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Toward a More Complete Humanism: The Case for Imbuing International Political Service with Humilitas

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Toward a More Complete Humanism: The Case for Imbuing International Political Service with *Humilitas*

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation with Honors in Peace and Justice Studies in the Department of Theology At Carroll College, Helena, Montana

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This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for Peace and Justice Studies in the Department of Theology.

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Abstract

My thesis, coming out of a theological perspective, explores a way for those involved in international service to become more effective in helping solve crises in the world. I first examine the current crisis in Darfur, Sudan as representative of the need for more efficient international service. The situation in this region has been compared to the crisis in Rwanda in 1994 and, similar to its reaction to that crisis, the international community is once again hesitant to put an end to the atrocities. Next, I describe the philosophy of humanism as a means recently used to address such international crises. The advent of humanism brought with it a much needed emphasis upon social responsibility and forced the world to consider whether or not it had any responsibility to help people who are suffering in some remote corner of the world. As can be seen in the case of Darfur, however, even though the world may recognize a need from its humanistic perspective, that same humanism may be unable to provide an efficacious approach to aid those people who are suffering.

Finally, in proposing a more efficacious approach, I analyze the writings and public service career of Dag Hammarskjöld, UN Secretary-General from 1953-1961. Hammarskjöld’s life and service were founded not purely upon humanism, but also upon a deep theo-centric spirituality that came to light with the posthumous publication of his journal. Rooted in this spirituality, Hammarskjöld displayed a deep-seated humilitas that imbued his everyday life and his work as a UN Secretary-General. My thesis argues that the international community should incorporate such humilitas into its humanistic methodology if it desires to work toward becoming more efficient in aiding those who suffer in the world.
I don’t know Who—or what—put the question, I don’t know when it was put. I don’t even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer Yes to Someone—or Something—and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal.

-Dag Hammarskjöld, Markings
Introduction

Starting Point

Suffering exists in the world. Injustices abound. The pain of others often causes a visceral reaction in us, prompting us to enact change. But some approaches to social justice are more successful than others, which gives rise to the question of what social justice should consist of and which approach to it is the best. What is it that makes Jesus, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mother Teresa stand out? Was it their humanistic concern or their theological starting point? What is it that accompanies their beneficial aid, setting it apart from political moves to save or gain face? Such ponderings have prompted me to explore international social justice. Two major means of addressing social justice issues have been humanistic and theological. Tension is often found between the two methodologies, the existence of which led to my investigation of their relationship. My studies in politics and theology have led me to investigate the blatant insufficiency of current political methods, which often employ secular humanistic ideologies, and to provide an alternative that combines secular humanism with a theocentric spirituality. Despite the importance of Liberation Theology, which is a theological approach that begins with empowerment at the grassroots level, I have chosen to broach this subject from the equally important level of institutional leadership.
Currently, the most prominent organization in international politics is the United Nations (UN) under the guidance of the UN Secretary-General. Dag Hammarskjöld was the Secretary-General from 1953-1961. Research on Hammarskjöld’s life has uncovered a phenomenal intertwining of politics and spirituality. One of the most significant elements of Hammarskjöld’s life was *humilitas*, the simultaneous recognition of one’s incredible potential and insignificance within the realm of the transcendent, demonstrated in his political actions as well as within his spiritual journal, *Markings*. After examining Hammarskjöld’s approach, it became clear that humanism makes significant contributions to social justice, but it is insufficient for ultimate social justice success.\(^1\) In order to achieve such success, we need humanistic values imbued with *humilitas*.

**Approach**

The following study of the role of *humilitas* in international service to humanity will focus on the contemporary crisis in Darfur, Sudan, then examine humanism as a foundation of current policies of international service, and will finally analyze Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld as a personification of the exemplary integration of *humilitas* with service to humanity.

The current situation in western Sudan continues to escalate despite efforts on the part of various humanitarian groups, the United Nations (UN), the United States (U.S.), and the African Union (AU). As will be shown, the financial interests of China and Russia have hindered UN efforts to halt the crisis. These two countries have wielded

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\(^1\) “Success” in this context does not imply saving the world or implementing international peace, rather it implies the establishment of stable foundations from which peace can ensue and the people of that society can begin to establish stable lives without daily threats of, for example, violence, starvation, endemics, or corruption.
their veto power within the Security Council of the UN to prevent the passage of resolutions sufficient to curb the violence in Darfur. The situation appears to lack a leader who is willing to step forward on behalf of the victims of Darfur, someone who is willing to stand up to the major powers, risking his or her political clout for the sake of the people. If an international leader, such as current Secretary-General Kofi Annan, took such a stance on the side of the Darfurians and against the avarice of the major powers, then the crisis might begin to subside. My question is why he does not do so.

Humanism provides a good approach to social justice issues as well as a foundation for the promotion of human rights in areas where they are lacking, such as in Darfur. The world undoubtedly benefits from the work of humanists, yet the latter lacks the key element of transcendent spirituality. Mainstream humanism adamantly rejects notions of transcendence. The following examination of humanism will show its value as an emphatic voice for social responsibility, but will raise the question as to the efficacy of humanism as a model of service to humanity in light of its persistent rejection of transcendent spirituality.

Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the UN, served from 1953 until his death in 1961. He is commonly recognized as a peacemaker and a tireless activist for the rights of the developing world. With the posthumous publication of his spiritual diary, *Markings*, Hammarskjöld demonstrated to the world that a politician can be successful and spiritual. As Secretary-General, Hammarskjöld held one of the most prominent international positions in the world; however, *Markings* shows the extent of
his own self-doubt and his utter dependence upon God.\(^2\) Within this diary he often directly addressed the issue of *humilitas* and he demonstrated this virtue in his political actions. Dag Hammarskjöld was the quintessential politician serving humanity with *humilitas* out of recognition of his calling from God. *Humilitas*, as displayed by Hammarskjöld, necessarily arises from a belief in the transcendent and is consequently absent from mainstream humanism. In his career, Hammarskjöld did not cause a remarkable transfiguration of the international community, prompting the correction of every injustice and securing basic human rights for all, yet to this day he is remembered as a peacemaker as well as a remarkable politician and man. He was powerful and efficacious in his own quiet way and his transcendental conviction suggests an important potential for politics. His success as an international politician and his deep *humilitas* appears to be more than mere coincidence.

One of the best ways to serve the world, as demonstrated by Hammarskjöld, is from a foundation of *humilitas*. If the international community further develops humanism by imbuing its service with the virtue of *humilitas*, as Dag Hammarskjöld did, it may be able to more truly serve the people of Darfur and help them build a stable future. The international community could benefit from an incorporation of *humilitas*, with its inherent belief in transcendence, into its humanistic methodology. Sudan shows the need, Hammarskjöld shows the way.

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\(^2\) Hammarskjöld refused to identify with a particular religion, yet he was raised in the Lutheran church and, therefore, comes from a Christian background. He often transcended this background, yet it is worth noting that his initial perception of religion and transcendence was formed within the Christian church.
Chapter One
Case Study: Darfur, Sudan

Currently, the international community faces various crises, some of which it considers necessary to act upon and others of which it does not. The question to be addressed here is the efficacy of the actions taken by the community, particularly in regard to the current crisis in western Sudan, generally referred to as the Darfur region. The United Nations (UN) and its current Secretary-General Kofi Annan are attempting to help resolve the crisis in Darfur, but the following will argue that the actions taken are less than sufficient to adequately aid the region. First, the crisis and the underlying politics will be analyzed. Next, Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s current approach to the conflict will be examined according to the research available on his actions regarding the Darfur crisis. Finally, the actions deemed more efficient in attempting to resolve this crisis will be presented.
The Crisis in Sudan

Heightened tensions due to increasing droughts in the Darfur region led to the crisis that erupted in Sudan in February 2003. The region consists of three provinces in the western part of Sudan. According to David Hauck, a reporter for the Christian Science Monitor, Non-Arab (ethnic African) farmers and Arab nomadic herders have traditionally co-inhabited this region. Prior to the February 2003 eruption, small skirmishes occurred as the herders infringed upon the farmers’ land in search of water during the dry season. With the increasing severity of droughts, the infractions became more serious, livestock was being raided, and armed banditry increased. In an effort to secure their land and livestock, the farmers armed themselves after being refused protection by the Sudanese government. As this occurred, the central government (in Khartoum) began to arm the Arab nomadic herders and “recruited, paid, and armed more than 20,000 Arab militiamen called Janjaweed.” At present, both the government-backed militia and the rebel groups are substantially armed. The rebel contingent consists of two main groups, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), which launched attacks in Darfur in an effort to force the central government in Khartoum to aid the farmers and disarm the Janjaweed. Khartoum once again refused the requests of the farmers and, instead, provided military and financial support to the Janjaweed and “commissioned them to put down an

