

GIOVANNI BATTISTA TEZA, 5QLSC

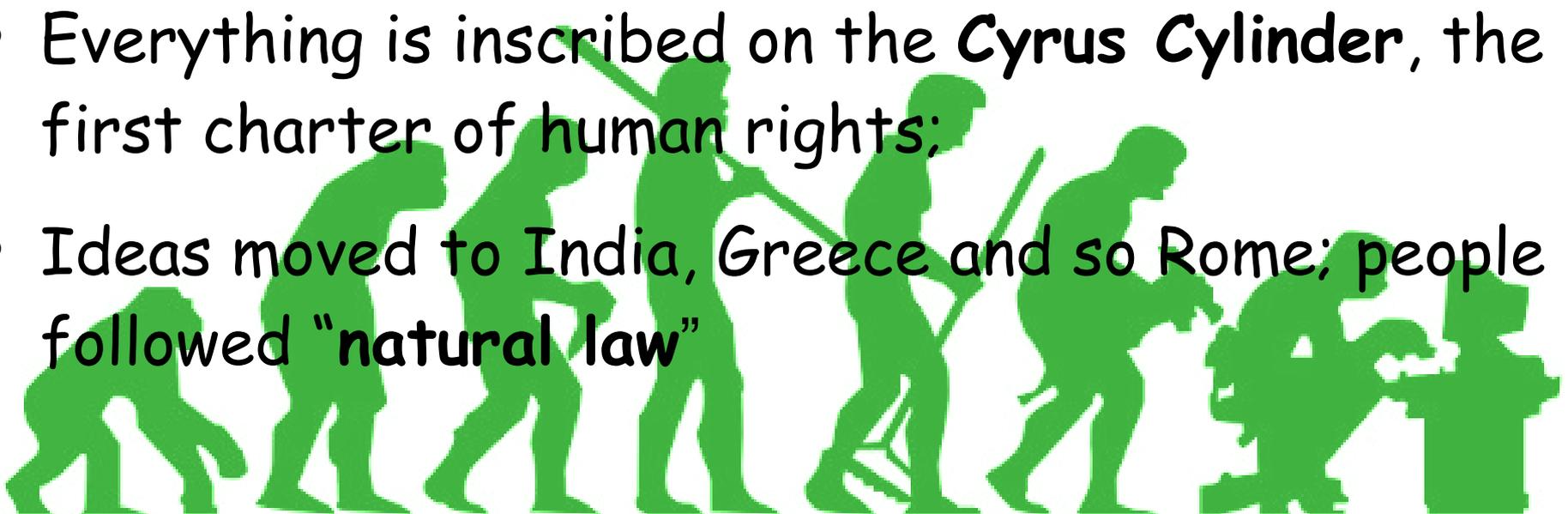


"The rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened."

— John F. Kennedy

The path of Human Rights through History

- 539 B.C.: Cyrus The Great, after having conquered Babylon, freed all the slaves, gave people the right to choose their own religion, and expressed racial equality
- Everything is inscribed on the **Cyrus Cylinder**, the first charter of human rights;
- Ideas moved to India, Greece and so Rome; people followed "natural law"

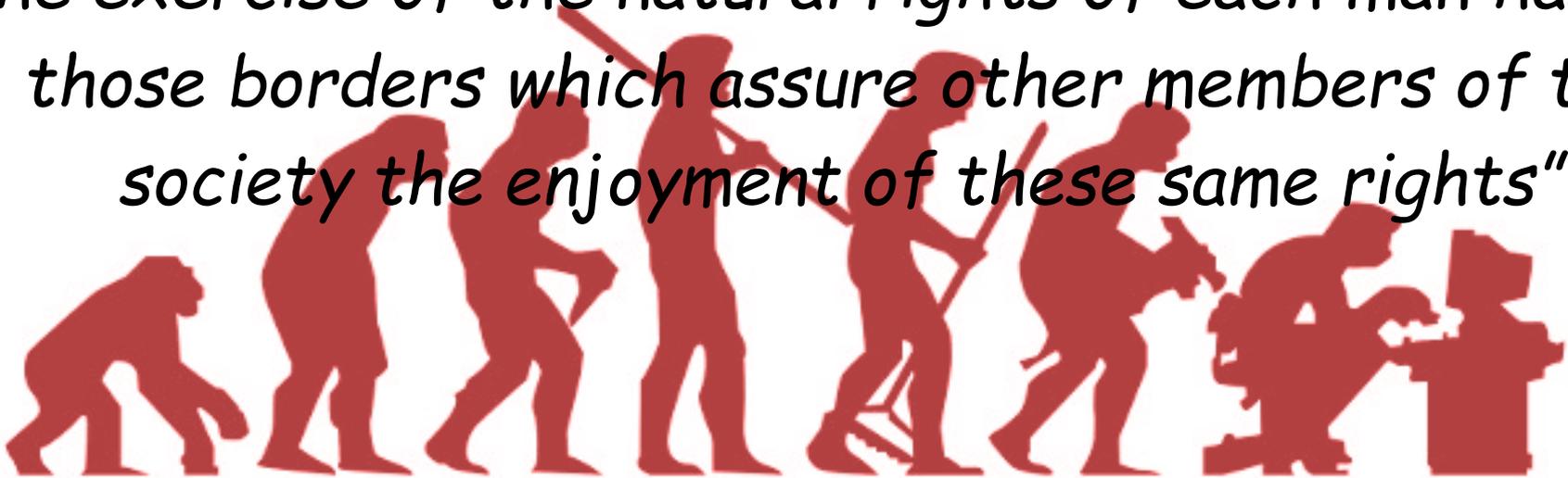


- 1215: King John of England is forced to sign the **Great Charter**; right to inherit property, equality before the law, widows could not remarry, no excessive taxes
- 1628: English Parliament sends to Charles I the **Petition of Rights**; no taxes without Parliament's consent, no imprisonment without case shown, no soldiers may be quartered upon the citizenry, no martial law in peace time
- 1776: Thomas Jefferson pens **American Declaration of Independence**; individual rights and right of evolution



- 1791: the **Bill of Rights**; it protects freedom of speech, of religion, right to keep arms, of assembly, of petition; federal government can't deprive of personal life
- 1789: after French Revolution, the **Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen**; no absolute monarchy, law as expression of general will; Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité

"the exercise of the natural rights of each man has only those borders which assure other members of the society the enjoyment of these same rights"



- 1864: **Conference of Geneva**; extend care without discrimination to wounded and sick military personnel, medical personnel transports and equipment with the sign of the red cross on a white background
- 1945: **United Nations** "saving succeeding generations from scourge of war"
- 1948: **The Thirty Articles of Human Rights**, for the first time in history, are codified into a single document.

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."



Are Human Rights respected today?

