



Canadian Centre for Policy Studies

Human Rights as a dangerous ideological abstraction

Michael Veck
August 2010

When the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (better known by its acronym UNESCO) decided to formulate a new *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1947 that would be solemnly proclaimed by the General Assembly, its ruling cadre had no idea how difficult a task they were taking on.

At the initiative of, among others, Eleanor Roosevelt, a committee was set up to solicit the input of as many international “moral authorities” as possible on the subject. In all, about 150 intellectuals from many different nations were asked to give their views. What the committee got back was a potpourri (some might say witch’s brew) of abstract thoughts and contradictory opinions so diverse and unruly that it was decided not to even publish the results of the inquiry.¹ Instead, organizers opted to negotiate and conclude a *practical*

agreement on what the *Declaration* should include, ignoring the crucial first step of establishing a *theoretical* framework that would a) justify why some things were determined to be fundamental human rights while others were not, and b) serve as a guide to the future interpretation of the *Declaration* and the development of human rights standards and laws around the world. This consensual document owed more to the ideological and political realities of the day than universal principles. Nevertheless, it was (and still is) revered as a record of revealed, and therefore immutable, truths as though it were delivered from on high, in a Moses-like fashion.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Studies is an independent, research and advocacy group dedicated to the advancement of freedom and prosperity at home and abroad through the development and promotion of good public policy. Visit our website at www.policystudies.ca

The ideology of human rights rests on a foundation of blind faith in the improvement of the future and destiny of humanity, and like all acts of faith, it is justified by its objectives. These objectives are posed as norms, but because they cannot be either validated scientifically or, as we have already seen, theoretically, they must be affirmed dogmatically. Any intelligent discussion of human rights must begin with this fact.

Critics of human rights ideology tend to focus on its universal pretensions and abstract egalitarianism,² but there has always been disagreement on the practical content and extent of human rights. The French *Declaration on the Rights of Man* of 1789 stipulates, in Lockean fashion, that the right of property is “inviolable and sacred”; the United Nations *Declaration* of 1948 remains prudently silent on this point. Most defenders of the rights of peoples dissociate any specific “people” from the nation-state, which is understandable if one wants to defend the rights of minorities, but classic legal theory expressly refuses to make that distinction. The principle of non-retroactivity of laws, held in 1789 and throughout the entire Western legal tradition as an imprescriptible human right was abandoned during both the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials and in the face “crimes against humanity” committed by the Axis powers during, and in the years immediately preceding, World War 2.

Unconditional freedom of speech is considered a human right in the United States and guaranteed by its constitution but not in many countries of the European Union or in Canada³, where laws against hate-speech exist. It is possible in the United States to sell one’s blood, but not in Canada. In the United Kingdom, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence is proposing to scrap its age limit on in-vitro fertilization treatment – along with other distinctions over whom to treat – to avoid being sued under the *Equality Act*. In fact, this proposal establishes a new human right for older women to have babies. In Canada and most other Western jurisdictions, no such human right yet exists (but stay tuned). The examples are endless...

It is obvious that so-called fundamental human rights regularly contradict one another. Positive rights frequently come into conflict with negative freedoms: freedom of association can be an obstacle in anti-discrimination legislation. The right to work can come into conflict with property rights or the right of private initiative. In our previous example, the human right in the United Kingdom for older women to have babies ignores the dangers posed by such a pregnancy to the child’s health. In addition, many older mothers cannot care for babies and very young children as well as younger women can. They do not have at their disposal the same levels of stamina and patience, and they

are more likely to become infirm or even die before the child reaches adulthood. Since 1975, French legislation guarantees the right to an abortion (during early months of pregnancy), but bans medical experiments on embryos out of respect for human life, which starts from the moment of conception.⁴ If the embryo is not yet a human being, why should we not be allowed to conduct medical experiments on it? If, on the other hand, the embryo is a human being, however underdeveloped, how can we justify the right to an abortion?⁵

The concept of “human rights” in the West has become a catch-all expression with an ever-changing meaning depending on circumstances and fads. Paradoxically, as human rights increasingly lose their philosophical foundations, we witness their proliferation on a truly global scale. In other words, the more we witness a frenzied production of human rights, the more we witness an emergence of doubts as to their ideological *bona fides*. To an impartial observer they now denote a self-serving and abstract legal field that lends itself to a litany of various meanings in various social and historical contexts. One example among many that will illustrate the absurdly politicized nature of human rights in the West, as of this writing⁶ a former U.S. Justice Department attorney alleges that Attorney General Eric Holder

asked the Justice Department to drop a New Black Panther Party voter intimidation case because the victims were white.⁷ Of course, this is the same Attorney General who recently introduced hate crime legislation with selective enforcement.⁸ Apparently all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.

