Abstract

The master thesis deals with the historical development of humanitarian aid against the backdrop of transformations of the world order. Firstly, the thesis scrutinizes the differences between the classical humanitarianism of the Red Cross and the so-called new humanitarianism, which emerged during the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970). Secondly, the thesis demonstrates that although the new humanitarianism tends to be presented in an opposition to and as a more historically advanced form of the classic humanitarianism, when examined in a more detailed manner, the two humanitarian approaches face similar dilemmas in relation to political power. The overcoming of the “end of history” era, which gave rise and prominence to the new humanitarianism, opened discussion about the alternatives to the future of the world order. This shift allows us to formulate the main argument of the thesis – the evolution of the humanitarianism should not be seen as teleological and linear but as a continuous process in which both the classic and the new humanitarianism need to balance between strict legalism which can lead to moral failure and exaggerated moralism which can have consequences contradicting the basic principles of humanitarian action.

Keywords: classical humanitarianism, new humanitarianism, human rights, world order, Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders