

## Reference Reviews

### THE FOUNDATION FOR A NEW CONSENSUS ON HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001), xiii + 91 pp. + CD-ROM. ISBN 088936960791. Supplementary Volume: *Research, Bibliography, Background*, xiv + 410 pp. ISBN 0889369631.

Debate on the 'right' to carry out 'humanitarian intervention' preoccupies, with growing fervor, both academics and policy-makers. Changes in the geopolitical environment and, not least, the release of the UN Security Council from its Cold War gridlock have made humanitarian intervention both a viable and a legitimate tool for international policy. Yet, as pointed out by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in an entreaty to the international community, there is a pressing need to form and crystallize a consensus on how to approach the issues posed by the notion of humanitarian intervention.<sup>1</sup> In September 2000, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien responded to this challenge, announcing that an independent International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) would be established. The central task of this commission was to lay out the terms and issues behind the debate about humanitarian intervention that has taken place over the last decade.

The commission's report takes its point of departure in the 'right of humanitarian intervention', articulating the questions of whether and when it is appropriate for one state to take coercive action against another for the purpose of protecting people at risk in that other state. The focus of the report – and the novelty of its philosophical approach – is, however, the notion of 'respon-

sibility'. According to ICISS, the question of the responsibility of a state to protect its own is never in question. In a case where that responsibility is disregarded or neglected, it shifts to the broader community of states. Clearly, the commission goes far beyond specifying the limits of allowed intervention, formulating the responsibility with which the international community is necessarily charged. *The Responsibility to Protect* is thereby an argument about the nature and dimensions of the responsibility borne by others when the agency primarily responsible for the well-being of state citizens is either unwilling or unable to act in accordance with its obligations.

From a certain point of view, the report starts from scratch in its attempt to find new responses to the problem of intervention. Its method is to revisit the traditional concepts of the discourse on intervention, reinterpret them, and then reinsert them into a newly forged discourse. According to ICISS, the standard language of the sovereignty-intervention debate is inadequate. The report responds by introducing the language of responsibility, shifting the perspective in three main ways. First, it calls for re-evaluation of the issues from the point of view of those in need of support; second, it underscores that the primary responsibility lies with the state in question; and, third, it brings the issue of 'prevention' to bear on the questions of action (or reaction) and the 'responsibility to rebuild'. Extended chapters are applied directly to these direct, but previously little articulated, issues.

*The Responsibility to Protect* builds upon the concepts and ideas presented in the research material provided by its companion volume, drawing out and articulating what it sees as the *normative* implications of these. Thus, ICISS revisits traditional concepts surrounding questions of humanitarian intervention with normative eyes. It does not

stop at an analysis of sovereignty and intervention in the new global reality, but rather draws the consequences of the newly understood concept of sovereignty. Finally, *The Responsibility to Protect* dedicates one chapter each to recommendations on carrying out military interventions, recommendations for mobilizing international will, and questions of legitimacy in the framework of a program based on *responsibility*.

The wide-ranging accompanying volume, *Research, Bibliography, Background*, presents the raw materials delivered to the commission as a background for its report by an international research group of 51 scholars. Thomas G. Weiss and Don Hubert authored the 'research essays' of this volume, and this unusually well-designed book provides both the historical, political, and philosophical backgrounds for the issue of humanitarian intervention and the most state-of-the-art research on the subject. Part I brings together a comprehensive set of research essays of theoretical, analytical, and historical character. The intellectual history of humanitarian intervention is mapped out, as well as the theory of the state and legal and moral aspects of sovereignty. It also includes an unusually clear and useful case-by-case geopolitical overview of all of the interventions of the last century. Part II of the volume consists of a 174-page bibliography of the most up-to-date literature in relevant areas, organized according to subject area (humanitarian intervention, sovereignty and intervention, conflict prevention, ethical aspects, legal aspects, interest and will, national and regional perspectives, non-military interventions, operational aspects of military interventions, post-conflict challenges, and country cases). Part III describes the nuts and bolts of the methods and organization of the commission.

*The Responsibility to Protect* is accompanied by a CD-ROM that contains full electronic versions of the report and the supplementary volume, as well as a key-worded, searchable version of the bibliography.

Together, these two volumes encapsulate an exacting normative project and the

scholarly foundation upon which to continue a constructive debate.

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#### NOTE

- 1 Kofi Annan, 'The Meaning of International Community', address of the Secretary-General to the fifty-second DPI/NGO Conference, New York, 15 September 1999; United Nations Press Release, SG/SM/7133, PI/1176; available at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1999/19990915.sgsm7133.doc.html>.