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5 Hauck, “What’s Behind the Darfur Crisis,” Who’s fighting whom?
6 Hauck, “What’s Behind the Darfur Crisis,” How did the current crisis begin?
7 Hauck, “What’s Behind the Darfur Crisis,” How did the current crisis begin?
insurgency by the region’s non-Arab Muslims.”8 *Time* magazine declares that “The United Nations says the pogrom has created the worst humanitarian disaster in the world today.”9

At the time of this writing, the crisis has gone unfettered for 21 months. Beginning this past summer, the Security Council of the UN began passing resolutions regarding the conflict in Sudan.10 The threat of sanctions against the Khartoum government hangs in the air, but the Security Council has yet to pass a decisive resolution enforcing such measures. The UN has been eager to push the bulk of the responsibility for resolving this crisis into the hands of the African Union (AU), without helping to provide the resources it would need to successfully do so.11 On November 18th and 19th, the Security Council met in Nairobi, Kenya.12 The rare and historic meeting, only the fourth Security Council meeting held outside of New York City, was held in an effort to finalize two years of peace talks between Sudan’s other war, the twenty-year civil war between the Muslim north and the Christian animist south, the progress of which the Darfur crisis eclipsed.13 A peace agreement between the north and south is theoretically expected to aid in resolution of the Darfur crisis, as well.14 But various organizations outside of the UN have deemed the results of the Nairobi meeting less than satisfactory to aid the Darfurians. Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch and Oxfam, two major

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9 Calabresi, 56.
13 “Sudan Government and Southern Rebels,” *UN News Service*.
international human rights non-governmental organizations, declared that the November 19th Security Council resolution specifically addressing the Darfur crisis “is very weak and is a step back from the two prior resolutions.”\textsuperscript{15} The inexcusably weak action on the part of the UN and the international community in general (not including the AU which has shouldered the burden of dealing with the crisis),\textsuperscript{16} alludes to underlying politics determining the decisions made and the actions taken.

**Underlying Politics**

The Security Council of the UN consists of five permanent members (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, and Russia), each of which has a veto vote.\textsuperscript{17} There are also rotating members, who sit on the council for two-year periods.\textsuperscript{18} As described in Scott Peterson’s article, “Sudan’s key ties at the UN,” in the *Christian Science Monitor*, China and Russia have proved to be two long-standing barriers between Khartoum and UN-imposed sanctions.\textsuperscript{19} Sudan has become a significant importer of Russian arms and military equipment, often via Belarus.\textsuperscript{20} In addition, oil has piqued the interests of both Russia and China. The latter in particular, as “the largest importer of


\textsuperscript{16}Deen, “Oil, Arms.”


\textsuperscript{20}Deen, “Oil, Arms.”
Sudanese oil,” has an interest in Sudan it may not be willing to risk. Both China and Russia have found a willing international partner in oil in the form of the Khartoum government in Sudan. Additionally, Russia has found an eager arms buyer in the Khartoum government. As veto holding members of the UN, the stalling tactics of China and Russia have come to play a significant role in the Council’s dealings with the crisis, particularly in regard to the Khartoum government.

Colum Lynch of the Washington Post pointed out that even “after the United States agreed to water down language that explicitly threatened sanctions against Sudanese officials or the country’s oil industry if Khartoum fails to comply [with UN orders to allow AU monitors into Darfur and restrain the Janjaweed militia],” China and Russia abstained from voting on the resolution. U.S. Ambassador to the UN John Danforth said: “It turns out that the use of the word ‘sanctions’ is objectionable to certain members of the Security Council.” Gerald Butt commented that “given the size of Chinese investments in Sudan’s oil sector, Beijing will need a lot of convincing [to vote for sanctions].” Such statements from within the institution and from the media indicate that the world has come to recognize the vested interests of China and Russia that are impeding the passage of a significant and substantially sound Security Council resolution. So why is little being done in favor of the pillaged Sudanese? One plausible answer is that the international community currently lacks a leader willing to risk professional success in order to stand up for the Sudanese victims.

23 Deen, “Oil, Arms.”
24 Butt.
Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s Approach

In an article entitled “Human Rights and Humanitarian Intervention in the Twenty-First Century,” current Secretary-General Kofi Annan writes that “[t]he United Nations is an association of sovereign states, but the rights it expounds in its Charter belong to people, not governments.”25 This implies that the Secretary-General, as the leader of the UN, is called upon to ensure that these rights are upheld. Consequently, a Secretary-General must not seek his or her own success at the expense of those he or she is called to serve. The second Secretary-General of the UN, Dag Hammarskjöld, once stated that “It is not the Soviet Union or, indeed, any other big Powers who need the United Nations for their protection; it is all the others. In this sense the Organization is first of all their Organization.”26 In light of the relatively recent rise in conflicts within countries, as opposed to conflicts between countries, the following rethinking of the central issue Hammarskjöld’s statement is offered by Annan: “Even though we are an organization of member states, the rights and ideals the United Nations exists to protect are those of peoples.”27 Thus, Secretary-Generals should ideally first and foremost serve the underprivileged people of the world, rather than the major powers. Such a position of service often requires one to be willing to sacrifice professional self-interest.

In his second term as Secretary-General, Kofi Annan has faced challenges that include the highly contentious war in Iraq and the crisis in Darfur. The crisis in Darfur is eerily redundant for Annan who was in charge of peacekeeping during the Rwandan

genocide in 1994 and was “widely criticised” for his actions in regard to that crisis. By the end of June 2004, the UN was calling the crisis in Darfur “a campaign of ethnic cleansing.” However, seven months later, the world has yet to see definitive action taken by the Security Council.

Kofi Annan has repeatedly denounced and called for an end to the violence and destruction currently taking place in the Darfur region. In July 2004 he visited the region and was witness to a joint communiqué between the UN and the Sudanese government in Khartoum, agreeing to “disarming the militias . . . and preventing them from conducting further attacks.” He has also penned five reports on Darfur to alert the Security Council to the continuing atrocities in Darfur and the relative compliance, or lack thereof, to Security Council resolutions. Most recently, he called for the Security Council to address the continuing violence rather than focus on whether or not the actions technically constitute genocide. These are all actions publicized by the media, leaving open the possibility that Annan could also be acting in ways yet unknown to the general international public. Regardless of this possibility, whatever public or private actions are being taken have not sufficed to stem the rising tide of violence. Even after the historic November meeting in Nairobi, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Kieran Prendergast, warned “the Security Council that clashes between the pro-government militias in the Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) ‘threatened to

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29 “Annan Seeks to Evade Sudan Blame.”
plunge Darfur into chaos.”

Disarmament clearly did not happen and, in fact, the crisis appears to have worsened since the recognition of “ethnic cleansing” and the joint communiqué.

The question arises as to what has transpired since the communiqué. The Security Council passed two significant resolutions on July 30th and September 18th; the first called for possible sanctions if Khartoum failed to meet the objectives outlined, such as disarming the Janjaweed, and the second recognized the government’s failure to meet the objectives, called for expansion of the AU mission, and once again threatened the possibility of sanctions. Additionally, as previously mentioned, a third resolution was passed on November 19th and subsequently declared weak by Oxfam and Human Rights Watch. Richard Cromwell of the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria, South Africa said that the latest resolution “was entirely toothless” and “sent a message to Darfur’s rebels: ‘The world is not going to help you’ and that they would have to fend for themselves.”

Abraham McLaughlin of the Christian Science Monitor writes that international potency seems to be dwindling as the Security Council continues its deadlock over sanctions and “two key architects of US action – Ambassador Danforth and Secretary of State Colin Powell – will be leaving the Bush administration soon.”