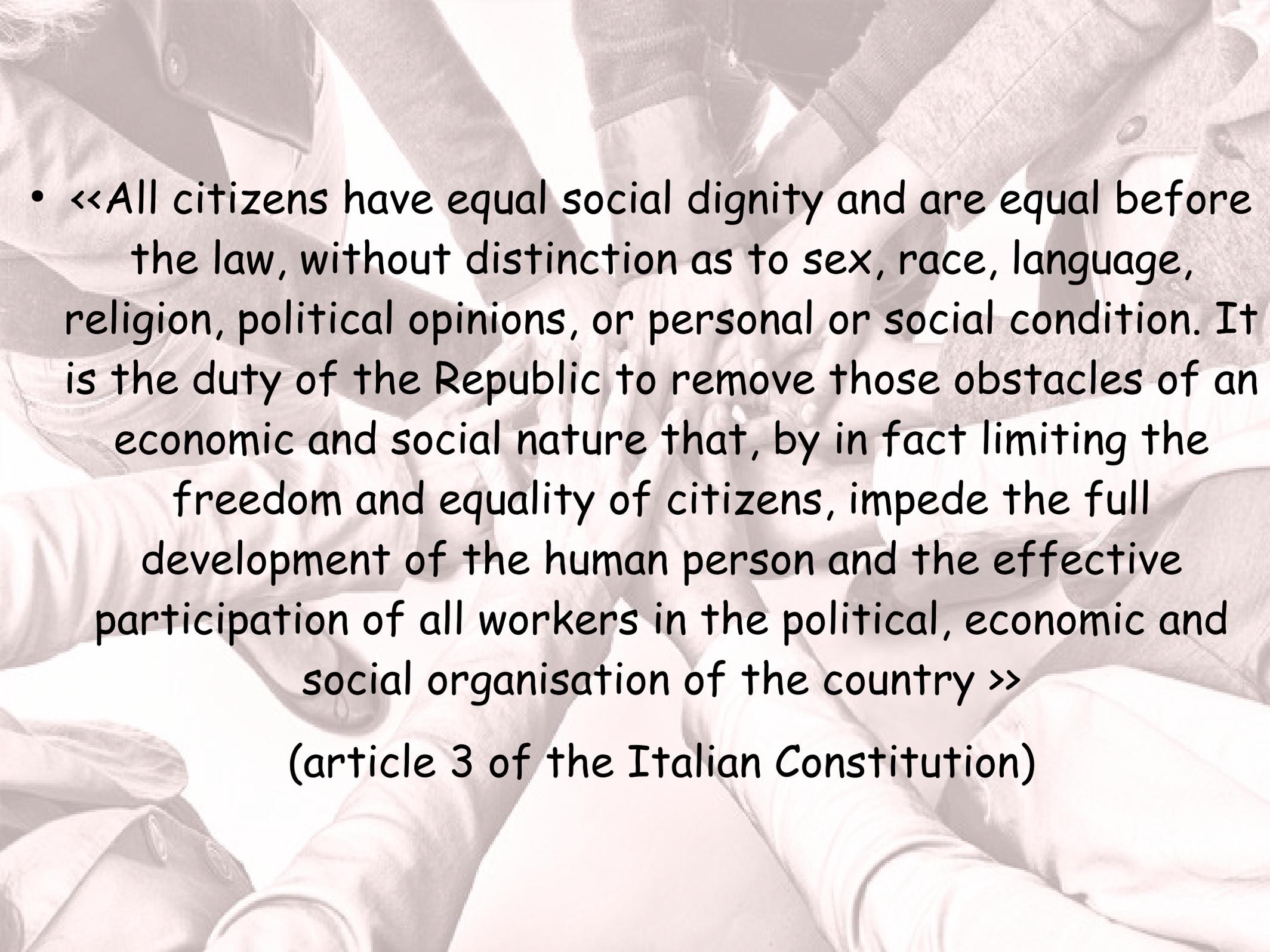
PARTIALLY



SOME EXAMPLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- «The Republic recognises and guarantees inviolable human rights, both for the individual and within social groups where the individual's personality is expressed, and it requires the fulfilment of the imperative duties of political, economic and social solidarity» (article 2 of the Italian Constitution)

Note: recognition is guaranteed to all those who deal with our State, not only Italian citizens

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- «All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction as to sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, or personal or social condition. It is the duty of the Republic to remove those obstacles of an economic and social nature that, by in fact limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, impede the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organisation of the country »

(article 3 of the Italian Constitution)

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- «The Republic recognizes the right of all citizens to work and promotes those conditions that will make this right effective. Every citizen has the duty, according to capability and individual choice, to carry out an activity or a function that contributes to the material or spiritual progress of society »

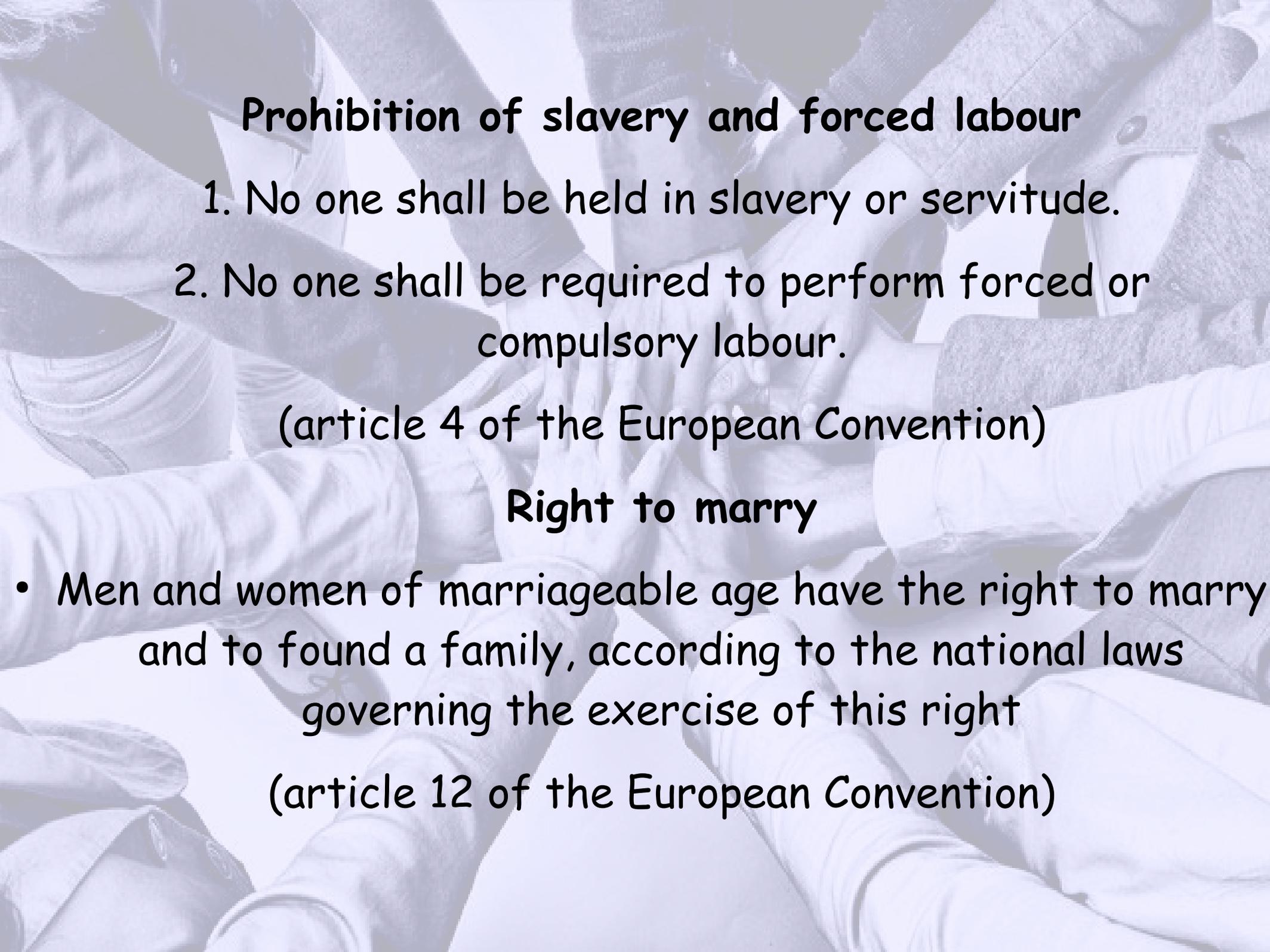
(article 4 of the Italian Constitution)



Prohibition of discrimination

- The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

(article 14 of the European Convention)



Prohibition of slavery and forced labour

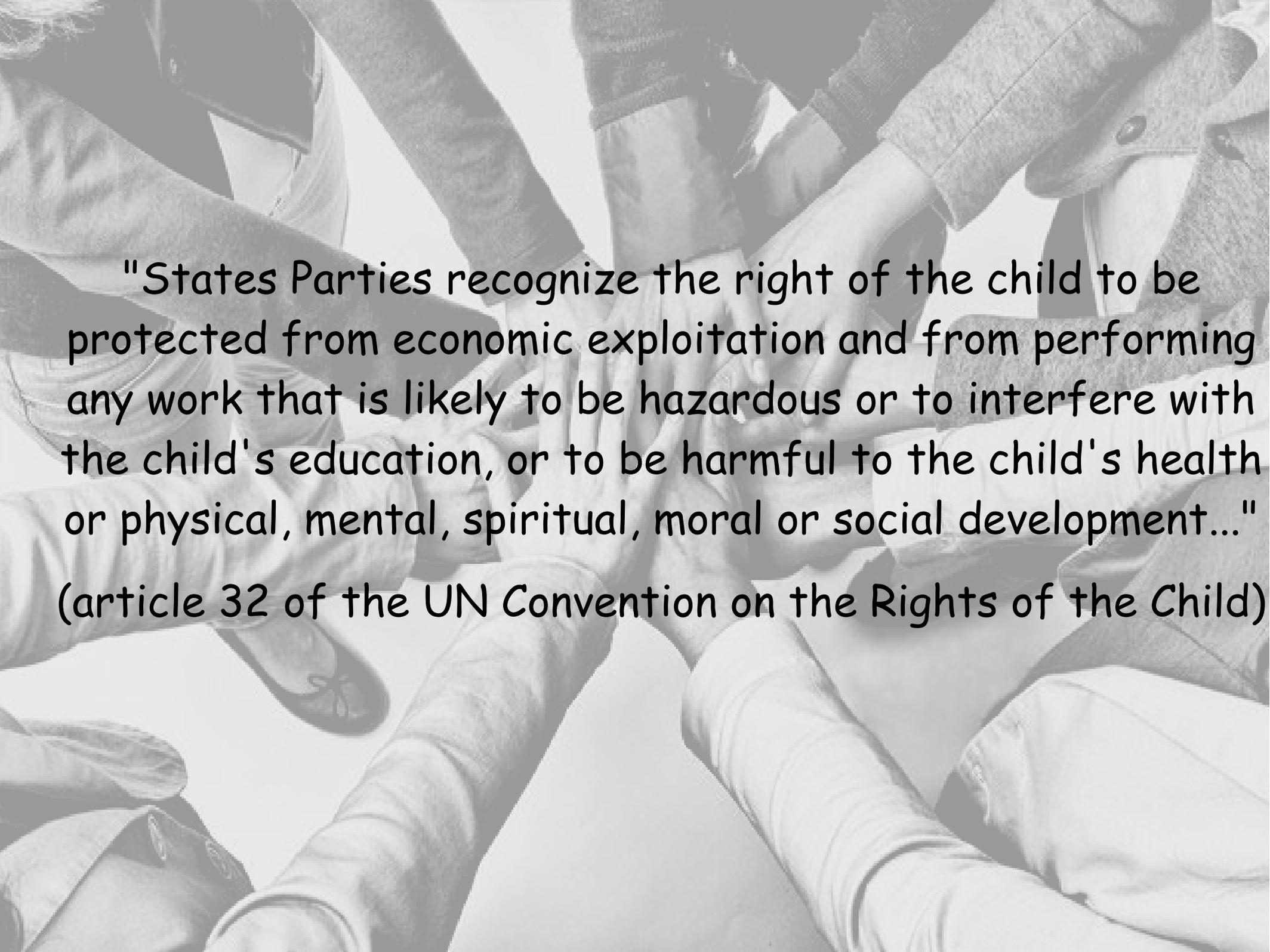
1. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
2. No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.

