevelt, Churchill, Roosevelt)
 - They could have had no trial. Summary judgment and thrown them in jail.
 - There could have been summary executions (some in Roosevelt's cabinet supported this)
 - However, many had a grander ambition rather than sheer revenge.

- There was too much to lose if they were to just execute without a trial. Would have been seen by the world as hypocritical.

United Nations Conventions and Declarations specifically outline human rights

- The main international institution that elaborates human rights
- In the 1940s, early 1950s, it was looking very good for the cause of human rights. Creation of U.N.
- There's a stop with the Cold War
 - Flagrant disregard on both sides for human rights
 - How did the Cold War lead to a decline in human rights
 - Displaces human rights as the primary consideration.
 - U.S. and Soviet Union was supporting dictatorships and proxy wars that committed human rights abuses. Ex: Haiti, Angola, etc.

Colonization of Africa and Asia.

- Establishment of independent states
- Membership in the U.N. expands greatly with the creation of the independent states
- In 1966, the International Human Rights Covenants were created.
 - Civil and political rights
 - Universal declaration of rights
- Have it ratified by each state.