The victims of Darfur seem to be suspended in international hesitation and lack of conviction. In the midst of the perpetuated violence, the media continues to refer to the lack of resolve on the part of the Security Council as a result of China and Russia’s

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36 McLaughlin, “Moral Clarity.”
economic interests in Sudan. Jan Pronk, the special representative for Sudan from the UN, declared on December 14th that if a unified Security Council confronted the warring factions in Darfur, negotiation would be inevitable. Thus it seems that a unified Security Council is the primary hope for Darfur.

A Stance That is Currently Needed

Careful research of the available documentation of Annan’s actions in regard to the Darfur crisis does not produce evidence that he has confronted China and Russia about their blatant hesitations in regard to sanctions. Though data does exist indicating that Annan has denounced the violence and the Khartoum government’s noncompliance, there is no corresponding information indicating that he has ever condemned China and Russia’s sacrifice of humanitarian interests for the sake of monetary interests. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it appears that Kofi Annan’s method of dealing with the Darfur crisis is to call for action from Khartoum and the rebels rather than placing part of the blame on the Security Council for the continued violence.

The failure to secure a significantly forceful resolution from the Security Council, suggests that the influence of the major powers, in this case China and Russia, is more powerful than the needs of the victims. It seems as though Annan would rather remain in the favor of these two countries than possibly sacrifice his reputation for the sake of the Darfurians. Interestingly, Annan himself has recognized a need for “a revitalization of

38 Due to the contemporary nature of the Darfur crisis, the world is currently limited in its ability to analyze Annan’s actions in their entirety and, therefore, with the caveat that all of his actions are not yet known, can only analyze what is made available to it.
the effectiveness and relevance of the Security Council”; in elaborating on this idea, he states:

The choice . . . must not be between Council unity and inaction in the face of genocide—as in the case of Rwanda, on the one hand; and Council division, with regional action, as in the case of Kosovo, on the other. In both cases, the member states of the United Nations should have been able to find common ground in upholding the principles of the Charter and acting in defense of our common humanity.39

The international community, especially the people of Sudan, needs Kofi Annan to stand up for basic human rights and help the Security Council find that “common ground” so that it can fully defend “our common humanity.” This may mean that Annan should confront China and Russia and use his influence to gain their votes in favor of the Sudanese people.

If Annan directly addresses the issue of China and Russia, he may be able to reunite the Security Council and, therefore, be able to efficaciously aid in the resolution of the Darfur crisis. Even though “few expect Russia will get in the way of a sanctions vote against Sudan, if one comes up and has widespread support,” China poses a slightly larger problem than Russia because it has a much larger investment in Sudan.40 Hence, Annan should first address the Russian hesitation and then the Chinese hesitation in order to gain the votes of both of these countries in favor of the people in Darfur. Such a stance would require Annan to risk significant political and personal standing; the cost to him may be extremely high. Yet, as one of the most prominent international leaders and as Secretary-General, basically he is faced with allowing the perpetuation of major power

40 Peterson.
dominance or standing up for the voiceless and victimized in the world, even at great risk to his career and notoriety.

In order to gain Russia’s crucial vote, he must push for widespread support within the Security Council. Even if he gains such widespread support, Annan must still be prepared for possible hostility from Russia, as any effort to aid a repressed people will more than likely be construed as biased by those on the side of the repressors. Hence, Russia may view an attempt by Annan to divert its influence as diametrically opposed to Russia as a country. Russia could very likely be offended by Annan’s stance. Annan will, therefore, have to act courageously in attempting to gain Russia’s vote. Despite the risks involved, the foundations of Annan’s position as Secretary-General calls upon him to be a voice for the voiceless people, not a pawn for the major powers and their allies.

In addition to accepting the possibility of hostility from Russia, Annan will also need to accept that same possibility in regard to China, if the approach prescribed here is taken. If China were to agree to a resolution passing sanctions, it would be risking approximately $1 billion in trade as well as contracts for building a pipeline and a $215 million export terminal. On the other hand, notorious for human rights violations of its own, China would open itself up to further criticism if it stood as the lone dissenter on a resolution passing sanctions against the Khartoum government. With this in mind, and after securing widespread support from the rest of the Security Council, including Russia, Annan could then work on persuading China to vote for sanctions. If he has not already done so unbeknownst to the rest of the international community, one option is for him to meet with the Chinese Ambassador to the UN to discuss options and make clear the ideals of the UN to protect people before monetary interests. This meeting should be

41 For China’s $1 billion in trade, see Peterson and for contracts and export terminal, see Butt.
held in such a way that the Chinese Ambassador is given the opportunity to maintain the overall integrity of his position and his country, in other words, Annan will not succeed by shaming China. Annan should also make clear the alternatives available to both the Ambassador and himself and the course of action that he will take if China does not cooperate. If such an encounter does not work, then Annan should be willing to publicly state his stance in regard to protecting monetary interests at the expense of human lives, specifically citing the current situation within the Security Council and the Sudanese crisis. In swaying the Chinese vote, Annan may face hostility from China due to the increased potential for monetary loss for China in the event of such a vote.

Allowing Russia and China to use their veto powers in order to secure their own economic interests is contrary to the unique challenge of the UN as stated by Annan: “The critical challenge for the United Nations and the member states is to refuse to stand aside when gross and systematic violations of human rights are taking place.” For Annan to stand up to these two major powers and, consequently, risk his political career, would truly require a resolute act of courage and commitment to his position as the leader of an organization he believes exists to protect people. Such an act appears to be one of the best options for the people of Darfur. The Darfurians would benefit from a leader willing to stand up for them and demonstrably indicate that humanitarian interests are more important to the international community and its stability than are economic interests. If Annan is willing to risk hostility from the major powers, he may have a greater chance of effectively helping the Sudanese at this point in time. If Annan is

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willing to humble himself for the sake of the Sudanese he may actually be able to help them.
Chapter Two
Humanism as a Current Political Foundation

One of the underlying principles of current Western politics is humanism, one of the central tenets of which is an embrace of secularism. The humanist movement has developed various subgroups, two of which are distinct and have assumed different names—Secular Humanism and Religious Humanism—but much of their underlying philosophies overlap in their respective literature as will be shown below. Both of these subgroups of humanism are members of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), an umbrella organization for humanist movements worldwide, which will also be addressed. Secular and Religious Humanism also share many of the same core values, including an emphasis on social responsibility and the need to work for a more just society, as well as a rejection of transcendent spirituality. In examining the humanist movement, I first will define humanism in light of Secular and Religious Humanism and the IHEU and then use excerpts from the vast literature of the two movements and the

44 Secularism is “Religious skepticism or indifference; The view that religious considerations should be excluded from civil affairs or public education,” as found at Dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=secularism>, c.v. “secularism.”
45 Religious Humanism has recently become known as the American Humanist Association, but for the purposes of this paper, the name Religious Humanism will be used.
IHEU to show how they emphasize social responsibility and eschew transcendent spirituality.

**Defining Humanism**

Humanism is defined by *The Humanist* magazine, which is published by the American Humanist Association, as:

>[A] rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. Affirming the dignity of each human being, it supports the maximization of individual liberty and opportunity consonant with social and planetary responsibility. It advocates the extension of participatory democracy and the expansion of the open society, standing for human rights and social justice. Free of supernaturalism, it recognizes human beings as a part of nature and holds that values—be they religious, ethical, social, or political—have their source in human nature, experience, and culture. Humanism thus derives the goals of life from human need and interest rather than from theological or ideological abstractions, and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny.\(^47\)

This definition encompasses mainstream humanism as a whole, despite differences among groups within that whole. For example, Secular and Religious Humanism differ historically but reference many of the same scholars and documents. The Council of Secular Humanism, deemed “North America’s leading organization for non-religious people”\(^48\) by the IHEU, defines and describes Secular Humanism as:

>[A] philosophy and world view which centers upon human concerns and employs rational and scientific methods to address the wide range of issues important to us all. While secular humanism is at odds with faith-based religious systems on many issues, it is dedicated to the fulfillment of the individual and humankind in general. To accomplish this end, secular humanism encourages a commitment to a set of principles which promote the development of tolerance and compassion

\(^{47}\) *The Humanist*, 58, no. 6 (November/December 1998): inside cover page.

and an understanding of the methods of science, critical analysis, and philosophical reflection.49

Secular Humanism clearly defines itself according to science and rationality and is guided by a kind of anthropocentrism to which it “dedicates” itself. As shown in The Humanist definition above and further exemplified in the Council of Secular Humanism definition, humanism does not perceive humanity within any larger context beyond its immediate surroundings.