(article 4 of the European Convention)

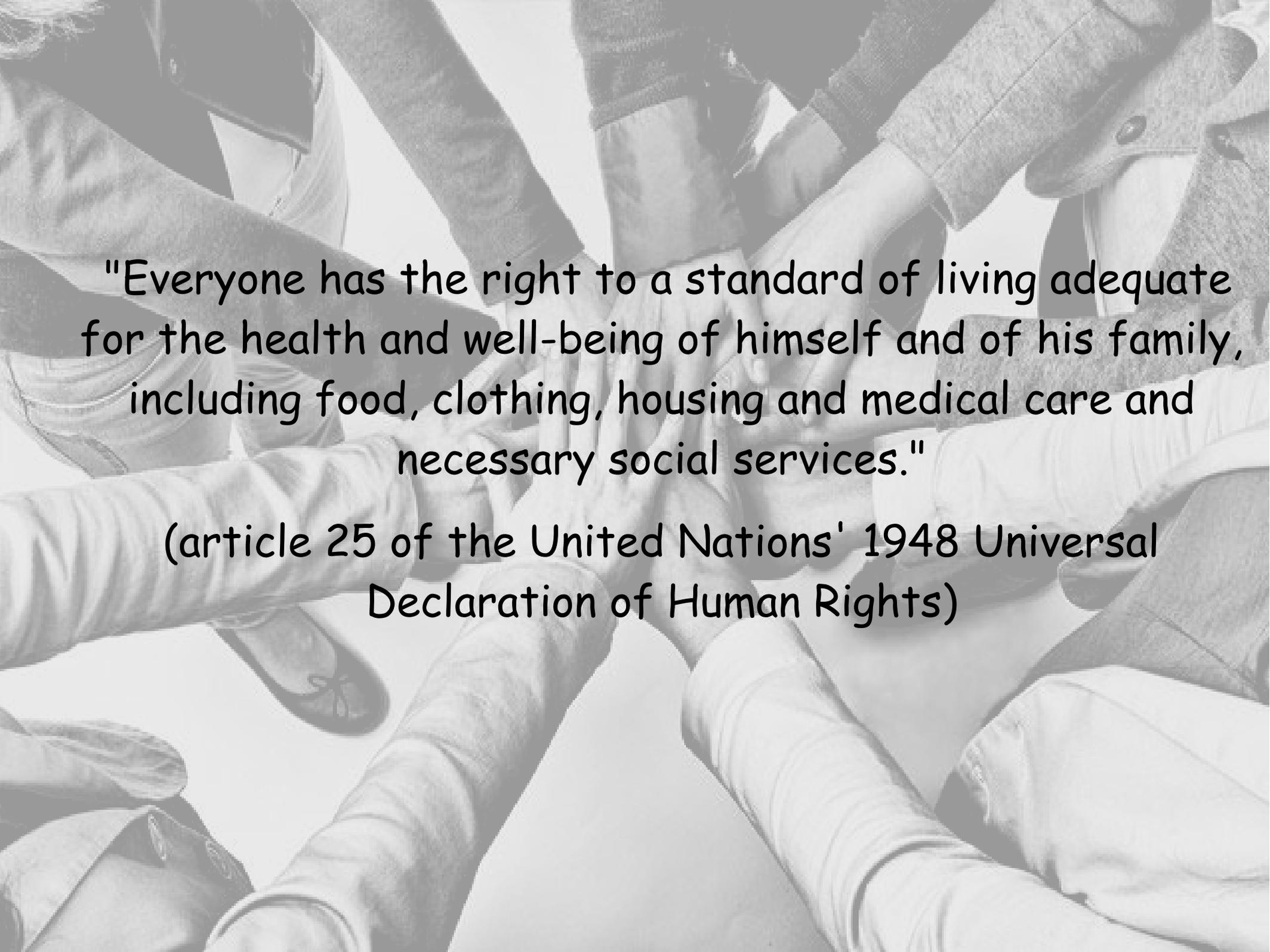
Right to marry

- Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry and to found a family, according to the national laws governing the exercise of this right

(article 12 of the European Convention)

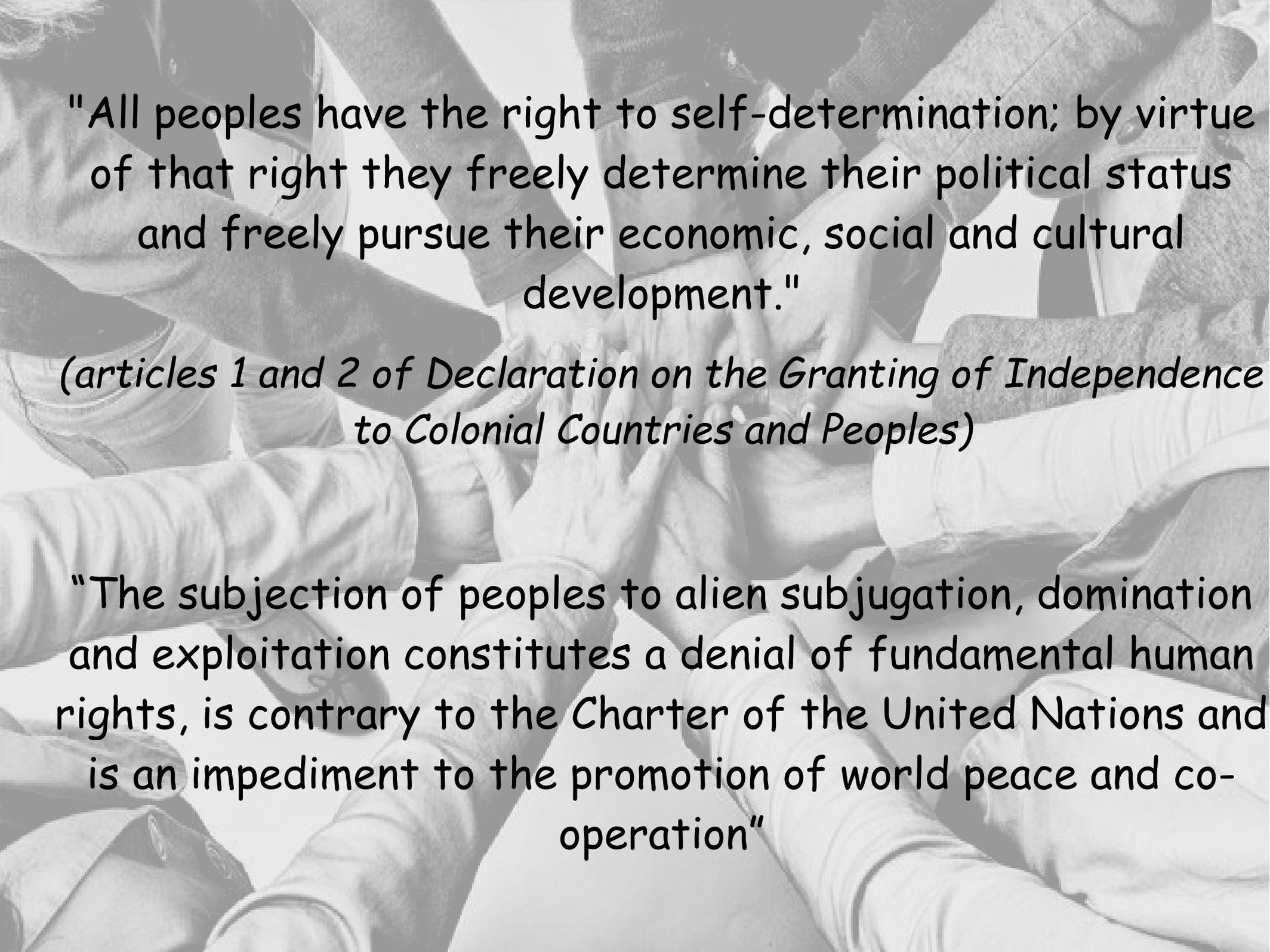


"States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development..."
(article 32 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)



"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services."

