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Policy*

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*Une revue Interdisciplinaire de droit et les
politiques*

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Foreword

The Complexity of Human Rights on the Tenth Anniversary of the *Canadian Journal of Human Rights*

Richard Jochelson

I am honoured to write this foreword in recognition of the significant achievement of the tenth anniversary of the *Canadian Journal of Human Rights*. The journal remains a singular and unique journal in Canada, and its confluence with other Human Rights institutions in the city of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba, instill it with a special duty in fostering the critical exploration of human rights issues.

If the modern era of human rights sprang from the darkness of World War II, the issues facing humankind at this moment in time speak to the salience of probing interrogations of the nature of rights in this late-modern era. Since its fifth anniversary, the journal has operated or continued to operate through the eras of Me-Too, Black-Lives Matter, Indigenous injustice, COVID, Defund the Police, climate activism, Truth and Reconciliation, religious symbol persecution and the dawn of a resurgence of educational institutional regard for equity, inclusion, and diversity. Scrutiny of the underrepresentation of Indigenous persons in justice making enterprises and overrepresentation in carceral systems continue to be unfortunate realities of lived experiences in Canada.

Disability injustice maintains, as Canada continues to lag even the United States in legislative responses to inaccessibility. Members of the LGBTQ2S*+ communities continue to be othered and excluded from institutions and opportunities across the globe. Hate crimes and anti-Semitic speech appear to be on the rise over the last several years in Canada and globally. Trumpism, the rise of strong men and movements to the fascistic right have increased around the world.

And, of course, as this forward is written, atrocities in Europe in the Russian attack on Ukraine demonstrate the continual human rights abuses that occur during acute conflict, including the racism and intolerance that affects marginalized members of migrant communities. The abuses associated with human migration continue to be visceral and are often troubling correlates of attendant human rights abuses.

Discussing the theoretical, material and socio-legal phenomena undergirding these many challenges remains a critical part of situating and then engaging in emancipatory action. Critical, rigorous and nuanced exploration of the state of human rights provide us with the knowledge about social and cultural problems. It provides empirical grist for the mill of social change.

It has never been more important to explore these vital issues, and this journal continues to be an international thought leading vehicle in the complicating of human rights discussions. It is only by understanding complexities and acknowledging them that amelioration becomes possible. It is by shining light on these issues, by making empirical sense of rights, that meaningful progress can be made. Falling short of this standard would mean advocacy for change based on spiritual preference. We are proud at the Faculty of Law that the *CJHR* looks for a substratum of inquiry and answers (even tentative ones) before merely advocating for reflexive change. The journal remains a deep pool of reflection that grounds action in research, science, debate and then, calls for amelioration.

Gratitude is owed to Dr. Donn Short (Editor-in-Chief and Founder) and his team of editors for fostering an international and leading venue for nurturing these discussions for a decade! With impeccable care from content to the visual presentation of the journal, every detail has been carefully crafted and edited. The journal maintains the highest standard of double-blind peer-review for each and every volume.

A former Dean wrote in Volume 5, No 1 (2016) that the protection of basic rights and freedoms must be cultivated, naming three key players: government, judges and individuals. One cannot doubt the role of each in the enterprise. The genius of the collective works of this journal is its reach beyond these. The collected works of the journal reflect an acceptance that, as much as anything, rights are socially constructed. Law has a place in this construction to be sure, as do persons, but culture, society, institutions, organized religion, communities and media are also critical.

Human Rights were certainly constructed as internationally recognized bundles of protections in the aftermath of World War II, but the fundamental conceptions of human dignity, worth and community are ancient, inscribed on formative legal and religious documents, in anthropological evidence, in artefacts of archeology, in social science, in literature, in art and in popular media. This broad conception of human rights is what sets the journal apart as a leading force in the study of the conception of rights today.

This tenth anniversary finds us at multiple global crossroads at a moment in time when the most educated population in human history acts instinctively in seemingly destructive ways. Let the explorations of the *CJHR* and like-minded fora guide us with knowledge, debate and discovery so that we may foster the privilege of education into meaningful and informed social change.

*Dr. Richard Jochelson
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