The trend today consists in converting into “human rights” all manners of personal demands, wishes, and interests. In this view, individuals would have the “human right” to satisfy any and all demands simply because they can formulate them. Nowadays, to demand one’s “human rights” is only a way to maximize one’s interests. Reduced to a wish list or letter to Santa Claus and posited as needs, “human rights” continuously proliferate without anybody even bothering to justify their *raison d’être*.

Are we then in a society that “respects human rights”, or are we in a society that has decided to give its *imprimatur* to all forms of desire; indeed, that has decided to “recognize” all lifestyles, all manners of existence, all preferences and orientations, as long as they do not interfere too much with those of our neighbours? Does the recognition of “human rights” necessarily signify acquiescence to the individualistic postulate that all personal choices or preferences are equally legitimate?

The banalization of human rights inevitably leads to their devaluation, since the rule of law is dissolved in a never-ending stream of demands. The total permissiveness that is on the horizon of a boundless mass production of human rights contains within it the seeds of nihilism.

Another consequence of individual affirmation and the *ad infinitum* multiplication of human rights is the extraordinary rise of the litigious society. The judicial sphere is increasingly seen as solely capable of regulating political life and providing social cohesion. In the United States, and to a somewhat lesser degree in Canada, all political quarrels seem to end in some courthouse or other. This situation has spread to other Western countries where the powers of the judiciary keep expanding exponentially and where social relations are more and more determined in terms of human rights.

Since the ideology of human rights wants to cover all facets of existence they inevitably are vaguer than national laws. The problem then arises how best to convert them into positive law without damaging the consensus they enjoy. If in the future we rely mostly on human rights to adjudicate matters, the way in which cases are decided will become unpredictable, arbitrary, and ultimately despotic.

Historically, the West utilized human rights as an ideological club against the Soviet Union. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, they have in turn been utilized to disqualify and delegitimize all sorts of governments or practices, particularly in the Third World, but also, with increasing shrillness, the State of Israel.⁹

Another point we wish to raise concerns the use of the ideology of human rights by jihadi ideologues and terrorists. Melanie Phillips in her book *Londonistan*¹⁰ highlights the role the human rights law played in the asylum shambles that provided cover for the influx of large numbers of people into western countries who posed a direct threat to them from without.

When politicians finally did try to tackle the problem [of the collapse of the asylum system], they failed dismally because they refused to address the fundamental reason for the chaos. This was at root an ideology of “human rights” that was nothing less than an assault on the integrity of the nation, along with an obsession with preventing any self-designated “victim groups” from being harmed anywhere in the world. And the topic couldn’t even be talked about openly and honestly for fear of accusations of racism. Remarkably, these absurd and dangerous attitudes – the governing creed of the progressive intelligentsia – had become the orthodoxy in the very heart of the British establishment, the judiciary, whose rulings not only reduced the asylum system to a shambles but thwarted all subsequent attempts to restore order.¹¹

As the author further notes, in 1989, the European Court of Human Rights extended the scope of the provision in the European Convention on Human Rights that prohibits torture or degrading treatment. This ruling made it impossible to deport illegal immigrants – including suspected terrorists – to any place where judges thought such abuses might be practiced. Although the ruling applied to all signatories to the Convention, the English courts applied it far more zealously than anyone else. At the same time, English judges began to interpret the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees much more broadly than other countries, so that the definition of a refugee was expanded from its original meaning of someone persecuted by the state to anyone threatened with harm by any group.

As a result, asylum policy descended into farce. Thanks to its courts, Britain was now obliged to grant asylum to potentially billions of people who could claim to be harmed by any group; and if such immigrants turned out to be themselves harmful to Britain, they could not be thrown out if they claimed that they faced further harm where they were being sent – which many promptly did. This impasse was then deepened by a series of judgments under human rights law – such as the ruling that halting welfare payments to asylum-seekers denied them a right to family life – in which the judges thwarted all government attempts to end the abuse.¹²