## C E L E B R A T I N G   T H E   F I R S T   1 0 0 Y E A R S   O F   T H E   N O B E L   P E A C E P R I Z E

Irwin Abrams, *The Nobel Peace Prize and the Laureates: An Illustrated Biographical History 1901–2001* (Nantucket, MA: Science History Publications/USA, 2001), xviii + 350 pp. ISBN 0881353884.

Øyvind Stenersen, Ivar Libæk & Asle Sveen, *The Nobel Peace Prize: One Hundred Years for Peace: Laureates 1901–2000* (Oslo: Cappelen, 2001), 304 pp. ISBN 8202189357.

The Nobel Peace Prize celebrated its centenary in 2001, and two handsome books have been published to mark that occasion. *The Nobel Peace Prize and the Laureates* by Professor Irwin Abrams, doyen of Peace Prize historians, first appeared in 1988. The centennial edition has been thoroughly revised and is so up to date that it includes the most recent award, made jointly to the United Nations and its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. The three authors of *The Nobel Peace Prize: One Hundred Years for Peace*, Øyvind Stenersen, Ivar Libæk & Asle Sveen, cannot match this coup – their account stops with Kim Dae-jung in 2000 – but they make up for it in other ways. As befits the authors of successful history textbooks for Norwegian schools, they are able

to make their story (published simultaneously in Norwegian and in a clear and readable English translation) accessible to a wide audience. They place it firmly in the context of international relations from the late 19th century to the present day, and their volume also benefits from a generous selection of well-chosen illustrations, many of them in colour.

In many respects, the two books are quite similar. Both have drawn heavily on the archive and library resources of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, and both come with the imprimatur of Professor Geir Lundestad, the institute's current director. Both combine a general discussion of the history of the Peace Prize with short biographies of each Nobel laureate, organized in chronological sections. Abrams divides the first century of the Peace Prize into five periods (though the preface [p. x] says there are only four) of roughly 20 years each. Starting much earlier, in 1870, Stenersen, Libæk & Sveen have seven periods of unequal length but with a clearer internal logic. They follow the main landmarks of international relations: the beginning and end of the two world wars, the interwar crisis, the rise and fall of the Cold War, and (from 1991) the era of globalization. Both books also have useful bibliographies: Abrams's are particularly detailed and are helpfully appended to the individual biographical entries.

In addition, both books divide the Nobel laureates into broad categories according to their chief contributions to the cause of peace. Abrams has six groupings: 'the organized peace movement', 'humanitarians', 'international jurists', 'statesmen and political leaders', 'religious' (there is only one laureate in this category, or possibly two: John Mott [1946] is 'religious' in the text [p. 121] but 'humanitarian' in the appendix) and finally 'human rights'. The six categories adopted by the three Norwegian historians are similar, though a little more analytically ambitious: 'the peace movement', 'humanitarian work', 'supporting a world organization', 'disarmament' and 'honouring the statesmen'. Inevitably, some laure-

ates are difficult to classify, and many could be placed in more than one category. This reflects the eclectic nature of the criteria employed by successive Nobel Committees in making their choices over the last 100 years. Of course, the flexibility this has permitted is one of the keys to the Peace Prize's success. If the committees had stuck rigidly to the terms of Alfred Nobel's will, they might have been more consistent, but they could never have come up with a range of names that would have commanded such attention or – on the whole – respect. However, the same flexibility presents problems to those – like the authors of these two books – who want to write an account that is not merely a modern version of a medieval chronicle or hagiography.

Despite their basically chronological and biographical approaches, both books mark a big step forward in Peace Prize history (still a relatively small and specialized genre), above all in their use of archival sources from both the Norwegian Nobel Institute and elsewhere. Abrams has been a pioneer in this respect, notably in his writings on Bertha von Suttner and Carl von Ossietzky. For the new edition of his book, he has had access to Nobel archive material up to about 1950 (the Swedish Nobel Foundation operates a 50-year rule, which the Norwegian Nobel Institute is obliged to follow), and he has used this material in his discussion of a number of laureates, including Henri Dunant, Norman Angell and Ossietzky. For the post-World War II period, he has been able to use the diary of former Nobel Committee chairman Gunnar Jahn to reconstruct the campaign that led to the award to Emily Greene Balch in 1946. Abrams has one further asset that he is able to use to great effect: his age. His biographical accounts are enlivened by personal recollections. He is old enough to have met the private secretary of William Randal Cremer, only the fifth person to receive the Peace Prize (in 1903); he knew Ludwig Quidde, one of the two 1927 laureates, in the days of his exile from Nazi Germany in Geneva; he also met Christian Lange, the first director of the Nobel Institute

and himself a recipient of the Peace Prize for 1921. Among more recent laureates, Abrams's most fruitful contacts have been with Linus Pauling, Martin Luther King, Jr., Willy Brandt and Alva Myrdal.