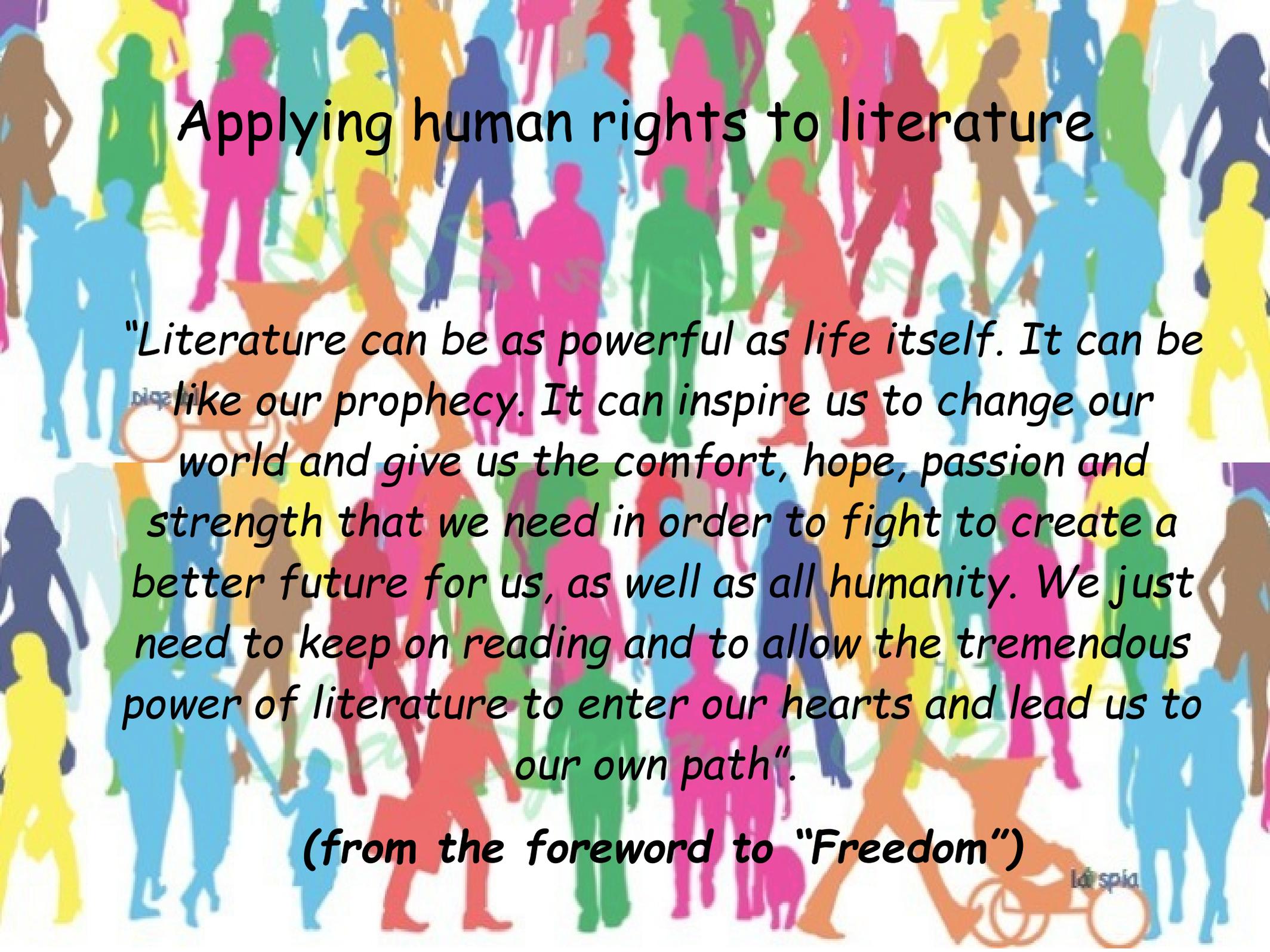
(article 25 of the United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights)



"All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

(articles 1 and 2 of Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples)

"The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation"



Applying human rights to literature

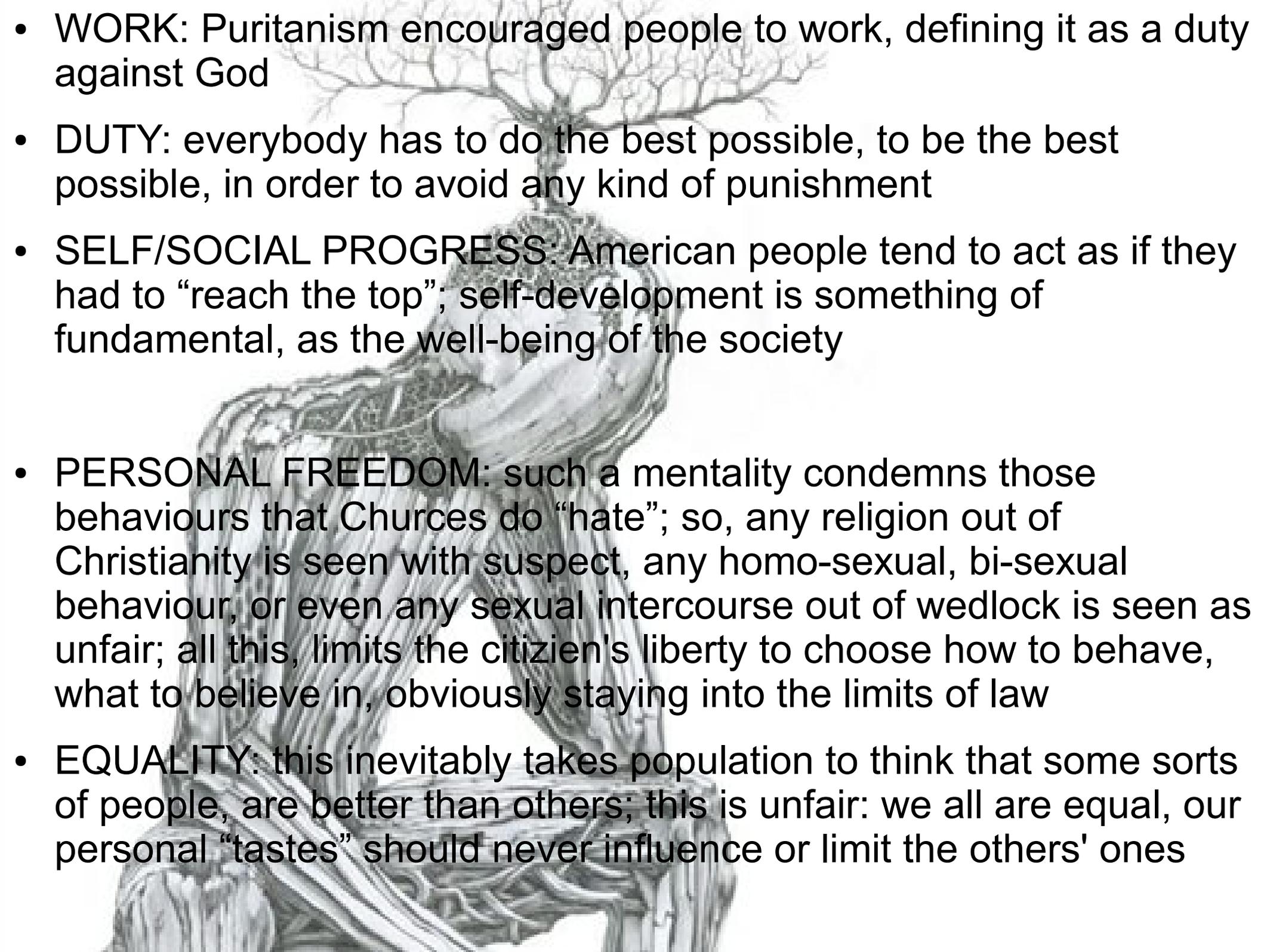
"Literature can be as powerful as life itself. It can be like our prophecy. It can inspire us to change our world and give us the comfort, hope, passion and strength that we need in order to fight to create a better future for us, as well as all humanity. We just need to keep on reading and to allow the tremendous power of literature to enter our hearts and lead us to our own path".

(from the foreword to "Freedom")

Is American still Puritan?

(from The New York Times)

- The article deals with the social experiments led by psychologist Eric Uhlmann; these show how current American mentality is similar to the Puritan one, and so based on hard work, achievement, progress. On the other side, it also proves a marked sense of religion, that condemns sexual behaviours, and limits certain leanings.
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- **RIGHTS ENJOYED:** social duty, work, self-progress, society's growing
- **RIGHTS IN CONFLICT:** personal expression, religious freedom, sexual freedom, equality of all citizens

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- **WORK:** Puritanism encouraged people to work, defining it as a duty against God
 - **DUTY:** everybody has to do the best possible, to be the best possible, in order to avoid any kind of punishment
 - **SELF/SOCIAL PROGRESS:** American people tend to act as if they had to “reach the top”; self-development is something of fundamental, as the well-being of the society
 - **PERSONAL FREEDOM:** such a mentality condemns those behaviours that Churches do “hate”; so, any religion out of Christianity is seen with suspect, any homo-sexual, bi-sexual behaviour, or even any sexual intercourse out of wedlock is seen as unfair; all this, limits the citizen's liberty to choose how to behave, what to believe in, obviously staying into the limits of law
 - **EQUALITY:** this inevitably takes population to think that some sorts of people, are better than others; this is unfair: we all are equal, our personal “tastes” should never influence or limit the others' ones

