

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN
DIVERSITY

By the same author

THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF ENGLISH IDEALISM
FREEDOM AND RIGHTS
THE RIGHT TO DISSENT: Issues in Political Philosophy

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN DIVERSITY

An Essay in the Philosophy of Human Rights

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To my Anita in loving memory

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Preface

I first conceived the idea of this book in the autumn of 1978. I had been invited by Professor Frank Dowrick of the Law Department in the University of Durham to give a public lecture on the idea of 'human rights'. This was part of the series of lectures and seminars held in the university to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Although I had previously written about both rights in general, and human rights in particular, while working on my lecture I became dissatisfied with my earlier work. I should like to thank Professor Dowrick and all who contributed to the lectures and seminars, for the stimulus which they have given me. Over the next seven years I had the opportunity on a number of occasions to try out the arguments and ideas in this book in the form of seminar and conference papers and lectures. I should like in particular to acknowledge my intellectual debts to the following: the members of the Politics Department in the University of York, Professor David Evans and members of the Philosophy Department in the Queen's University, Belfast, Dr Moorhead Wright of the Department of International Politics, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, together with the members of the conference at Gregynog, Wales, in July 1984 which he organised, and Professor Neil MacCormick, together with the members of his Jurisprudence Conference at the University of Edinburgh. To all of these I owe much in the way of critical comment and suggestion. I should also like to thank my colleagues in the Politics Department here at Durham and also in the Philosophy Department, for comments and criticisms on some of the arguments in this book which I have presented to them.

I am glad to have the opportunity to express my thanks for the practical help I have received in preparing the typescript for publication. I am especially indebted to Dr Wolfgang von Leyden, Mr Neville Rigby, Mr Kimmett Edgar and Mrs Susan Elkan for assisting me in preparing the final draft. I am greatly indebted to Mrs Hilda Winn, Mrs Dorothy Anson and Mrs Jean Richardson for producing the final typescript on the departmental word-processor – it was, in fact, the first book to be done on our new machine. I am especially grateful to Dr R. W. Dyson for correcting the proofs. Finally, I should like to mention my late wife, in whose memory this book is dedicated. She did not live to see its completion but I would like to record here my profound gratitude for her support, loyalty and help not only in writing this book but in all my work over the past 37 years.