Religious Humanism, on the other hand, holds many of the same tenets as Secular Humanism, but traces its roots back to its origin within the Unitarian Church and, therefore, retains “religious” in its moniker even though it has diverged from traditional religiosity in its philosophy.50 According to Edwin Wilson in The Genesis of a Humanist Manifesto,

[T]he founders . . . never intended to establish a church or denomination. Their organization was an aligning for mutual education of persons who belonged to various organized religions or to no organized religion. At the start, those who termed themselves religious humanists predominated, but the door was always open to unchurched freethinkers and rationalists. Some writers have dealt with humanism as a religion, but in its inclusive sense it is also a philosophy and an ethical way of life.51

According to Wilson, this particular subdivision of humanism is rooted in the Unitarian Church. The two groups maintained strong ties despite the church’s reservations regarding the role of theism, which inevitably contradicted the Religious Humanists who eventually disavowed theism.52

51 Wilson, 3.
52 Wilson, 5-10.
Wilson quotes Roy Wood Sellars, one of the original contributors to the formation of the Religious Humanist movement, who appears to have been adamant in establishing Religious Humanism in the field of religion, albeit without conforming to the traditional conception of religion:

[Religious Humanism] is religious because a concern for human values has always been the heart of religion. . . . We conclude that the humanist movement is a religious movement in that it is deeply concerned with the furtherance of human life along the lines indicated by reason and sympathetic intelligence. . . . [T]he careful students of comparative religions inform us that religion has always been one with the people’s philosophy of life.53

With this quotation from Sellars, we see that an attempt is made to ascribe a new meaning to the term “religious.” Religious Humanism is not religious according to the common connotation, even though it continues to use the word “religious.”54 The first humanist manifesto succinctly states that “Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams.”55 Religious Humanism thus claims religiousness in its attempt to “[realize] the highest values of life” for human beings through science and the achievements of humanity rather than through supplication to a supernatural power.56

In claiming that “[t]raditional religions often offer solace to humans, but, as often, they inhibit humans from helping themselves or experiencing their full potentialities,” Religious Humanism declares that religion in its traditional sense denigrates humanity

54 The common understanding of religion necessarily incorporates a form of theism.
56 “Humanist Manifesto I.”
and, therefore, discards it.\textsuperscript{57} But in taking this stance and in viewing religion and transcendent spirituality as synonymous, the movement simultaneously discards humanity's relationship with the transcendent, also referred to as transcendent spirituality.\textsuperscript{58}

Similarly to Secular and Religious Humanism, the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) adamantly rejects religion and anything related to the transcendent. It defines itself as "The world umbrella organisation for humanist, ethical culture, rationalist, secularist and freethought groups"\textsuperscript{59} and attempts to provide the sundry humanist organizations throughout the world with international common ground. In this internationally unifying capacity, the IHEU thus provides a "Minimum Statement on Humanism," which reinforces the above definitions of Secular and Religious Humanism:

Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. It stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethic based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality.\textsuperscript{60}

As demonstrated above with Secular and Religious Humanism, the IHEU also takes an oddly vehement objection to all forms of theism and supernatural beliefs. As the

\textsuperscript{57} "Humanist Manifesto II," \textit{American Humanist Association}, \url{http://www.americanhumanist.org/about/manifesto2.html} (11 September 2004), Religion.
\textsuperscript{58} Despite the common association of spirituality with the supernatural or transcendent, humanists sometimes use the word "spirituality" in reference to "the cultivation of moral devotion and creative imagination," as defined in "Humanist Manifesto II." For our purposes "spirituality" in its common connotation of relationship with the transcendent will be referred to as "transcendent spirituality" in order to avoid confusion with humanistic definitions.
\textsuperscript{59} \textit{International Humanist and Ethical Union—IHEU News}, \url{http://www.iheu.org/modules/news/} (25 September 2004).
international umbrella organization for humanism, the IHEU perceives the threat of transcendence common to all humanisms.

As we have seen, two of the major humanistic philosophical movements as well as the IHEU appear to be grounded in one overriding humanist philosophy that affirms humanity and its achievements, seeks the pursuit of science, works to promote a just society by encouraging social responsibility, and shuns the transcendent. The promotion of social responsibility and eschewal of the transcendent will now be explored in further detail.

**Humanistic Social Responsibility**

Humanism, at its very core, desires a just society and seeks to establish such a society through social responsibility. The various groups all agree on the need for respect for humanity and from that respect arises a concern for the well-being of individual human beings. The literature of the humanist groups clearly iterates this key element of social responsibility.

In the August 2004 Council for Secular Humanism article entitled "The Affirmations of Humanism," the following statements exhibit the role that social responsibility plays in the humanist philosophy:

We are committed to the application of reason and science to the understanding of the universe and to the solving of human problems.

We attempt to transcend divisive parochial loyalties based on race, religion, gender, nationality, creed, class, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, and strive to work together for the common good of humanity.
We affirm humanism as a realistic alternative to theologies of despair and ideologies of violence and as a source of rich personal significance and genuine satisfaction in the service to others.

We believe in the fullest realization of the best and noblest that we are capable of as human beings.\(^{61}\)

Secular Humanism unmistakably values social responsibility and the recognition of the inherent value of each human being and desires “the betterment of human life.”

Religious Humanism also takes a firm stance on the need for social responsibility in its three humanist manifestos. “Humanist Manifesto I,” written and signed in 1933 by humanists of the time among whom were Unitarian ministers, philosophers, philosophy professors, an attorney, and a rabbi, states:

Religious Humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man’s life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist’s social passion.

In the place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being.\(^{62}\)

“Humanist Manifesto II” reaffirmed in 1973 much of what the first manifesto put forth, with minor alterations. Some of its theses state:

It is a planetary imperative to reduce the level of military expenditures and turn these savings to peaceful and people-oriented uses.

We urge the recognition of the common humanity of all people. We further urge the use of reason and compassion to produce the kind of world we want—a world in which peace, prosperity, freedom, and happiness are widely shared. ... Let us work together for a humane world by means commensurate with humane ends.\(^{63}\)


\(^{62}\) For more information, see the following: “Humanist Manifesto I.”

\(^{63}\) For more information, see the following: “Humanist Manifesto II.”
Clearly Manifestos I and II emphasized the need for social responsibility. This recognition continues to be vital to the peace and security of societies notwithstanding the American Humanist Association’s belief that the values and ideals behind the humanist life stance “are subject to change as our knowledge and understandings advance.” The continued emphasis upon social responsibility despite the changing face of humanistic ideals is reflected in the 2003 “Humanist Manifesto III”:

Humans are social by nature and find meaning in relationships. The joining of individuality with interdependence enriches our lives, encourages us to enrich the lives of others, and inspires hope of attaining peace, justice, and opportunity for all.

Working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness. We seek to minimize the inequities of circumstance and ability, and we support a just distribution of nature’s resources and the fruits of human effort so that as many as possible can enjoy a good life.65

In its “Introduction to IHEU,” the IHEU provides the following statement regarding social responsibility:

As Humanism is also a philosophy of human freedom, Humanists aim for a social order in which individual freedom and dignity, social justice, fundamental rights and the rule of civilized law are protected.66

The IHEU comprehensively states the stance of many humanist organizations around the world. As a central organization, its emphasis on working for the protection of the rights of human beings everywhere demonstrates the importance of social responsibility within most humanist movements worldwide.

65 For more information, see the following: “Humanism and Its Aspirations: Humanist Manifesto III.”
Another clear example of this emphasis on social responsibility can be found in *The Humanist* magazine. A mere glance at the covers of this periodical will illustrate the movement’s drive for social justice. For example, the cover of the November/December 1998 issue bears an image of a child soldier.\(^67\) Also, as shown above, the definition of humanism in *The Humanist* emphasizes social responsibility in its promotion of the individual’s dignity and responsibility and in its advocacy of human rights and social justice.\(^68\)

Looking at all of these examples of humanist statements, it is apparent that the defining goals of humanism in general are social responsibility and the creation of a just society in which all people can live unfettered and have the opportunity to reach their individual potentials.