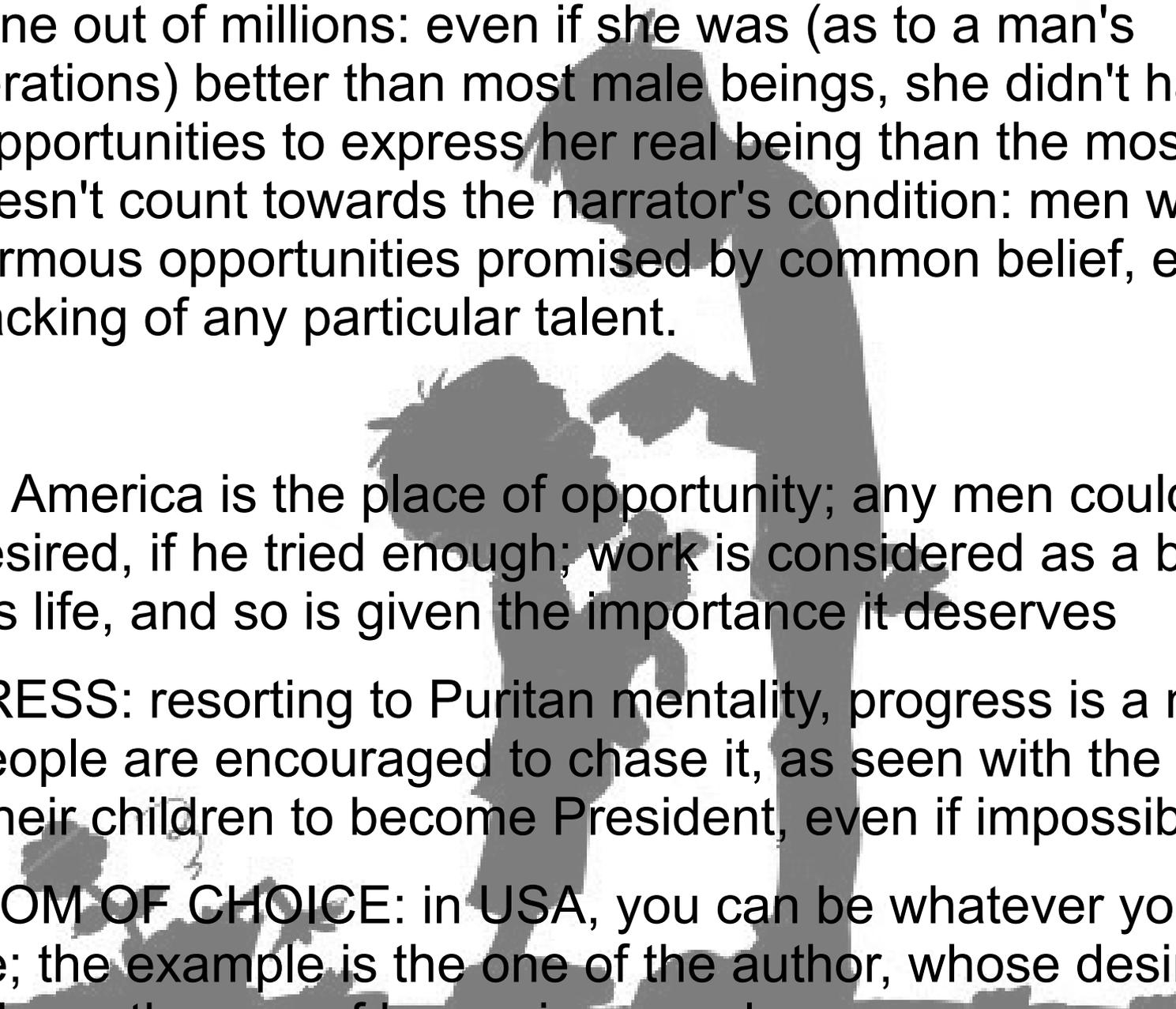
Growing up

(by Russel Wayne Baker)

- This is the author's autobiography, set between the Two World Wars, in the United States. The extract I'm going to analyse, deals with the separation of roles in 1930s, and with the way American Dream changed perspectives. Central, is the experience of Mr. Baker's sister, Doris, whose condition of woman blocked her, in spite of her multiple talents.

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- RIGHTS ENJOYED: work, progress, personal freedom of expression
- RIGHTS IN CONFLICT: equality

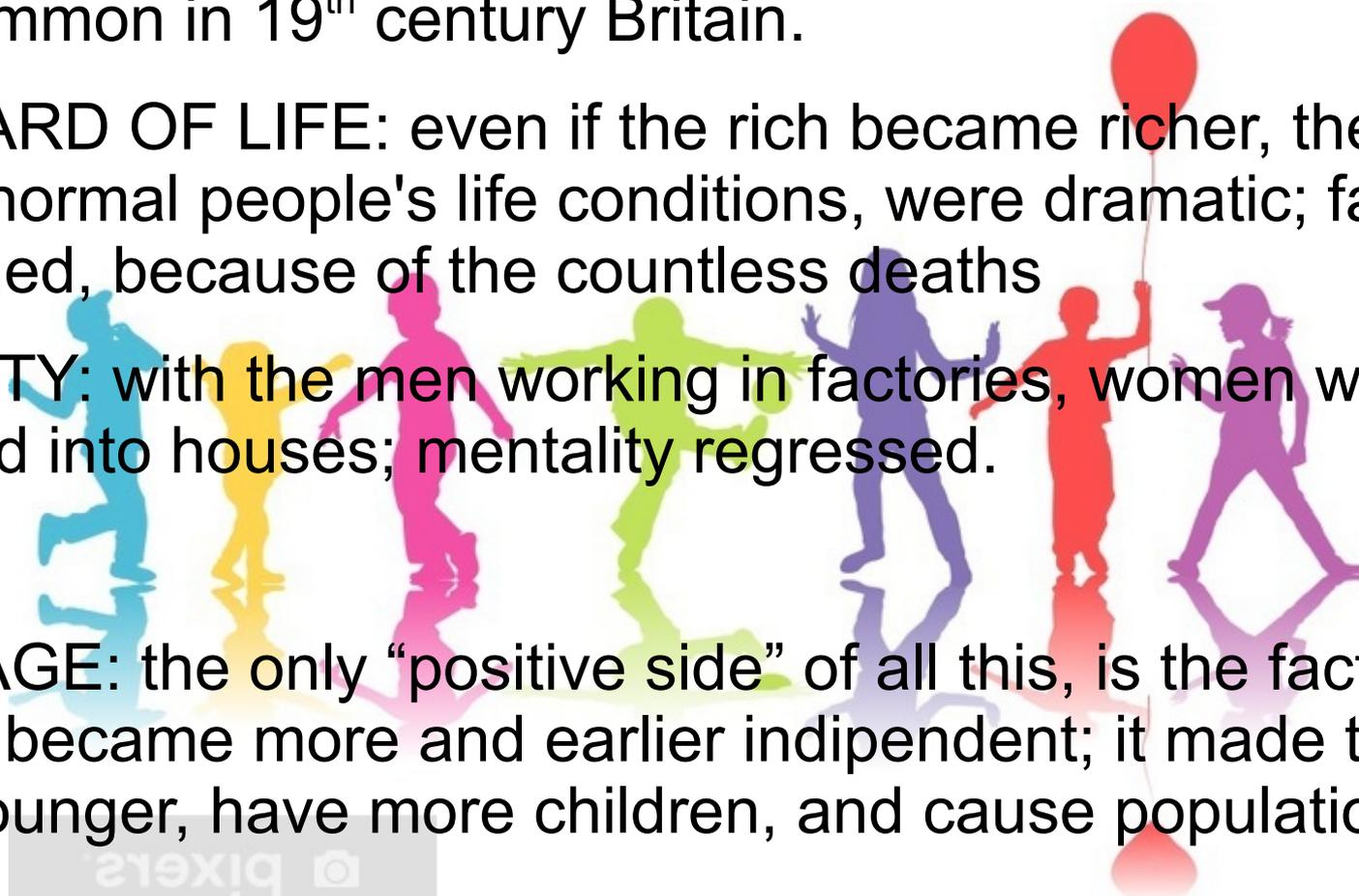


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- **EQUALITY:** even if American Dream slogan told that everybody could be what they wanted, if only they worked hard, reality is different. Women were discriminated, considered inferior, and Doris is just one out of millions: even if she was (as to a man's considerations) better than most male beings, she didn't have the same opportunities to express her real being than the most of men. This doesn't count towards the narrator's condition: men were given the enormous opportunities promised by common belief, even to those lacking of any particular talent.
 - **WORK:** America is the place of opportunity; any men could have the work desired, if he tried enough; work is considered as a base on a person's life, and so is given the importance it deserves
 - **PROGRESS:** resorting to Puritan mentality, progress is a need, is a duty; people are encouraged to chase it, as seen with the parents telling their children to become President, even if impossible
 - **FREEDOM OF CHOICE:** in USA, you can be whatever you want to become; the example is the one of the author, whose desire has always been the one of becoming a garbageman

Revealed: child slaves powered industrial Revolution; Huge factory expansion would not have been possible without exploitation of the young

- This article, taken from The Independent and written by David Keys, deals with child-labour; it bases its conclusions on the studies of Oxford's professor Jane Humphries, and marks how child slaves were one of the most important bases for the industrial Revolution. Not only, but it shows how these conditions irremediably changed English families conditions, and women's role and mentality.
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- RIGHTS ENJOYED: marriage
- RIGHTS IN CONFLICT: slavery, forced-labour and children protection, standard of life, equality