The consequence was that human rights doctrine was used to uphold patently false

claims against the British state, with ruinous consequences.¹³ A similar situation exists in Canada following the decision in *Singh v. Minister of Employment and Immigration*¹⁴ where the Supreme Court held that foreign nationals are protected by the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.¹⁵ Why has the British, and by extension Western, judiciary behaved in this way? For Western judiciary and the progressive intelligentsia, human rights law is an article of faith, the legal progenitor of a brave new world in which prejudice, discrimination, and oppression are consigned to history. In fact, it has undermined Western society, eviscerated its values, allowed mass immigration on an epic scale (*i.e.* colonization), and helped create the conditions breeding Islamist terror. Human rights law lies at the very heart of the hollowing out of Western society, which has all but destroyed the West's internal defenses against the external threats it faces from Islamist aggression and ethnic dispossession.¹⁶ In Melanie Phillips' formulation, the ideology of human rights has become the West's "nemesis".

International law¹⁷ is also shaken at its core by the human rights ideology that justifies the right or duty of "humanitarian intervention"¹⁸, *i.e.* preventive war, historically equated with the war of aggression. Of course, this so-called right of humanitarian intervention has no basis in international law and violates the United

Nations Charter.¹⁹ This innovation mandates any state to intervene in the internal affairs of any other states under the pretext of stopping “human rights abuses.”²⁰ The rationalization for this politico-military neo-imperialism allows for a number of countries or bodies that pretend to act in the name of a vague “international community” to impose their worldview on lesser countries without taking into account cultural preferences nor the political and social practices accepted democratically. The risks attached to this new doctrine are clear: it opens the door to an interminable series of wars. Obviously, only minor actors can be subjected to humanitarian interventions, nobody thinks of invading China or Pakistan to put an end to human rights abuses. More fundamentally, the new legal concept of humanitarian intervention (*i.e.*, the latest eruption of an artificial messianic legal structure in the Wilsonian tradition) contravenes the *jus publicum europaeum* and the role of the state as a vehicle of popular sovereignty by subordinating states’ and peoples’ interests to an authoritarian “universal ethic.”

In both Locke and Hobbes the theory of rights is preceded by a mythical rationalization of origins. It postulates a mythical state of nature, outside of time and space. In this view, rights are what human beings are supposed to “possess” because they are human beings. The individual holds these rights from the “state

of nature”, in the same way that he holds all other attributes of his being.

This circular legitimization appears in several foundational texts. The American *Declaration of Independence* announces that “all men are created equal” and that they are “endowed” by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. The UN *Declaration* of 1948 proclaims at Article 1 that “All human beings are *born* free and equal in dignity and rights. They are *endowed* with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”. [Emphasis added.] It is because they are natural and innate that they are inalienable and imprescriptible.

This classic rationalization of rights faces grave difficulties. First, there is no consensus on the question of what is “human nature”. In the Greco-Roman world, human nature commanded individuals to put the interests of the community first. In modern times, human nature legitimizes the individualistic pursuit of any end that pleases. In any case, once we have established that a human nature exists, we still need to show that something of significance flows from that fact or that those human beings have rights (in the sense of the human rights ideology).

We can readily note that it is impossible to deduce from “nature” that all “men are created

equal.” Rather, we can say with confidence that, by nature, people are *unequal*. The natural sciences²¹ show that “nature” is far from egalitarian and that it is not the individual that is at the base of collective existence, it is the collective existence that is at the base of individual existence. Indeed, for both Darwin and Aristotle, the human being is first and foremost a social animal. Moreover, we can infer from the biological study of human nature conclusions that run counter to the ideology of human rights. Evolutionary biology can thus serve to legitimize honour killings, ethnic cleansing, vengeance, nepotism, a racially based caste system, rape, etc. In fact, there is nothing in the “laws of nature” that tells us that a group of genetically related individuals does not have the right to seek by all means to maximize the reproductive success of its members.²² Therefore, we can say that the “natural rights” referred to by the ideology of human rights contradict what we actually observe happening in nature or concerns things of which nature says nothing. To quote Baudelaire: “La nature ne peut conseiller que le crime.”

The last point we wish to highlight in this essay is the threat that the ideology of human rights poses to our democracy. Democracy is a political doctrine and the ideology of human rights is a legal and moral doctrine, and these two doctrines are in frequent conflict. As a

political regime, democracy tends to restrict what is not democratic, in addition to what is not political. In turn, the theory of human rights tends to restrict political prerogatives. Additionally, the ideology of human rights knows only abstract individuals, democracy knows only citizens. Although they oftentimes utilize the same legal rhetoric, the rights of citizens are fundamentally different from human rights. They are not the attributes of human beings *qua* human beings, but are *capacities* linked to a particular political regime (a democracy) and to a specific membership (in a given political community). The theory of human rights gives the right to vote to all human beings, without making any distinctions, because they are human beings (“one man, one vote”). Democracy gives the right to vote to all citizens, but does not extend suffrage to non-citizens.