**Humanism’s Eschewal of Transcendent Spirituality**

In addition to an emphasis on social responsibility, humanistic movements tend to blatantly eschew transcendent spirituality. As described earlier, “transcendent spirituality” refers to the common connotation of spirituality as humanity’s relationship to the transcendent, in contrast to the humanistic definition of “spirituality” that fails to recognize the transcendent.\(^69\) Nearly every defining piece of literature relating to humanism pointedly refutes the common concept of transcendent spirituality, as the following examples will show.

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\(^{67}\) *The Humanist.*

\(^{68}\) *The Humanist,* inside cover page.

\(^{69}\) All references to transcendence are intended to encompass any and all forms of belief throughout the world, but the author comes from a Christian tradition and can only claim sufficient familiarity with a Christian perception of transcendence.
In its “Affirmations of Humanism,” Secular Humanism affirms that it “deplore[s] efforts to denigrate human intelligence, to seek to explain the world in supernatural terms, and to look outside nature for salvation.”\(^7^0\) The document entitled “A Secular Humanist Declaration” that was issued in 1980 by The Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (known today as the Council for Secular Humanism) and signed by humanists of various backgrounds, professions, and countries, asserts:

> It [Secular Humanism] is opposed to all varieties of belief that seek supernatural sanction for their values or espouse rule by dictatorship.

> We find that traditional views of the existence of God either are meaningless, have not yet been demonstrated to be true, or are tyrannically exploitative.\(^7^1\)

Such rejections of the “supernatural” and other forms of transcendence are echoed by the three humanist manifestos of Religious Humanism as well as by the IHEU.\(^7^2\) The threat of religion felt by all of these groups is very real; religion has notoriously been the source of many wars and human rights abuses, as well the foundation for dictatorships as exemplified by the famous concept of the “divine right of kings.” But the question must be begged as to the authenticity of such religious foundations. The religiosity against which the humanist movement reacted is a religion based on power, generally an abuse of power, and self-interest. Conversely, genuine and authentic religion is founded upon very different ideals, chiefly that of *humilitas*, which will be discussed at greater length below. In thus rejecting all religion, the broad humanist movement discarded authentic religion and transcendent spirituality in its attempt to avoid future religious atrocities.

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\(^7^0\) “The Affirmations of Humanism.”


\(^7^2\) For additional evidence of the rejection of transcendent spirituality, see the following: “Humanist Manifesto I,” “Humanist Manifesto II,” “Humanism and Its Aspirations: Humanist Manifesto III,” “IHEU Minimum Statement on Humanism,” and “Humanism for the World.”
Thus, humanistic literature endeavors to break away from traditional religion and spirituality as well as all connections with them. Secular Humanism rejects religion on the grounds that it has historically proven to be a less than perfect institution and has failed to meet its own objectives. Religious Humanism rejects religion because it can hinder humans and prevent them from full expression and realization of their human natures. In attempting to avoid the corrupting influences of inauthentic religion, both of these movements also reject authentic spirituality, the integration of which could enhance their efforts at social responsibility.

In reading excerpts of humanistic literature, it becomes apparent that two of the main foci of the movement are social responsibility and rejection of the transcendent. The preceding case involving Sudan depicts the need for social responsibility in the international community and indicates that something more is needed to effectively aid the victims. The following chapter will present the real life example of Dag Hammarskjöld, an extraordinary example of the intertwining of transcendent spirituality and service to humanity, as a possible solution to the insufficiency of the international response to the Darfur crisis.
Chapter Three
Dag Hammarskjöld's Vocation

Dag Hammarskjöld epitomized the ideal combination of social responsibility and
humilitas. He came to be known, largely posthumously, as a peacemaker.

Hammarskjöld strove to establish a society in which people do not need to struggle
merely to survive and one where violence is not the primary means of problem solving.
He may have had a utopian vision of the world, but that did not prevent him from acting
on his convictions and working toward them, however slowly. He was a unique
politician in regard to his immensely spiritual inner life that could only fully be
appreciated after his death when his spiritual diary, Markings, was published. In a 1956
entry from this diary, Hammarskjöld wrote:

To love life and men as God loves them—for the sake of their infinite
possibilities,
to wait like Him,
to judge like Him
without passing judgment,
to obey the order when it is given
and never look back—
then He can use you—then, perhaps, He will use you.

And if he [sic] doesn’t use you—what matter. In His hand, every moment
has its meaning, its greatness, its glory, its peace, its co-inherence.

From this perspective, to “believe in God” is to believe in yourself, as self-
evident, “illogical,” and as impossible to explain: if I can be, then God is.73

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73 Dag Hammarskjöld, Markings, trans. Leif Sjöberg and W.H. Auden (New York: Ballantine Books,
December 1964), 108.
sacrifice of all personal interests, but likewise the courage to stand up unflinchingly for your convictions.

From scholars and clergymen on my mother’s side I inherited a belief that, in the very radical sense of the Gospels, all men were equals as children of God, and should be met and treated by us as our masters in God.  

Thus even in his lineage we see the coming together of politics and spirituality, for the ultimate goal of service to humanity. Hammarskjöld’s father is presented as an austere man “faithful to his past, faithful also to the past,” which is consistent with the patriotism and militarism integral to his own background. On the other hand, Hammarskjöld’s mother appears to have had a much softer personality, also consistent with her heritage, which most likely accounts for the closeness between her and her youngest son. The diversity within his own household inevitably influenced Hammarskjöld’s life. In particular, the political life of his father seems to have made a significant impact upon Hammarskjöld. His father eventually left the Swedish political scene at the age of fifty-six, after his unsuccessful role as the Swedish Prime Minister, and lived the rest of his life under the unfavorable scrutiny of Sweden due to his persistence during World War I that Sweden remain neutral, which led to beliefs that Sweden sided with Germany. His father’s veritable ignominy most likely influenced Hammarskjöld’s political career, especially his approach to public scrutiny.

Under such an austere and demanding father, expectations for the Hammarskjöld boys were high: one brother, “Bo, had a highly successful career in Swedish public life, and another brother, Ake, became registrar of the Permanent Court of International
Justice at The Hague in 1922 at the age of twenty-nine and a judge of the Court at forty-three.”

Thus, Hjalmar Hammarskjöld’s sons followed him into the public life of Sweden. Hammarskjöld inherited a sense of service to humanity from both his political father as well as his religious mother. Urquhart writes, “A sense of loneliness, isolation, of not belonging, as well as of being someone set aside for purposes not comprehensible to the ordinary man, was certainly an important part of Hammarskjöld’s inheritance.”

After receiving law and economics degrees from the University of Uppsala, he received a Ph.D. in economics in Stockholm. He went on to hold prominent positions in the field of economics in Sweden, such as Under-Secretary of the Swedish Ministry of Finance, which led to even more prominent positions in public service and on April 10, 1953 he was installed as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Once he became Secretary-General, Hammarskjöld basically spent two years orienting himself in his new position and devoting himself to arranging the administrative aspects of the job, rather than immediately jumping in and making political changes. As would become evident in his later actions, Hammarskjöld wanted to be as prepared and informed as possible about something before acting on it. Therefore, he familiarized himself with the job and got to know the people he would be working with and only then did he make his presence known in international politics.

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82 Urquhart, 21.
83 Urquhart, 21.
84 Urquhart, 22.
85 For more prominent positions, see Urquhart, 22, and for installation as Secretary-General, see Urquhart, 16.
86 Urquhart, 56.
87 Urquhart, 54-56.
Background of the Crisis in the Congo

In the early summer of 1960, the crisis began that would define the end of Dag Hammarskjöld’s life and career and ultimately lead to his death. According to the United Nations book *The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peace-keeping*, the Congo did not seriously begin to consider independence until 1959 and was, therefore, ill prepared when the Belgian authorities announced it would relinquish control on June 30, 1960. Belgians basically held all authoritative and professional positions within the country, and the Congolese had virtually no experience or education suitable for such a massive turnover. An independent Congolese government was formed, placing two rival Congolese in the top two government positions: Joseph Kasa-Vubu as president and Patrice Lumumba as prime minister. Thus, the Congo sat poised on the eve of independence with virtually no expertise and a government of rivals.