- **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS:** in the article, it is said how 15% of the total early 19th century's labour force was made of children; it meant more than one million child-workers, and around 350 thousand from 7 to 10 years old. This totally goes against any human right regarding children, who should never be exploited.
- **SLAVERY AND FORCED LABOUR PROTECTION:** not only children, but all sort of people during the Industrial Revolution were treated as slaves; forced labour, impossible rhythms, void salaries were common in 19th century Britain.
- **STANDARD OF LIFE:** even if the rich became richer, the poor were poorer; normal people's life conditions, were dramatic; families were also ruined, because of the countless deaths
- **EQUALITY:** with the men working in factories, women were relegated into houses; mentality regressed.
- **MARRIAGE:** the only “positive side” of all this, is the fact that children became more and earlier independent; it made them able to marry younger, have more children, and cause population's growth



Oliver Twist

(by Charles Dickens)

- The autobiographical novel of Mr. Dickens treats the themes of work-houses, in a society as the England of the Industrial Revolution that only cares about progress, and profit. In this context, the protagonist is a child, who experiences the adult's indifference and duplicity. The novel is a way to criticize the author's age, with irony and intelligence.
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- RIGHTS ENJOYED: none
- RIGHTS IN CONFLICT: children protection, standard of life

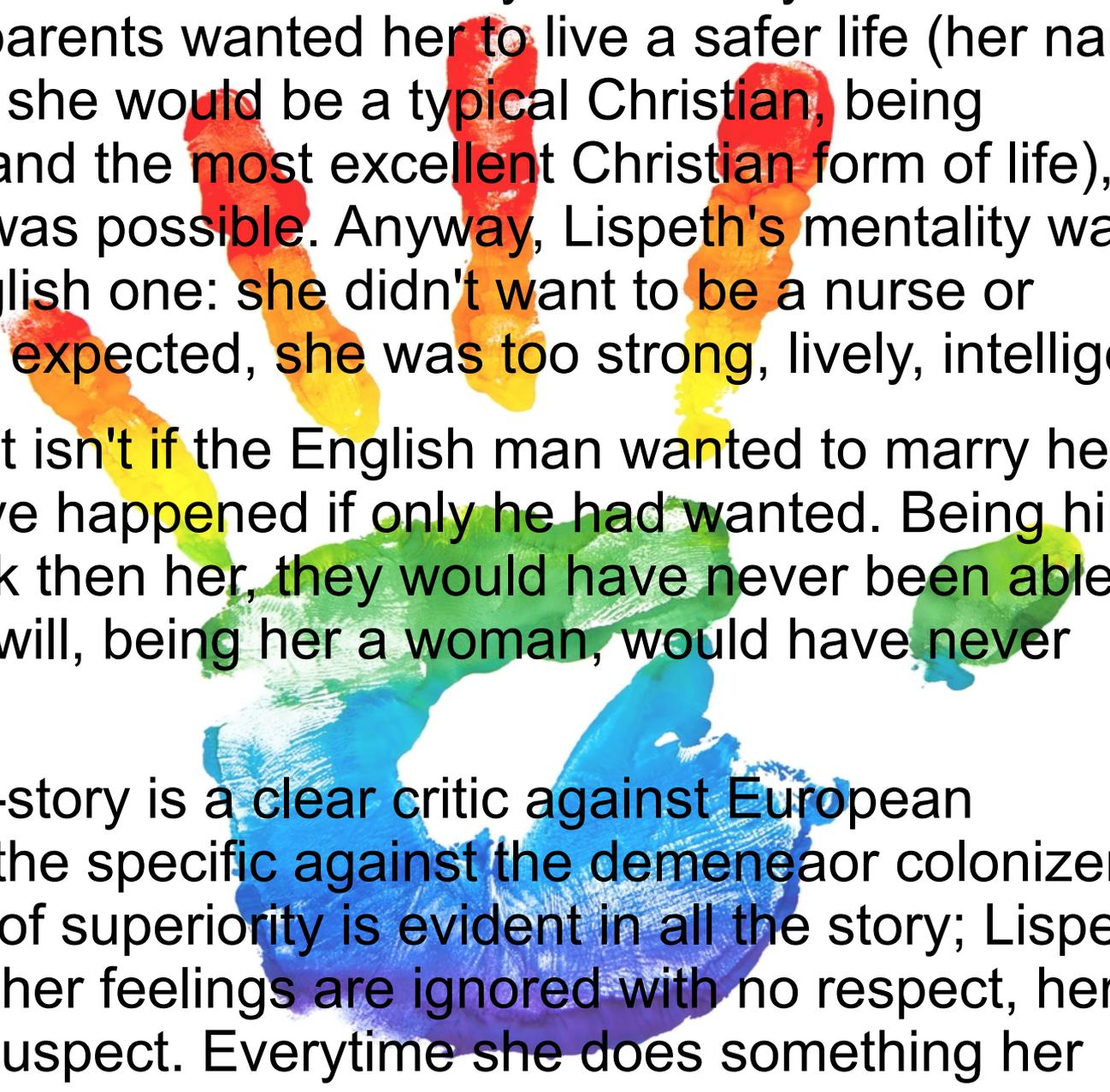


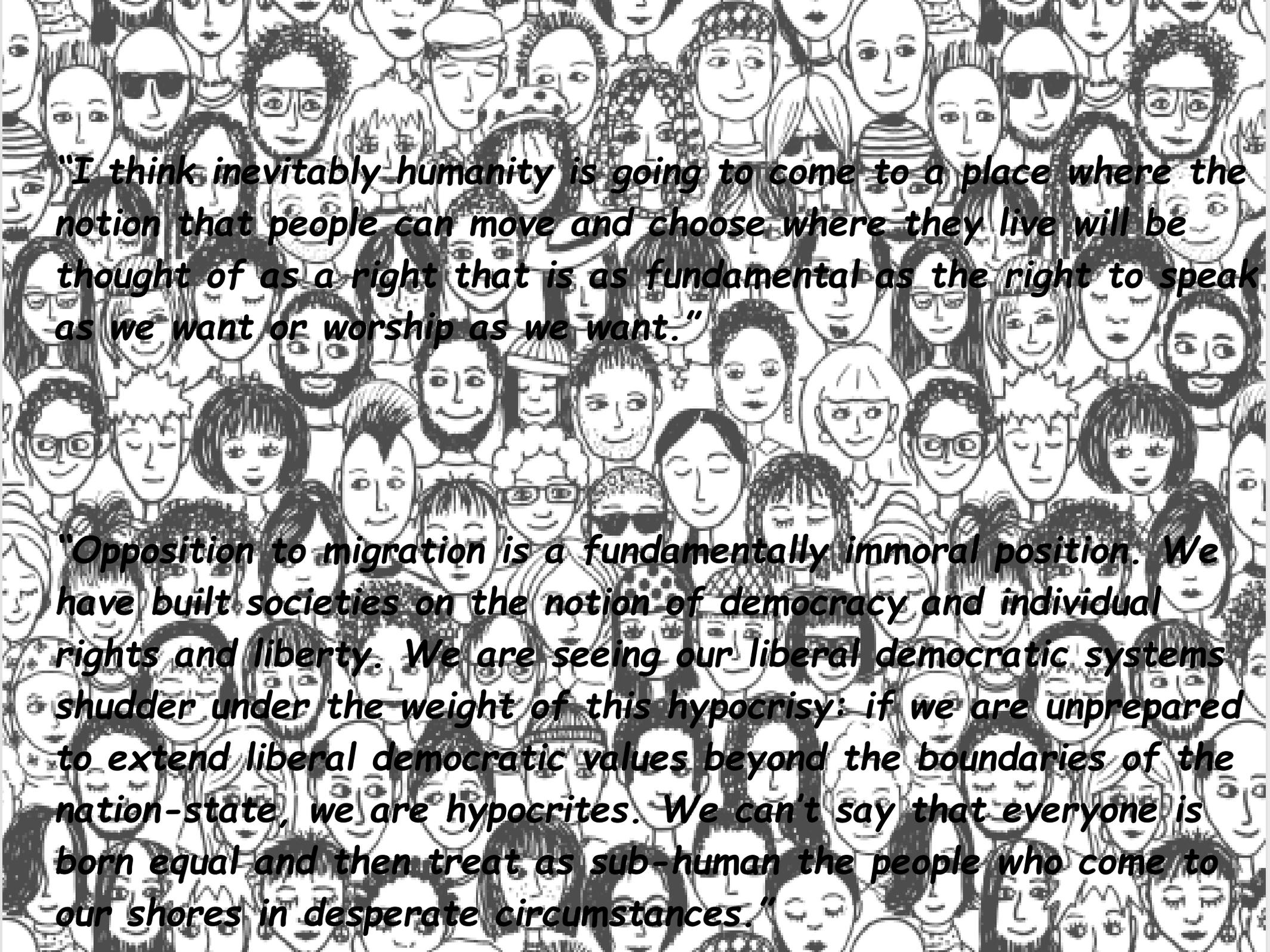
- **CHILDREN PROTECTION:** Charles Dickens has been a child-worker, and so most of his works deal with children's bad living condition in that time, and the indifference of a society that sees them only as profit (another example can be *Great Expectations*); Oliver, the protagonist, is an orphan, who is never treated with kindness; the adults (the society) want him just to work, to help the community to progress, and especially not to complain. When he asks for some food more, because of his terrible hunger, he is offered as an old doll to whoever wants to “buy” him.
- **LIFE CONDITION:** the Workhouses were theoretically meant to raise poor people's condition; actually, they were a way to focus all the people the richest didn't want to see, in the most little places possible. In Workhouses, conditions were terrible, people were given the least food possible not to starve, rooms were overcrowded and dirty, the habitants were treated as slaves, liberty wasn't an option. This is just those contexts reality, the streets were worse.