A democratic state takes its legitimacy from the consent of the people, generally expressed through suffrage. At bottom, democracy is the type of government that establishes the sovereignty of the people. Conversely, the ideology of human rights claims to be in possession of moral and universal truths, applicable everywhere and at all times only because of their alleged universality. Hence, their value does not depend on their democratic ratification. In fact, the theory of

human rights can easily oppose democratic decisions.

As we have seen, insofar as international law is inspired by the ideology of human rights (*i.e.* humanitarian intervention) it implies a limitation on the sovereignty of states and peoples, by the same token it also implies the same limitation on popular sovereignty *inside* democratic states. As well, the ideological climate in which the doctrine of human rights arose makes popular suffrage fully valid *only insofar* as it does not contradict the ideological postulates of human rights. In other words, democratic principles are circumscribed within the strict limits that correspond to the theory of human rights. Should one individual defend them against a majority opinion, it is that solitary individual who has, from the perspective of human rights, adopted the only legitimate attitude.

Therefore, all democratic votes that are deemed to contravene human rights are automatically rejected as “irrational” and “illegitimate”. The same human rights dogma opposes direct public consultations in the form of referenda on subject matters considered by the elites to be too “sensitive” for the masses. Loud denunciations of “populism” are frequently heard: when we address issues of “human rights”, the people are often suspected of thinking badly.

¹ See generally Johannes Morsink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting, and Intent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

² For example: Taine made the following observation regarding the *Declaration of 1789*: “La plupart des articles ne sont que des dogmes abstraits, des définitions métaphysiques, des axiomes plus ou moins littéraires, c’est-à-dire plus ou moins faux, tantôt vagues et contradictoires, susceptibles de plusieurs sens et susceptibles de sens opposés, bons pour une harangue d’apparat et non pour un usage effectif, simple décor, sorte d’enseigne pompeuse, inutile et pesante...” See *Le dépérissement de la politique : Généalogie d’un lieu commun* (Paris: Flammarion-Champs, 2002) at 283.

³ The following exchange from the *Warman v. Lemire* hearing before the Canadian Human Rights Commission (page 4793 of the transcript) gives a proper flavour of how Canadian “anti-hate” investigators view freedom of speech:

MS KULASZKA: Mr. Steacy, you were talking before about context and how important it is when you do your investigation. What value do you give freedom of speech when you investigate one of these complaints?

MR. STEACY: Freedom of speech is an American concept, so I don't give it any value.

MS KULASZKA: Okay. That was a clear answer.

MR. STEACY: It's not my job to give value to an American concept.

Canadian political commentator Mark Steyn adds: “Mr Steacy is wrong. It is not “freedom of speech” that is the kinky foreign imposition but his own Orwellian “human rights” regime, set up in the late 1970s and wholly alien to Canada's legal tradition. Why he is so unacquainted with English law as to believe “freedom of speech” is an “American concept” is something I look forward to exploring with him face to face. I happen to believe that freedom of speech is a Canadian right and, if Dean Steacy and the Islamic Congress think it's “their job” to take it away from Canadians, then let's have the dust-up and settle it once and for all.” Mark Steyn, *Alien ideologies*, National Review online:

<http://corner.nationalreview.com/post/?q=NjY1YWJhNDc5ZTkYzE4NTE3NTYyM2Q1ZTBkZjlxYzQ=> (date

accessed: 4 July 2010). However, Canada does have a human right not to be offended, see sec. 13 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* that in truly science fiction fashion prohibits conditional, future tense crimes, the Canadian legislator was undoubtedly inspired by Philip K. Dick novels: 13. (1) It is a discriminatory practice for a person or a group of persons acting in concert to communicate telephonically or to cause to be so communicated, repeatedly, in whole or in part by means of the facilities of a telecommunication undertaking within the legislative authority of Parliament, any matter that is **likely to** expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt by reason of the fact that person or those persons are identifiable on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination. [Emphasis added.], online: Canadian Human Rights Commission http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/proactive_initiatives/hoi_hsi/qa_qr/page1-en.asp (date accessed: 4 July 2010).