In its report, the United Nations (UN) goes on to describe the involvement of Dag Hammarskjöld and the UN in the Congo. Hammarskjöld foresaw the disorder and violence that would ensue; and, prior to June 30th, he was organizing a UN effort to assist the new country. Despite Hammarskjöld’s best efforts, significant trouble arose on July 11th with the arrival of unwanted Belgian troops and Moise Tshombé’s declaration of the independence of the province of Katanga, of which he was the president. Katanga was the richest region of the Congo and provided the country with most of its income.

The UN report says that the Security Council adopted a resolution calling for the removal of Belgian troops as well as for Hammarskjöld to work with the Congolese

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88 Urquhart, 389.
government until it could legitimately support and protect the Congo. Following this mandate and an earlier request for assistance from the new government, Hammarskjöld developed guidelines for a UN peace-keeping force in the Congo, which can be seen in full detail in *The Blue Helmets*. By July 18th everything was in place for the commencement of the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC).

The UN review points out that the eventual withdrawal of Belgian troops in September was soon overshadowed by a constitutional crisis that would last nearly a year. President Kasa-Vubu dismissed Prime Minister Lumumba on September 5th and subsequently suspended the parliament. On the night of November 27th, Lumumba was arrested by soldiers loyal to Kasa-Vubu, and held captive until January 17th when he was moved to Katanga despite great protests from Hammarskjöld and other UN representatives. A month later it was reported that he had been murdered. This tragedy caused further violence and disorder and threatened to cause the civil war conditions previously contained within Katanga to spread throughout the Congo. Meanwhile, at UN headquarters, Hammarskjöld was denounced by the Soviet Union, which announced that it would no longer recognize him as Secretary-General. Hammarskjöld’s reaction will be discussed below.

According to *The Blue Helmets*, conciliatory efforts were made by Kasa-Vubu and other Congolese authorities in an attempt to prevent a civil war. On July 22nd Parliament reconvened under the watch and security of ONUC. Subsequently, on August

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2nd, a new prime minister replaced the late Patrice Lumumba and the Congo once again had a united government.93

Beginning in September, according to the UN’s retrospective analysis, a new phase of the Congo crisis began. The secession of Katanga had rapidly become one of the main foci of the entire Congo crisis. Because of the aforementioned richness of the Katanga region, external powers wanted to gain influence in that region. The Belgians, therefore, aided and abetted the secessionist movement in order to maintain as many remnants of their previous control as possible. In order to effect the evacuation of foreign factions not under the authority of the UN, Hammarskjöld personally worked with both the Belgian government and Tshombé, making clear his desire for the extrication of all foreign influences.94

The UN review depicts further attempts to gain the cooperation of Tshombé in the repatriation of mercenaries and other foreign elements in Katanga. Hammarskjöld made a trip to the Congo in anticipation of further negotiations between Kasa-Vubu and Tshombé, but the eruption of hostilities between ONUC troops and foreign-led secessionist troops inevitably monopolized his time in the region. Hoping to negotiate a cease-fire, Hammarskjöld set up a meeting with Tshombé in Ndola in then Northern Rhodesia. On the way to the meeting, his plane crashed and Dag Hammarskjöld died on September 17th, 1961.95

95 United Nations, The Blue Helmets, 242-244.
**Humilitas as Exemplified by Hammarskjöld**

In response to a barrage of insults from Khrushchev around the time of Lumumba’s death and the subsequent escalation of the crisis, Hammarskjöld gave a speech that defended his actions in the Congo and displayed his overwhelming *humilitas*. Hammarskjöld acknowledged the personal insults of Khrushchev but refused to respond in kind; he did not personally attack Khrushchev in return, nor did he take the time to rectify his sullied name and reputation. Instead, he succinctly and soundly confuted Khrushchev’s speech by reaffirming his position within the structure of the UN and iterating the power of the member organizations that he served. In his rebuttal he also refused to succumb to the pressure of the major powers in the UN. As outlined above, Hammarskjöld, in his dealings with the Congo crisis, had continuously come under pressure from these global giants to allow them to gain influence in the resource rich area of Katanga, and he faced the same pressure once again, this time from the General Assembly.

As will be shown, Dag Hammarskjöld did not try to make himself famous by appeasing the major powers, instead, he insisted upon supporting powerless and destitute people, displaying *humilitas*, a fundamental aspect of his spirituality. Hammarskjöld displayed this aspect in two distinct ways after being assaulted by Khrushchev in front of the General Assembly: he responded in terms of his position, rather than himself as an individual, and he adamantly refused to adhere to the whims of the Soviet Union, one of the two super powers at the time. First, an explanation of the concept of *humilitas* will be given, followed by a description of Khrushchev’s assault. Finally, Hammarskjöld’s
response to Khrushchev will be analyzed in terms of his political displays of *humilitas* as well as in light of *Markings*.

*The Concept of Humilitas*

The word "*humilitas*" is more suitable to this study than is its oft-misconstrued descendent, "humility." *Humilitas* comes from *humus*, which means "earth."96 *Humilitas* is the recognition that there is a transcendent power guiding humanity, impelling one to give one's life and ability to fulfilling one's vocation. The current perception of "humility" is often one of lowering one's self, subjugating one's self. But, *humilitas* differs from this perception in that it requires recognition of one's worth. Dietrich von Hildebrand, a twentieth-century Roman Catholic theologian, wrote that "Humility is closely connected with that holy freedom in which we acquire the proper perspective in relation to our own person, regarding ourselves no longer with our own eyes but in the light of God."97 He also wrote: "Although we are nothing by ourselves, although everything we have is received—still, we have received a great deal from God."98 Therefore, *humilitas* gives one the ability to see one's own worth and see oneself as God sees one. The contemporary French philosopher André Comte-Sponville writes that *humilitas* allows one "Self-acceptance—but without illusions."99 A person with *humilitas* recognizes that oneself as a human being and humanity in general are both incredibly valuable and worthy and capable of great things.

98 Von Hildebrand, 41.
99 Comte-Sponville, 143.
Humilitas inherently requires a belief in transcendence. A person with humilitas recognizes that humanity is unavoidably dependent upon the transcendent and, consequently, insignificant within the infinitude of the transcendent. Thus, humilitas appreciates the paradoxical value and insignificance of humanity within the realm of the transcendent. On an individual level, humilitas prompts one to acknowledge one’s ability to help humanity while also acknowledging that the survival of humanity does not hinge upon this contribution. Humilitas provides the impetus one needs to acknowledge one’s vocation, the position in which one can best serve humanity and the transcendent. Von Hildebrand states that an “implication of true humility [is] our awareness of God’s personal appeal addressed to each of us as to this specified individual.”

Thus, a triune balance develops among the individual, humanity, and the transcendent. The individual and humanity are important, but only in so far as they are part of the transcendent. Hence, humilitas is the result of one’s perception of one’s role as an individual in relationship with the community of humanity and with the transcendent.

This grand perspective that comes with humilitas is what is necessary to most efficaciously serve humanity because it provides one with a fundamental sense of responsibility for and connection with all of humanity, which necessarily leads to holistically fulfilling one’s vocation. Without this foundation, the vocation of service to humanity can easily lose its grounding in the interconnectedness of humanity and become purely self-serving.

\[100\text{ Von Hildebrand, 50} \]
Khrushchev's Assault

As was shown previously in relation to the Sudanese crisis, countries sometimes attempt to undermine the UN in an effort to ensure outcomes more favorable to their own interests. The Soviet Union did just that in regard to the Congo crisis when it called for the dismissal of Hammarskjöld as Secretary-General. This proved to be a serious problem in the meeting of the General Assembly that began on September 20, 1960.101 In his aforementioned biography of Hammarskjöld, Brian Urquhart describes the nearly catastrophic event prompted by Nikita Khrushchev, then-leader of the Soviet Union. According to Urquhart, on September 23rd Khrushchev began a series of personal attacks against Hammarskjöld. He accused the Secretary-General of being a mere pawn for the colonial powers, willingly succumbing to their whims, and declared that he should be dismissed as Secretary-General.102

Hammarskjöld was not entirely caught off guard by Khrushchev’s speech because the Soviet Union’s foreign policy of the time, in the midst of the Cold War, recognized “the importance of the Third World as the vital strategic reserve of imperialism and as an arena in which the Soviets could wage the bipolar struggle with solid prospects of success.”103 And, as Joseph Nogee and Robert Donaldson state in their book Soviet Foreign Policy: Since World War II, “The boldest attempt by Moscow during the Khrushchev period to capitalize on the independence struggle in order to establish a revolutionary foothold in Africa came . . . in the Belgian Congo.”104 In addition, as described by Urquhart, Hammarskjöld knew that in blocking the influence of the major