Lispeth

(by Rudyard Kipling)

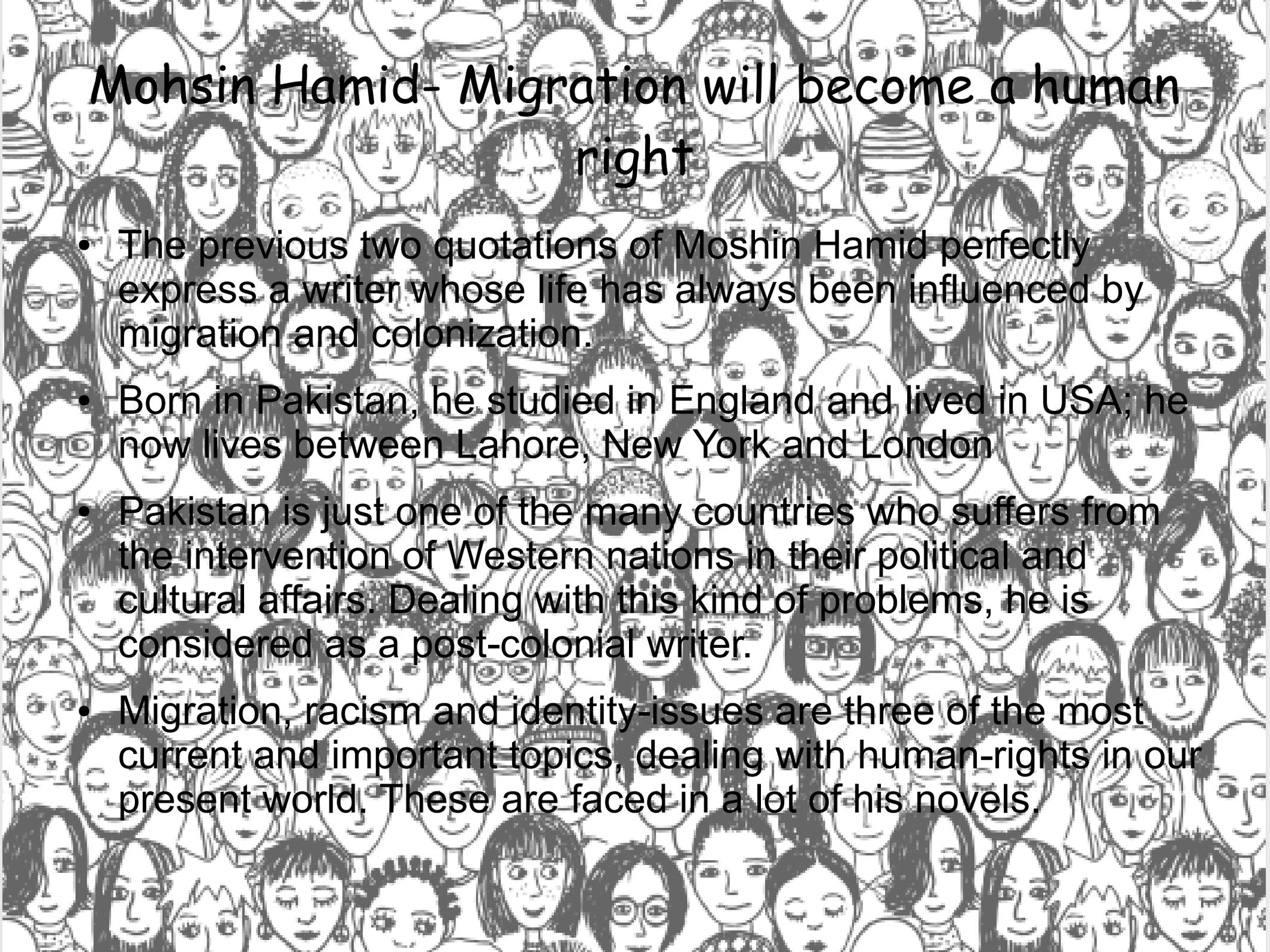
- This short story's protagonist, Lispeth, is a Sonoo (a Hill-woman of the Hymalayas) who is adopted by two Christian and British colonizers. Her life changes when she meets and saves a wounded English man, and falls in love with him. Her desire to marry him isn't tolerated by her “mother”, who deeply hates her, and neither by the man: anyway they decide to trick her, in order to avoid any problem. Lispeth's innocence and hope in European people vanish when she discovers the truth: she returns to live with the Hill-men, and changes drastically; her beauty and her determination are just a vague memory, her vision of the world is “capsized”.
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- **RIGHTS ENJOYED:** progress (partially)
- **RIGHTS IN CONFLICT:** marriage, respect

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- **PROGRESS:** colonizers do live in a totally better way than the colonized; Lispeth's parents wanted her to live a safer life (her name expresses their hope she would be a typical Christian, being Elisabeth the queen and the most excellent Christian form of life), and this, theoretically, was possible. Anyway, Lispeth's mentality was different than the English one: she didn't want to be a nurse or anything "genteel" as expected, she was too strong, lively, intelligent.
 - **MARRIAGE:** the point isn't if the English man wanted to marry her, but is what would have happened if only he had wanted. Being him of a higher social rank than her, they would have never been able to marry; obviously her will, being her a woman, would have never been listened.
 - **RESPECT:** this short-story is a clear critic against European Imperialism, more in the specific against the demeneator colonizers present. Their sense of superiority is evident in all the story; Lispeth is treated as a slave, her feelings are ignored with no respect, her identity is seen with suspect. Everytime she does something her English "responsible" didn't appreciate, her behaviour is associated to her "rude" roots. This lets the reader understand just one of the many bad sides of Colonialism, and "justifies" post-colonial issues.



"I think inevitably humanity is going to come to a place where the notion that people can move and choose where they live will be thought of as a right that is as fundamental as the right to speak as we want or worship as we want."

"Opposition to migration is a fundamentally immoral position. We have built societies on the notion of democracy and individual rights and liberty. We are seeing our liberal democratic systems shudder under the weight of this hypocrisy: if we are unprepared to extend liberal democratic values beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, we are hypocrites. We can't say that everyone is born equal and then treat as sub-human the people who come to our shores in desperate circumstances."



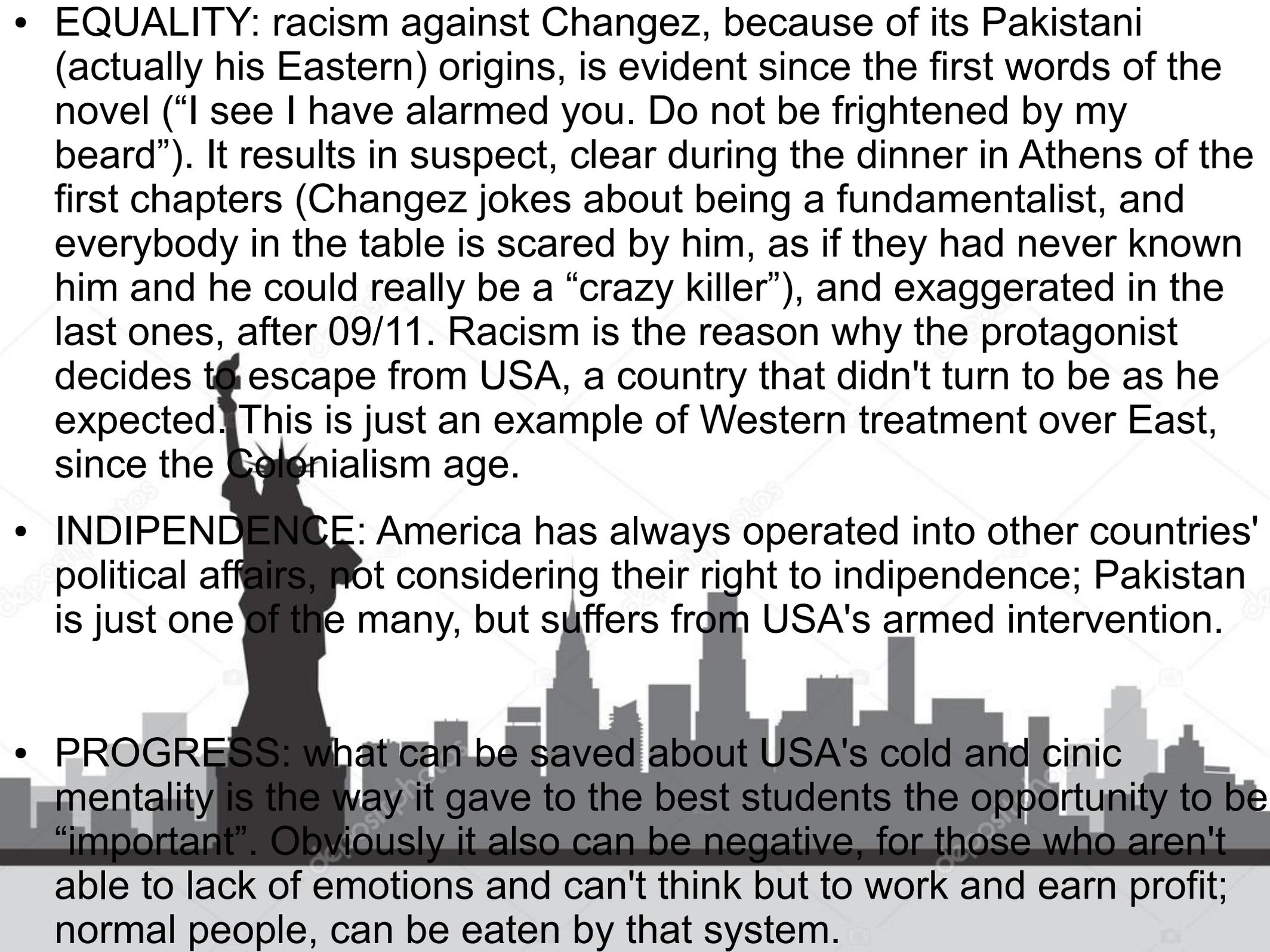
Mohsin Hamid- Migration will become a human right

