

# Corin Redgrave Memorial Lecture 2020

to be delivered by

**David Andress**

Professor of Modern History at Portsmouth University

## Justice In A Broken World

Saturday 14 March 2020 at 2.30 p.m.  
Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL

Tickets £10 (£6 concessionary) on Eventbrite (plus booking fee)

[Click here for tickets](#)

£15 (£8 concessionary) on the door

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### David introduces his lecture

Human Rights are one of the most powerful expressions of a commitment to justice in the world. Yet they have been from their origins compromised even by those who declared them. This lecture will consider whether alternative ways of framing the goals of a rights-driven order might offer different routes to achieving more of such goals in the future.

The long pre-history of “Natural Rights” associated them with the underlying belief in a natural order that was essentially religious and unquestionable. When, with the French Declaration of the *Droits de l'Homme* in 1789 these ideas became Human Rights, they also became the immediate object of great hypocrisy. The French of 1789 took almost sixty years more to abolish slavery in their domains. The framing states of the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights 150 years later included Stalin's USSR and a USA facing decades of civil-rights struggle, not to mention Britain's and France's reluctant decolonisers.

Throughout the modern history of rights, questions of the optimistic assertion of a just order have collided with terrible problems in implementing any such order. Optimism about the capacity to remake history has itself often driven the worst excesses of tyranny, with left and right in their different ways disregarding the humanity of individuals caught in their plans. Now, with the world on the brink of inescapable climatic breakdown, can we reconsider how to centre the humanity of all people within the need to act drastically for survival?

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Corin Redgrave was not only an outstanding artist but an inspirational, passionate and steadfast campaigner for human rights. For over 40 years Corin worked for and alongside those in struggle against injustice whether in the labour and trade union movement or in

individual cases of miscarriages of justice, and on behalf of those detained without trial in Guantanamo. No case was too big or too small.

Corin was tireless in his opposition to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the so-called 'War on Terror' and his work was recognised both at home and abroad. He was a founder of the Guantanamo Human Rights Commission and Peace and Progress - A Party for Human Rights.

**David Andress**, Professor of Modern History at Portsmouth University, is a historian of the French Revolution and of the social and cultural history of conflicts in Europe and the Atlantic world between the 1760s and 1840s. David is the author of several books about the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, and also of 'Cultural Dementia, How the West has lost its history and risks losing everything else', which was published last year and examines how "the former great powers of the historic 'West' ... seem to be abandoning the wisdom of maturity for senescent dreams of recovered youth. Along the way they are stirring up old hatreds, giving disturbing voice to destructive rage and risking the collapse of their capacity for decisive, effective and just governance".