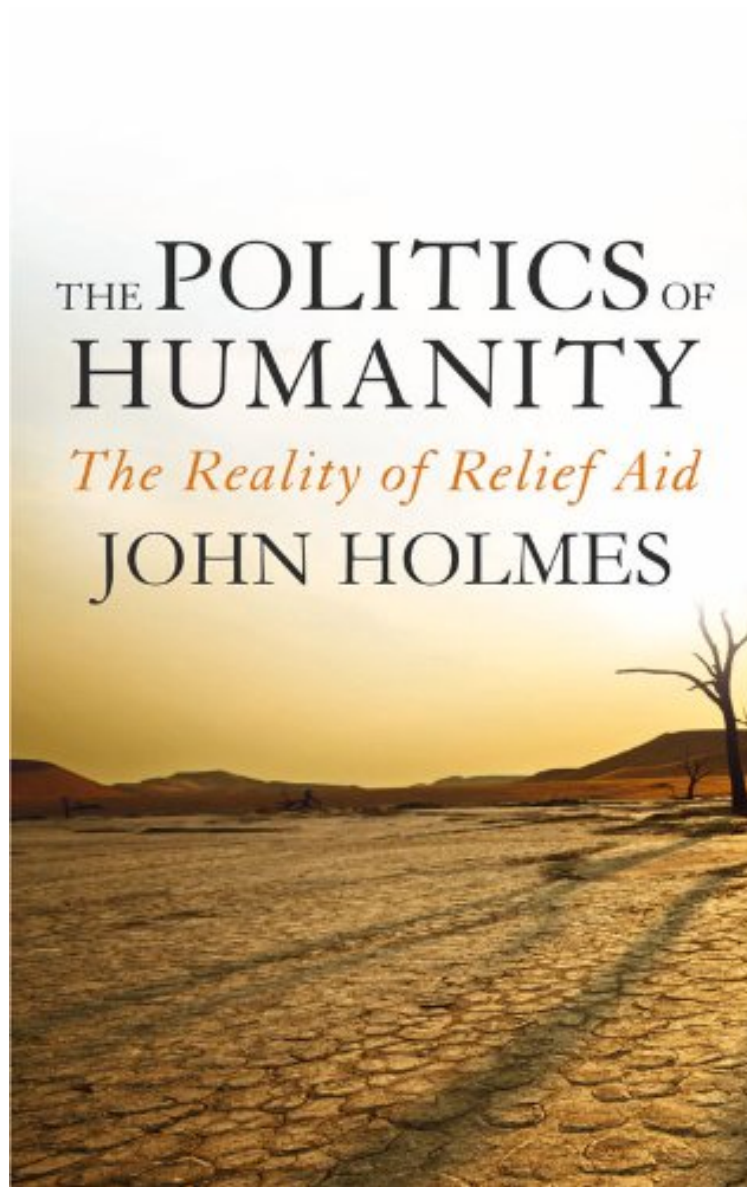


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The Politics of Humanity: The Reality of Relief Aid

John Holmes

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John Holmes : The Politics of Humanity: The Reality of Relief Aid before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Politics of Humanity: The Reality of Relief Aid:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A realistic, moving appraisal of humanitarian politics.By Philip SeibHolmes knows the political realities of humanitarian aid as well as anyone. His book makes a forceful case for giving these aid efforts a higher priority among global constituencies. His argument is superbly written and

compelling. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. At Once Simple and Complex By gerardpeter The news. In West Africa Ebola rages, an epidemic out of control. In Syria hundreds of thousands flee before the armies of ISIS. Famine is stalking South Sudan. Refugees are drowning in the waters of the Mediterranean. What should be done? What can be done? John Holmes was once tasked with answering questions like this. From 2007 to 2010 he was Emergency Relief Co-ordinator for the United Nations the Tsar, if you will, of humanitarian aid. This book is essentially his report on those years the years of Darfur and Haiti, Gaza and Sri Lanka, Congo and South Sudan again. It is not easy to get through. No serious consideration of these problems is going to be. In an introduction he explains exactly what humanitarian aid is, who is involved in delivering it and what his role as ERC was. Then he deals with the big crises of his period in office. The management of each crisis is critically and honestly reviewed. Not by any means was everything everywhere done well - in Darfur, he admits, everyone failed. But he picks out what worked, what showed promise, what could have been modified, what might have been tried. The final three chapters bring it all together. These are pages of sustained analysis and reflection. No sentence is redundant. No statement is unsupported. There is an enormous amount here, no summary can do it justice. He is unstintingly practical, pragmatic. There are the simple but potent interventions straws that filter dirty water. At a higher level he expounds the crucial principle of using local resources, local people, local experts wherever possible, and developing them where it is not. Anticipate and prepare the Disaster Risk Reduction Programme, already delivering results in the recent floods in Manila and in Kashmir. To the West, the main providers of aid, of course be careful. If there is one piece of advice I would offer, above all to Western governments, it is the need to understand much more profoundly the roots of conflict and political problems, in all their complexities, and not to fall prey to simplistic diagnoses and solutions. Tony Blair recommended him for the post. I think he got that right.

John Holmes was the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs from 2007 until 2010. His work took him to some of the most troubled areas of the world: to Sri Lanka, Darfur, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among other places, and exposed him to the harsh realities of humanitarian aid. Clear-eyed about the realities of development aid, Holmes realised early on that his role was to be a voice to the voiceless. This book exposes how difficult this job is, as well as analysing and exploring in great depth the wider policy questions of the role.

'Offers a glimpse into the workings of the global humanitarian machinery; at the same time it is a frank and engaging contribution to the debate on the efficacy of humanitarianism' TLS. About the Author John Holmes worked in the Foreign Office for 34 years, finishing as Ambassador in Paris, before taking up the role of UN USG for Humanitarian Affairs in 2007.