- The previous two quotations of Moshin Hamid perfectly express a writer whose life has always been influenced by migration and colonization.
- Born in Pakistan, he studied in England and lived in USA; he now lives between Lahore, New York and London
- Pakistan is just one of the many countries who suffers from the intervention of Western nations in their political and cultural affairs. Dealing with this kind of problems, he is considered as a post-colonial writer.
- Migration, racism and identity-issues are three of the most current and important topics, dealing with human-rights in our present world. These are faced in a lot of his novels.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist

(by Mohsin Hamid)

- This post-colonial novel's story is told in first person by Changez, a young-Pakistani adult who meets an unnamed American man, and tells him his life in New York. The techniques used (as the dramatic monologue or the colloquial but very intuitive and ironic tone) converge to create an Eastern point of view of themes as Colonialism, Islamic Fundamentalism and American Dream, in order to surprise the reader, but always making him free to independently think, and collect their own conclusions.
- **RIGHTS ENJOYED:** Progress, Opportunity
- **RIGHTS IN CONFLICT:** Equality, Cultural and Political Independence

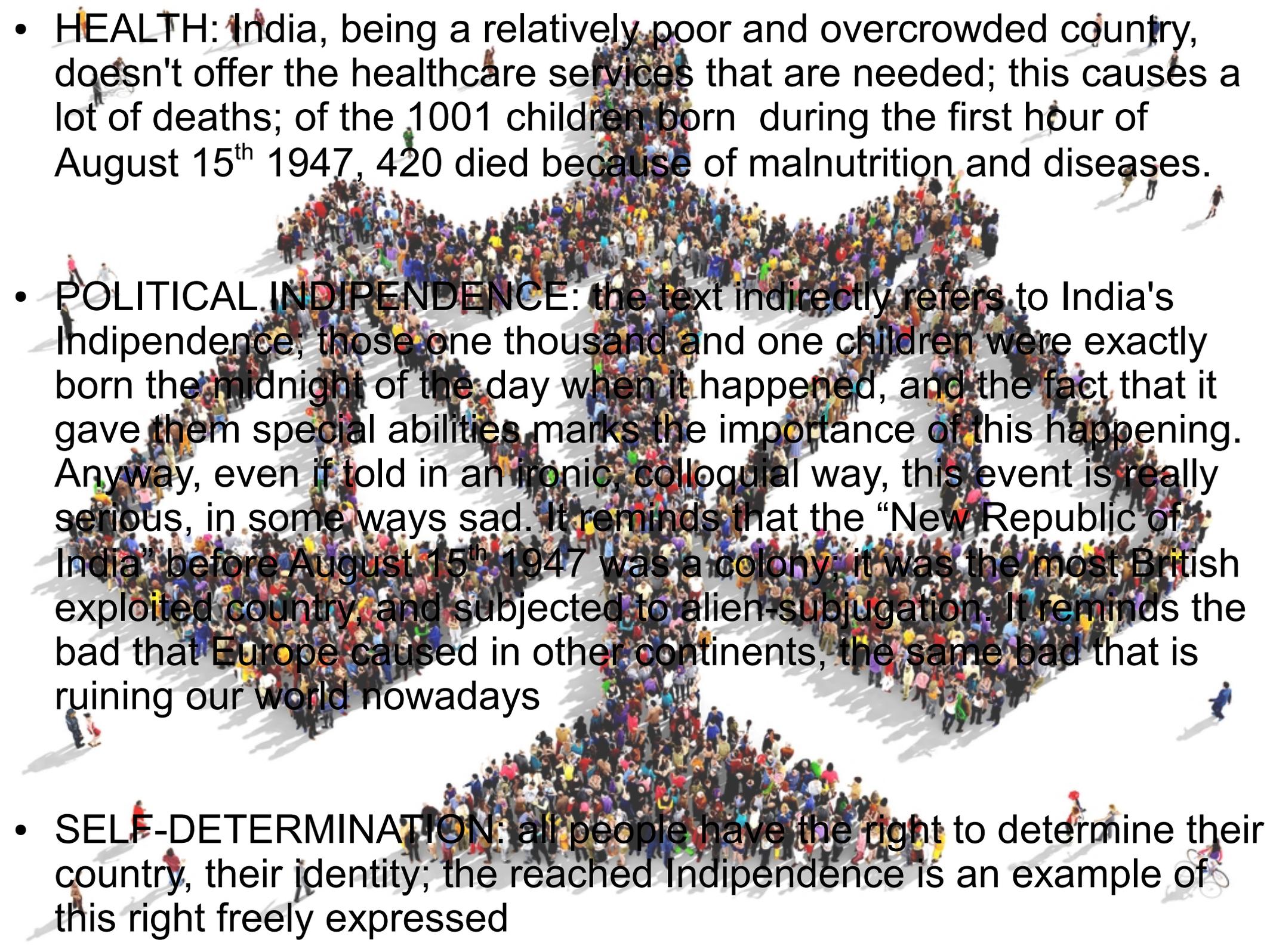
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- The background of the slide features a dark silhouette of the Statue of Liberty on the left side, with its right arm raised holding a torch. To the right of the statue is a silhouette of a city skyline with various skyscrapers of different heights and shapes. The overall background is a light, neutral color.
- **EQUALITY:** racism against Changez, because of its Pakistani (actually his Eastern) origins, is evident since the first words of the novel (“I see I have alarmed you. Do not be frightened by my beard”). It results in suspect, clear during the dinner in Athens of the first chapters (Changez jokes about being a fundamentalist, and everybody in the table is scared by him, as if they had never known him and he could really be a “crazy killer”), and exaggerated in the last ones, after 09/11. Racism is the reason why the protagonist decides to escape from USA, a country that didn't turn to be as he expected. This is just an example of Western treatment over East, since the Colonialism age.
 - **INDIPENDENCE:** America has always operated into other countries' political affairs, not considering their right to indipendence; Pakistan is just one of the many, but suffers from USA's armed intervention.
 - **PROGRESS:** what can be saved about USA's cold and cinic mentality is the way it gave to the best students the opportunity to be “important”. Obviously it also can be negative, for those who aren't able to lack of emotions and can't think but to work and earn profit; normal people, can be eaten by that system.

A large crowd of diverse people, including men, women, and children of various ethnicities, are arranged to form the shape of the number 12 on a white background. The crowd is dense and colorful, with many people wearing bright clothing. The number 12 is the central focus, with the '1' on the left and the '2' on the right. The people are standing on a white surface, and their shadows are cast on the ground. The overall scene is a vibrant and diverse representation of a large group of people.

Midnight's children

(by Salman Rushdie)

- Midnight's children is a postmodernist novel, that faces postcolonial themes, telling about the post-independence India; the background is unrealistic, and deals with a group of children born the same hour of the same day, and who all have some sort of “super-powers”
- RIGHTS ENJOYED: political independence
- RIGHTS IN CONFLICT: health

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- **HEALTH:** India, being a relatively poor and overcrowded country, doesn't offer the healthcare services that are needed; this causes a lot of deaths; of the 1001 children born during the first hour of August 15th 1947, 420 died because of malnutrition and diseases.
 - **POLITICAL INDIPENDENCE:** the text indirectly refers to India's Indipendence; those one thousand and one children were exactly born the midnight of the day when it happened, and the fact that it gave them special abilities marks the importance of this happening. Anyway, even if told in an ironic, colloquial way, this event is really serious, in some ways sad. It reminds that the “New Republic of India” before August 15th 1947 was a colony; it was the most British exploited country, and subjected to alien-subjugation. It reminds the bad that Europe caused in other continents, the same bad that is ruining our world nowadays
 - **SELF-DETERMINATION:** all people have the right to determine their country, their identity; the reached Indipendence is an example of this right freely expressed