⁴ The French text reads in part: «...respect de l'être humain dès le commencement de la vie.»

⁵ During the 1992 presidential elections in the United States, candidate Bill Clinton said that he wanted abortion to be “safe, legal, and rare”. If abortion does not pose a moral dilemma, why did the pro-choice Democratic candidate include the qualification “rare” in his exhortation?

⁶ July 6, 2010.

⁷ See *Former Justice Department Lawyer Accuses Holder of Dropping New Black Panther Case for Racial Reasons*, online: Fox News <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/06/30/justice-dept-lawyer-accuses-holder-dropping-new-black-panther-case-political> (date accessed: 4 July 2010).

“Adams says the dismissal is a symptom of the Obama administration's reverse racism and that the Justice Department will not pursue voting rights cases against white victims.”

⁸ *Thank you, Eric Holder, for your honesty*, online : <http://wizbangblog.com/content/2009/07/02/thank-you-eric-holder-for-your-honesty-1.php> (date accessed: 4 July 2010). Last week, during Senate hearings on the proposed Matthew Sheppard Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions offered the following hypothetical scenario to Attorney General Eric Holder: “[A] minister gives a sermon, quotes the Bible

about homosexuality, is thereafter attacked by a gay activist because of what the minister said about his religious beliefs and what Scripture says about homosexuality.” Sessions then wanted to know if the minister would be protected under the new proposed hate crimes legislation, because he was attacked specifically because of his religious views. AG Holder responded:

Well, the statute would not — would not necessarily cover that. We're talking about crimes that have a historic basis. Groups who have been targeted for violence as a result of the colour of their skin, their sexual orientation, that is what this statute tends — is designed to cover. That would not be covered by the statute.

Clearly if one is not a member of a selected class, one cannot be a victim of a hate crime as defined by the *Act*.

Later in the hearing, Oklahoma Senator Tom Coburn asked AG Holder about last month's attack on a US Army recruiting office in Little Rock by Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad, a radical Muslim, that left Pvt. William Long dead and Private Quinton Ezeagwula seriously wounded. The recruiting office and soldiers were targeted simply because they represented the US military. Again, Holder responded:

There's a certain element of hate, I suppose. What we're looking for here in terms of the expansion of the statute are instances where there is a historic basis to see groups of people who are singled out for violence perpetrated against them because of who they are. I don't know if we have the same historical record to say that members of our military have been targeted in the same way that people who are African-American, Hispanic, people who are Jewish, people who are gay, have been targeted over — over the many years.

In sum, Attorney General Eric Holder is stating that the hate crime legislation put forward by President Obama's administration is only designed to protect historic minorities. If one is not a historic minority but is singled out as the target of a criminal act solely because of the color of one's skin or one's religious beliefs, one has no additional recourse against the perpetrators of the crime under the proposed law.

It remains to be seen whether this legislation will be challenged under the equal protection clause. On a side note we agree with Camille Paglia's comment: “I have been on the record since the 1990s as strongly opposing

hate crimes legislation. I think it is a totalitarian intrusion into citizens' thought processes. Government functionaries should not be ceded the dangerous authority to make decisions about motivation. They aren't novelists, psychologists or sibyls! Furthermore, there should be no special privileged class of protected groups in a democracy. A crime is a crime -- period." Belief Net online:
<http://blog.beliefnet.com/crunchycon/2009/07/camille-paglia-vs-hate-crimes.html#ixzz0sq2aBYwN> (date accessed: July 4 2010).

⁹ Israel is routinely demonized in the mainstream media and at the United Nations as a racist and militaristic ethno-state that violates the human rights of Palestinian Arabs. For example, see World Conference against Racism 2001 in Durban, South Africa, that produced a resolution that singled out Israel as a racist state. See also former American President Jimmy Carter's accusations in his book *Peace not Apartheid* that Israel was a racist state akin to the old South Africa. Students on Canadian campuses during "Apartheid Week" (that actually lasts two weeks) are encouraged by a coalition of Leftist and Islamist agitators to view Israel as a Nazi-type state that perpetrates genocide on innocent Arabs.

¹⁰ (New York: Encounter Books, 2006.)

¹¹ *Ibid.* at 21.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Almost a quarter of all terrorist suspects arrested in Britain since 9/11 have been asylum-seekers. *Ibid*

¹⁴ [1985] 1 S.C.R. 177.