Abrams takes more interest than the three Norwegian historians in the mechanics of the selection process. This makes his book an essential work of reference, but Abrams also has a lively style and takes a stern, sometimes waspish, view of some Nobel laureates. He has little time for the architects of the Locarno treaties (though he is remarkably polite about Henry Kissinger), and his account of Nicholas Murray Butler (1931) is a classic example of damning with faint praise.

Benefiting from their two-year period as research fellows of the Nobel Institute, Stenersen, Libæk & Sveen are able to go further than Abrams in integrating archive-based research into their history of the Peace Prize. This enables them to throw light on a number of the more controversial decisions of the Norwegian Nobel Committee. The award to President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 – in the face of a negative report by the committee's adviser (Halvdan Koht) and open criticism of Roosevelt's imperialist policies by Christian Lange – appears to have been made because Foreign Minister and Nobel Committee Chairman Jørgen Løvland 'wanted a foot in the door of a world power, as Norway was now independent of Sweden and needed powerful allies' (p. 47). With this notable exception, the authors offer little evidence of a direct connection between the Nobel Committee's decisions and Norwegian foreign policy interests more generally. They do note, however, that following the award of the Peace Prize to Argentine Foreign Minister Carlos Saavedra Lamas in 1936, 'the Norwegian ambassador immediately made good use of the goodwill that the prize had brought about towards Norway, and successfully negotiated a reduced customs tariff for Norwegian dried cod' (p. 125).

There are several cases where we learn from Stenersen, Libæk & Sveen of arguments and deadlock among members of the

Nobel Committee. These help to clear up the puzzle of why the Peace Prize was not awarded at all in some years (especially in the 1920s): conflicting political agendas and strong, not to say stubborn, personalities seem to have been at the heart of these disagreements. We also learn a good deal about the role of the Nobel Committee's advisers – usually distinguished professors of history, economics and international law. In 1926, for example, Professor Wilhelm Keilhau suggested that the architects of the Locarno treaties be awarded the prize. When assigned to look into their careers, however, he came to wonder whether men like Austen Chamberlain or Gustav Stresemann, who had never shown any interest in 'the peace cause and its ideals' (p. 98), were worthy of the Peace Prize at all. On this occasion, the Nobel Committee disregarded its adviser's second thoughts, but there are other cases where Stenersen, Libæk & Sveen are able to demonstrate how pivotal an adviser's report may be to the success or failure of a candidate.

Such depth of insight into the Nobel Committee's decisions is a substantial achievement for a book that is primarily conceived as a work of popular history, and it offers a hint of what may be learnt when the archives for more recent periods become available for research. Ironically, however, the Norwegian historians' very success in this respect appears to have led to a change in the way the Peace Prize will be awarded in the future. Within the last couple of years, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has for the first time banned its advisers from recommending candidates for the Peace Prize. This seems to have been a direct result of learning from the researches of Stenersen and his colleagues how much influence – both positive and negative – the committee's advisers have sometimes been able to exert in the past.

As they approach the present day, both books, inevitably, become less informative about the selection process and more tentative in their judgements. This is due not merely to the absence of primary sources but also to the fact that many of the domes-

tic and international issues to which the Norwegian Nobel Committee has turned its attention, notably in the Middle East and Northern Ireland, remain unfinished business. Both Abrams and the Norwegian authors praise the committee's increased emphasis on human rights in its awards to such figures as Aung San Suu Kyi in 1991 and Rigoberta Menchu in 1992. Abrams, however, has reservations about examples of 'peacemaking by the Nobel committee itself' (p. 274), such as the 1994 award to Arafat, Peres and Rabin or the award to Hume and Trimble in 1998. On the other hand, the authors of both books acknowledge that there are cases in which the committee's growing readiness to take risks for peace has paid off: above all, with the 1996 award to José Ramos-Horta and Carlos Belo. In that case, the award of the prize directed unprecedented international attention to East Timor and undoubtedly helped to discredit Indonesian oppression more

rapidly than would otherwise have been the case.

It would be invidious to make a choice between these two books, since both provide excellent surveys of the first 100 years of the Nobel Peace Prize. But there are differences of emphasis. Abrams, his idealism undimmed, remains focused primarily on the individual laureates. In his view, these outstanding figures, in their remarkable diversity, reflect the essence of Alfred Nobel's vision and represent 'the glory of the Nobel Peace Prize' (p. 276). Stenersen, Libæk & Sveen are perhaps more accessible to the general reader and convey a stronger sense of context. With their book, one can begin to see how the Nobel Peace Prize fits into the broader picture of 20th-century international relations.

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