

The Birth of Realism: Morgenthau

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Hans J. Morgenthau was credited with having systematised classical Realism. His *Politics Among Nations* became the standard textbook, and continued to be reprinted after his death.

Morgenthau starts with the claim that he is presenting a "theory of international politics". He sees his theory bringing "order and meaning" to the mass of facts. It both explains the observed phenomena and is logically consistent, based on fixed premises. Like Carr, he sees this Realism as a contrast to liberal-idealism.

Morgenthau's theory is based on six principles he enumerates in his first chapter. In summary, these principles were:

1. International relations "...is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature".
2. The key consideration "...is the concept of interest defined in terms of power".
3. "...Interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid", although its exact meaning may change with time and circumstance.
4. While moral principles have a place, they cannot be defined identically at every time and place, and apply differently to individuals and the state.
5. "The moral aspirations of a particular nation..." are not "moral laws that govern the universe".
6. Politics is an autonomous sphere that needs to be analysed as an entity, without being subordinated to outside values.