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When in the early 90's Dr. Charles Jacobs began his abolitionist efforts, he realized that human rights groups were not actually working for universal human rights. Despite knowing that black women and children could be bought or sold for \$15 in Sudan and Mauritania neither Human Rights Watch nor Amnesty International were making a fuss. While a small and dedicated group of abolitionists fought slave-owners and slaving nations the large, well funded human rights organizations sat on the sidelines.

Dr. Jacobs spent the next decade trying to understand why this was the case.

Dr. Jacobs hypothesizes that the reason is what he calls a "human rights complex." Western rights groups consist mainly of decent white people who are motivated to fight evil committed by people who are like themselves. Think Apartheid in South Africa, Kosovo, Abu Ghraib, and Guantanamo.

But when these same folks see evil done by non-Westerners, they choke. It's prejudiced, they feel, to criticize non-Westerners, and they live in dread of being labeled racist, or worse, "Islamophobic."

On this page we will explore Dr. Jacobs's hypothesis and related issues.

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By Robert Bernstein  
The New York Times  
10/19/09

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Hudson Institute  
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