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101 Urquhart, 457-467.
102 Urquhart, 459-460.
104 Nogee, 223.
powers in the formation of the new Congo, the Soviet Union had felt victimized. This particular hindrance to Soviet interests was preceded by additional hindrances, such as when Congolese Chief of Staff Mobutu shut down embassies of the Soviet-bloc. Prime Minister Lumumba had been ready to use Soviet troops and, thus, allow the Soviet Union to gain control of the contested Katanga region, but with the division of the government (and later the death of Lumumba), Khrushchev’s hopes for securing power in the Congo were dashed.\textsuperscript{105}

On September 26\textsuperscript{th} Hammarskjöld attempted to return the focus to the institution of the UN and away from himself as a person.\textsuperscript{106} But Urquhart writes that, on October 1\textsuperscript{st}, Khrushchev once again attacked Hammarskjöld; increasing his insults to such a degree that Frederick Boland (the president of the Assembly at the time) had to intervene and Hammarskjöld later received various impromptu displays of support, both subtle and overt, from other delegations of the Assembly. Yet once again on October 3\textsuperscript{rd}, Khrushchev proclaimed his disapproval of Hammarskjöld as a Secretary-General and declared that Hammarskjöld had betrayed the fundamental justice required of a Secretary-General and called for his resignation. At the request of Boland, Hammarskjöld delayed his response until later that day.\textsuperscript{107}

\textit{Defense of His Position}

In his rebuttal speech, Hammarskjöld made the following declaration in regard to Khrushchev’s call for his resignation earlier that day:

\textsuperscript{105} Urquhart, 460.
\textsuperscript{106} Urquhart, 460-461.
\textsuperscript{107} Urquhart, 462-463.
I said the other day that I would not wish to continue to serve as Secretary-General one day longer than such continued service was, and was considered to be, in the best interest of the Organization. The statement this morning seems to indicate that the Soviet Union finds it impossible to work with the present Secretary-General. This may seem to provide a strong reason why I should resign. However, the Soviet Union has also made it clear that, if the present Secretary-General were to resign now, they would not wish to elect a new incumbent but insist on an arrangement which—and this is my firm conviction based on broad experience—would make it impossible to maintain an effective executive. By resigning, I would, therefore, at the present difficult and dangerous juncture throw the Organization to the winds. I have no right to do so because I have a responsibility to all those States Members for which the Organization is of decisive importance, a responsibility which overrides all other considerations.¹⁰⁸

Clearly, Hammarskjöld felt that regardless of his personal feelings, it was his duty to fulfill his obligation to those who had elected him, but that duty only existed as long as he was needed and wanted by the organization: the needs of the organization came before his personal need to avoid the embarrassment and political implications of such problems. He also recognized the value of his own contributions to the role of Secretary-General even though he simultaneously recognized the potential for future negation of that importance. Khrushchev’s solitary denouncement of him was not in keeping with the principles and foundation of the organization, which Hammarskjöld had been elected to lead, thus, he could not go against those very principles by succumbing to Khrushchev’s demands.

Regardless of his personal feelings toward the accusations, Hammarskjöld defended the position of Secretary-General rather than defending himself. He did not glorify himself; rather, he acknowledged his worth within the organization and honored the very foundation of the UN, vowing to serve that organization, as he believed he was obligated to. As he so succinctly stated in his rebuttal: “The man does not count, the

¹⁰⁸ Hammarskjöld, Servant of Peace, 318.
institution does.”109 This is a quintessential manifestation of Hammarskjöld’s decision to put the organization before himself and, therefore, of his ultimate *humilitas*, which is explicitly demonstrated in his personal writings described below. Such a speech in response to personal and professional accusations could be perceived as self-serving, but the intimate look at Dag Hammarskjöld’s motivations that *Markings* provides, suggests that he truly served humanity out of *humilitas* rather than himself out of greed.

*Entries in Markings on Defense of His Position*

Hammarskjöld’s writings in his diary, *Markings*, emphasize this theme of *humilitas*. He never sought fame for himself but merely sought to serve as he was asked to, which is exemplified in his writing that “If, while pleading another’s cause, you are at the same time seeking something for yourself, you cannot hope to succeed.”110 Hammarskjöld firmly held that in order to be able to better help the world one has to have a proper sense of one’s own role in the world; such a belief is an integral part of *humilitas*.

Serving as he was asked to in no way implies that Hammarskjöld strove for self-deprecation. On the contrary, he believed that the latter would be as harmful as self-aggrandizement. Again, in *Markings*, Hammarskjöld gives the following reflection on *humilitas*:

Humility is just as much the opposite of self-abasement as it is of self-exaltation. To be humble is *not to make comparisons*. Secure in its reality, the self is neither better nor worse, bigger nor smaller, than anything else in the universe. It *is*—is nothing, yet at the same time one with everything. It is in this sense that humility is absolute self-effacement.

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To be nothing in the self-effacement of humility, yet, for the sake of the task, to embody its whole weight and importance in your bearing, as the one who has been called to undertake it. To give to people, works, poetry, art, what the self can contribute, and to take, simply and freely, what belongs to it by reason of its identity. Praise and blame, the winds of success and adversity, blow over such a life without leaving a trace or upsetting its balance.

Towards this, so help me, God—

Hammarskjöld believed that self-deprecation and self-aggrandizement equally hinder one’s ability to live up to one’s potential. This conviction arose out of Hammarskjöld’s belief in the presence of God amidst humanity and humanity’s continuing relationship with God; he believed that one must recognize the unique nature and value of humanity as part of creation while simultaneously acknowledging one’s powerlessness in relation to God. Hammarskjöld’s belief in the presence of God in each person is beautifully illustrated in one of his poems from Markings:

Thou who art over us,
Thou who art one of us,
Thou who art—
Also within us,
May all see Thee—in me also,
May I prepare the way for Thee,
May I thank Thee for all that shall fall to my lot,
May I also not forget the needs of others,
Keep me in Thy love
As Thou wouldest that all should be kept in mine.
May everything in this my being be directed to Thy glory
And may I never despair
For I am under Thy hand,
And in Thee is all power and goodness.  

One’s potential is not merely a human individual’s potential, but rather a potential imbued by the integration of God in each person. About God’s presence in each person, Hammarskjöld wrote: “In the faith which is ‘God’s marriage to the soul,’ you are one in

111 Hammarskjöld, Markings, 151.
112 Hammarskjöld, Markings, 83.
God, and God is wholly in you.”\footnote{113} Hence, even when credit was directly given to him, Hammarskjöld in turn credited the transcendent: “Not I, but God in me.”\footnote{114} One must fulfill one’s potential without taking credit for the potential or the realization of that potential. This is true humilitas as displayed in Dag Hammarskjöld’s spirituality.

Supporting the Developing Countries

Hammarskjöld showed humilitas in defending developing countries despite political detriment to himself. In his response to the assault of Chairman Khrushchev of the Soviet Union, Hammarskjöld supported the stance taken by the UN in regard to the Congo. In refusing to succumb to the personal accusations and call for his resignation, Hammarskjöld, as Secretary-General, was insisting upon supporting the needs of the developing nations before the economic interests of the major powers, in this case the USSR. In the same speech quoted above, Hammarskjöld said:

> It is not the Soviet Union or, indeed, any other big Powers who need the United Nations for their protection; it is all the others. In this sense the Organization is first of all their Organization, and I deeply believe in the wisdom with which they will be able to use it and guide it. I shall remain in my post during the term of my office as a servant of the Organization in the interests of all those other nations, as long as they wish me to do so.

> In this context the representative of the Soviet Union spoke of courage. It is very easy to resign; it is not so easy to stay on. It is very easy to bow to the wish of a big Power. It is another matter to resist. As is well known to all members of this Assembly, I have done so before on many occasions and in many directions. If it is the wish of those nations who see in the Organization their best protection in the present world, I shall now do so again.\footnote{115}

\footnote{113} Hammarskjöld, Markings, 143. Hammarskjöld often used quotations from Meister Eckhart, the German mystic who was born around 1260 and died on 30 April 1328. See Cyprian Smith and Oliver Davies, “The Rhineland Mystics,” in The Study of Spirituality, ed. by Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold, SJ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 316.

