

Introduction

The second of our special issues commemorating the bicentenary of abolition engages with the idea of human rights—and the reality which gives rise to human wrongs. The legal and moral

thinking can be traced to Aristotle, but a more direct antecedent was the extraordinary period of revolutionary France. The English Bill of Rights of 1689 and the 1776 Virginia Declaration of Rights

Many of the global rights projects which we tend to trace to the UN are directly founded on those of the Revolution. The 1948 Declaration de (504)rh 7-e -0(g) 1t002.-pe60.004

who died in 1876, is even more a colonial tragedy, an emblematic story of the genocide of the Aborigines. The removal of human rights both from those who were deported from Europe¹ (like Kelly's father), and from the Aboriginal people, is one of the great wrongs of empire. Forshaw's poems are here accompanied with images of a painting and photograph of Trucanini—which we feel complement them.

Cicero took the pragmatic view: *Silent enim leges inter arma* (Laws are inoperative in war). However, today's international community has to the idea of legally sanctioned warfare, both through the concept of engagement and the concept of "just war."² The blue berets of unarmed UN troops which used to stand for passive intervention and really did succeed in keeping the peace in many tense spots around the world, have largely been superseded in our time by troops with arms and the mandate to use them. The dictum of Clausewitz (1780–1831) that war is the continuation of politics by other means³ remains prescient. Josef Bordat's paper tackles the morally and practically difficult idea of the "just war" or the war of humanitarian intervention—such as continues to polarise the world community over Iraq with an unconventional approach arguing that they are two phases of globalisation, he brings a solid debate of 1552 between Las Casas and Sepúlveda on the legitimacy of the Spanish conquest of South and Central America, to bear on the arguments of a recent report, *The Responsibility To Protect* (2001), which examines when and how the international community should intervene militarily in sovereign states. It also supports the role of the International Criminal Court in pursuing crimes against humanity.

Abuse of a people's human rights in a war situation is the mainspring of Nouri Gana's impassioned prose, addressed, it emerges, to the future of Palestinians. The

theoretical discourse. The foregrounding of questions of voice includes the reader, who, Croft writes, “may constit

The role of English as the emerging internationally dominant language enables us to communicate internationally, but is also troubling in its implications. It is one reason why, although *EnterText* is an English language journal, we make efforts to publish, alongside its English text versions in other languages where available. We are glad to include in this issue translations into French, German and Arabic, and are grateful to those who have undertaken translations at our suggestion, and to the University of Western Sydney for sponsoring two translations. It sends a signal, however faint, that we are aware that other languages and the cultures which take place in them are enormously important, not just to their own speakers but to the world community, and that we are actively interested in the exchange, communication and understanding across boundaries which we see as the lynchpin of our interdisciplinary and internationalist remit. This ends with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance....

Paula Burnett

¹ The transportation sentence was used in the colonies

² It is, of course, a paradox, like that of the motto of the Commonwealth of England (the "English Revolution," encompassing the period 1646-60), *Pax quaeritur bello* (Peace is sought through war).

³ "Der Krieg ist nichts als eine Fortsetzung der politischen Verkehrs mit Einmischung anderer Mittel."

⁴ See her play *L'Esclavage des Nègres* (Negro Slavery) of 1774. Women were, of course, conspicuous in abolitionist campaigns across Europe and acquired a real political influence despite not having the vote.

⁵ The 1948 UN Declaration does not mention a right to homosexual freedoms (though it does include a right to marriage on terms of "free and full consent"). However, Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) asserts the right to respect for one's "private and family life" (the 1948 Declaration has a similar clause, Article 12) which has since been interpreted broadly by the European Court to include the protection of consensual homosexual acts in private. Male and female homosexual behaviours have attracted different attention in different societies and at different times.