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## THE RIGHTS OF MAN OR, WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR?

H.G. WELLS

INTRODUCTION BY BURHAN SÖNMEZ,  
PRESIDENT OF PEN INTERNATIONAL

- The essay credited with laying the groundwork for the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UK's Human Rights Act.
- Written in response to oppressive forces threatening democracy and law, echoes with a truth still very relevant today.
- Contains an introduction by Burhan Sönmez, President of PEN International, with information on the author's life and the importance of the essay in today's context.

In 1940 the Second World War continued to rage, and atrocities wreaked around the globe made international waves. Wells, a socialist and prominent political thinker as well as a first-rate novelist, set down in *The Rights of Man* a stirring manifesto, designed to instruct the international community on how best to safeguard human rights.

The work gained traction, and was soon under discussion for becoming actual legislation. Although Wells didn't live to see it enacted, his words laid the groundwork for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which enshrined human rights in law for the first time, and was adopted by the United Nations in 1948, changing the course of history for ever and granting fundamental rights to billions.

**'A great artist.'** VLADIMIR NABOKOV

**'A born story-teller.'** J.B. PRIESTLY

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

H.G. Wells (1866–1946) was a prolific writer best known for his genre-defining science-fiction novels, in particular *The War of the Worlds*, *The Invisible Man* and *The Time Machine*. A socialist and a member of the Fabian Society, Wells was an outspoken political thinker, and his writings on human rights were incredibly influential – in particular his 1940 essay *The Rights of Man, or, What Are We Fighting For?*, which is widely acknowledged as laying the groundwork for the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UK's Human Rights Act.



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info@renardpress.com • 020 8050 2928

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