\footnote{114} Hammarskjöld, Markings, 75. This focus on God within a person can be seen as dangerous from a humanistic perspective, but Hammarskjöld never lost sight of the individual human, as is evidenced by his emphasis on the contribution of the self in the above quotation from page 151 of Markings.

\footnote{115} Hammarskjöld, Servant of Peace, 319.
Hammarskjöld knew that he was defying the wishes of the major power countries, but he firmly believed that that was the only way in which he could truly do his job as described by the UN itself. It is often easier for a public figure to allow such pressure to determine their actions and, therefore, cater to the desires of those holding most of the power and money than it is to take a publicly unpopular stance in support of poverty-stricken and powerless people. In this way, such public figures become the favorites of the major powers and benefit in terms of fame and notoriety, and maybe even financially. By refusing to follow this pandering path, Hammarskjöld often garnered the dislike and distrust of the major powers, as demonstrated by Khrushchev. The major powers were often strangers to such political and public refusal to bow to their needs.

Throughout his career as an international servant, Hammarskjöld focused on ensuring the equal say of developing countries, but always attempted to maintain neutrality on all levels, as shown by the following quotation from his “Introduction to the Annual Report 1960-1961,” which he gave in the middle of the Congo crisis:

It [the UN] has also had to pursue a line which, by safeguarding the free choice of the people [the Congolese], implied resistance against all efforts from outside to influence the outcome. In doing so, the Organization has been put in a position in which those within the country who felt disappointed in not getting the support of the Organization were led to suspect that others were in a more favoured position and, therefore, accused the Organization of partiality, and in which, further, such outside elements as tried to get or protect a foothold within the country, when meeting an obstacle in the United Nations, made similar accusations. . . . It is a thankless and easily misunderstood role for the Organization to remain neutral in relation to a situation of domestic conflict and to provide active assistance only by protecting the rights and possibilities of the people to find their own way, but it remains the only manner in which the Organization can serve its proclaimed purpose of furthering the full independence of the people in the true and unqualified sense of the word.\footnote{Hammarskjöld, \textit{Servant of Peace}, 372-373.}
This neutrality is what was often construed as bias for or against a particular country. Evidently, Hammarskjöld recognized the potential for political suicide in remaining neutral and refusing to grant the wishes of the major powers, yet he vehemently pursued a path consistent with his hopes for global equality. In his willingness to accept the charges of bias and favoritism against his neutral effort to support the developing countries, Hammarskjöld forged his own path away from the more common path of obsequious concession to major power domination and control. He was not willing to sacrifice what he believed in to gain a name for himself among the most influential and powerful nations of the world. Just as he had when he put the needs of the organization before his own needs, Hammarskjöld once again took a stance of humilitas in his refusal to bow to the whims of major powers and in his unrelenting support of the developing countries and their needs.

Entries in Markings on Supporting the Developing Countries

In Markings Hammarskjöld wrote of the need for humilitas: “O contradiction! O last stand! If only the goal can justify the sacrifice, how, then, can you attach a shadow of importance to the question whether or not the memory of your efforts will be associated with your name? If you do, is it not all too obvious that you are still being influenced in your actions by that vain dead dream about ‘posterity’?”117 He clearly believed that focusing on whether or not one would be remembered (such as could have been guaranteed him by the major powers) is to miss the point of life and service. Ironically, Dag Hammarskjöld has been remembered. Through his efforts to do what he

117 Hammarskjöld, Markings, 121.
believed to be right, rather than what was popular at the time, he became famous as a man of integrity and *humilitas*.

Hammarskjöld described the ultimate meaning behind the value of *humilitas* in one’s life, in the following entry in *Markings*:

> Except in faith, nobody is humble. The mask of weakness or of Phariseeism is not the naked face of humility. And, except in faith, nobody is proud. The vanity displayed in all its varieties by the spiritually immature is not pride. To be, in faith, both humble and proud: that is, to *live*, to know that in God I am nothing, but that God is in me.\(^ {118} \)

True *humilitas* requires faith, according to Hammarskjöld. In order to fully and genuinely live a life that reaches human potential, one must have *humilitas* and recognize that ultimately one’s life is nothing without God. Life, therefore, is not about one’s self-advancement, fame, and financial wealth, but rather about recognizing the paradox of one’s simultaneous significance and insignificance within the reality of God. One is utterly insignificant in that God would still exist without one, but one is at the same time overwhelmingly significant in that God is within one. The mere presence of God implies worth and significance. The immensity of this paradox cannot be fully comprehended without *humilitas*. Dag Hammarskjöld fully comprehended that immensity.

Hammarskjöld exemplified *humilitas* while weathering Khrushchev’s attacks and in his support of global equality at the expense of being the favored diplomat of the major powers. With this example, we see the promise in a political stance that incorporates *humilitas* and, therefore, transcendent spirituality. Hammarskjöld apparently refused to be limited by the secularist restrictions of the humanistic undertones of politics. He embraced the social responsibility of humanism along with the *humilitas* inherent in a

\(^ {118} \) Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, 76.
transcendent spirituality and in so doing became one of the greatest political peacemakers of our time. Hammarskjöld’s very life exemplifies the power of combining humanism and transcendent spirituality, of completing humanism by imbuing it with *humilitas*. In working tirelessly to serve according to his vocation, Dag Hammarskjöld gave us an example of international political service worthy of imitation.
Conclusion

Through an exploration of humanism as an underlying foundation of current humanitarian political trends, I came to the conclusion that the lack of belief in transcendence inhibited some forms of social justice from reaching their beneficial potential. The preceding remarks suggest the need for the integration of transcendent spirituality and, therefore, *humilitas* into current politics. In the case presented on the Darfur crisis in Sudan, mere politics will not solve the crisis. Dag Hammarskjöld showed that politics would benefit from incorporating a genuine transcendence that gives rise to *humilitas* in order to more effectively serve humanity. When politicians begin to serve Sudan with *humilitas*, as understood by Dag Hammarskjöld, the real human concerns and rights of these suffering peoples will probably be taken more seriously. The solution is not quick and easy, yet in order to gain a long-term and efficient solution, we must begin with *humilitas*.

The current crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan has been allowed to continue in order, for the most part, to protect the economic interests of China and Russia. The victims of this crisis will potentially benefit from a leader, most likely current Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who is willing to serve with *humilitas* and stand up to these major powers. Such a stance may be detrimental to Annan’s political career, but if he is to truly
serve the world as Secretary-General, he should be willing to stand up for human rights rather than the economic interests of governments. The advent of international leaders with *humilitas* could significantly aid in the resolution of conflicts throughout the world.

As mentioned above, humanism, as a current ideology in politics, brings social responsibility into politics. Such a movement is vital, yet it does not seem to be enough. In addition, the eschewal of transcendent spirituality by the humanist movement appears to produce a problematic in the efficacy of the entire movement. I argued that a belief in transcendent spirituality is an integral part of *humilitas*, which in turn leads to the conjecture that in its rejection of transcendent spirituality, humanism also rejects *humilitas*. Social responsibility without *humilitas* appears to be incomplete and, if that is the case, then humanism, even with its emphasis upon social responsibility cannot holistically serve humanity.

Dag Hammarskjöld epitomized the combination of politics and spirituality within one's life. He did not solve all of the world's problems, yet his *humilitas* ostensibly allowed him to aid in the slow process of stabilizing nations, even though he knew he would not see the fruits of his labor within his lifetime. Hammarskjöld put the UN and the people before himself: he served, he did not control. He knew that he could help humanity to a certain extent, and he was willing to do that even if it caused him to lose favor with the major powers. Hammarskjöld demonstrated that the most effective way to serve humanity should include a notion of *humilitas*. Without *humilitas*, we can lose perspective and purpose. *Humilitas* grounds us in reality, among the people, and within the transcendent.
The current need in Darfur, the insufficiency of humanism, and the example of Hammarskjöld, demonstrate the need for *humilitas* in politics. Dag Hammarskjöld was a remarkable social justice activist, arguably because he first and foremost sensed the paradox of his incredible potential and insignificance and the need to live out of a transcendent spirituality.
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