¹⁵ Between 1977 and 1980, Harbhajan Singh and six other Sikh foreign nationals attempted to claim convention refugee status under the Immigration Act, 1976 on the basis that they had a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country. They were denied status by the Minister of Employment and Immigration on the advice of the Refugee Status Advisory Committee. The seven foreign nationals challenged the adjudication procedures under the Immigration Act on the basis that it violated section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and violated section 2(e) of the Canadian Bill of Rights. The government claimed that since they had no status within the country they were not subject to the Charter. In a three to three decision the Court found that the seven foreign nationals were protected by the Charter

and their rights had been violated. Justice Bertha Wilson wrote the decision based on section 7 rights to security of person and fundamental justice. She also found the government's claim that giving hearing to refugees would be burdensome was too much of an administrative concern to justify infringing a Charter right.

The second half of the Court also found in favour of the rights claimants, but through section 2(e) of the Bill of Rights. Justice Jean Beetz, writing for this half of the Court, noted that section 26 of the Charter states that rights outside the Charter are not invalid, and hence the Bill of Rights still has a role to play in Canadian law. Beetz went on to find that in this case, refugees had been denied hearings, and thus their section 2(e) rights to fair hearings and fundamental justice were infringed. Following the Supreme Court decision, the number of hearings needed for refugees has caused massive delays in the Immigration Department. The number of refugee cases receiving legal aid was also increased, with 1,610 cases in Ontario in 1989 rising to 15,247 cases in 1990 in that province.

¹⁶ For example, in many western countries since the Second World War, governments embarked on a policy of mass immigration to change them into multiracial societies. They kept this momentous aim secret from the peoples whose votes they sought. See Melanie Phillips, *The secret plot to destroy Britain's identity*. Melanie Phillips' Articles online:
<http://www.melaniephillips.com/articles-new/?p=718> (date accessed: 5 August 2010).

¹⁷ International law is of dubious authority and lacks legitimacy since it is not rooted in any democratic jurisdiction. It is merely an expression of prevalent political or ideological views, which are subject to disagreement. Some of the judges in supranational courts have not been judges in their own countries, or are not even lawyers but diplomats; and their deliberations are inseparable from political maneuvering and *quid pro quos*.

¹⁸ The French politician Bernard Kouchner has been in the forefront of those advocating humanitarian interventions in all kinds of places. He was one of the principle figures to have convinced NATO to militarily intervene on the side of Kosovars in their struggle with Serbs. In 2008, Pierre Péan wrote *The World According to K*, an investigative work on the ties between Bernard Kouchner - currently French foreign minister - and African dictators. Péan claimed two consulting firms run

by associates of Kouchner were paid about \$6 million by the governments of Gabon and Congo for reports that were written by him. According to Péan, some of this money was paid by the two African governments after Kouchner became foreign minister in May 2007. Kouchner denied the accusations of conflict of interest, blaming the allegations on "circles" who hated him and pointing to differences with Péan over who should be blamed for the Rwandan genocide. Bernard Kouchner countered by accusing Pierre Péan of anti-Semitism (Kouchner's father is Jewish), provoking a scandal in French media. This book is not only about Africa, but also about Kosovo, and how Kouchner acted in his capacity as a UN delegate. Kouchner never answered the facts Péan revealed in his book, and preferred to keep silent.

²⁰ The world recently witnessed an example of a Turkish "humanitarian intervention" during the so-called "Gaza aid flotilla" episode when pro-Palestinian elements (some with terrorist links) tried to breach Israel's blockade of the Hamas controlled Gaza Strip. The organizers have already promised a repeat performance but this time backed by a military escort, thereby further escalating

tensions in the Middle East. *Israeli Officials Claim Aid Flotilla Had Ties to Al Qaeda, PM Gives Military 'Full Support'*. Fox News online: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/05/30/reports-israeli-ships-attack-aid-flotilla-dead> (date accessed: 5 July 2010).

²¹ See especially Steven Pinker, *Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* (New York: Viking Press, 2002).

²² See generally Frank Salter, *On Genetic Interests: Family, Ethnicity, and Humanity in an Age of Mass Migration* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006). According to Darwinian theory, the goal towards which all living things strive is to make more copies of their distinctive genes. This is seen most clearly in the devotion of parents to children; as Dr. Salter writes, "The importance of genetic continuity is an end in itself, for humans as well as for other species." From an evolutionary point of view, "propagating one's genes is life's *raison d'être*." This is the ultimate goal of living things, and every other goal is subordinate to it.