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By JULIAN HUXLEY

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The vague term ‘race’ has been much misused in modern pseudo-scientific writings and nationalist propaganda. The meaning of the term is here discussed, and the theory of an ‘Aryan race’ is shown to be a myth. National types, the ‘Nordic’ theory, the Jewish question, and the advantages of race-mixture are among the other topics dealt with.

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'RACE' IN EUROPE

Nature and Origin of the Group-sentiment

Of all appeals to which human beings respond, few are as powerful as that of tribal, or—in a more advanced stage—of national feeling. Such sentiment is at the basis of life in the modern State. It is doubtless founded upon some form of the herd impulse, which receives satisfaction in social animals through the presence of other animals like themselves. In Man, however, this impulse, like other so-called 'instincts', is not simple and straightforward in operation. The likenesses upon which this 'consciousness of kind' is based are *inborn* in animals: but in Man they are very largely *acquired*, being the product of experience and social factors.

Very many human activities, aspirations, and emotions have contributed, either naturally or artificially, to build up the great synthesis that we term a 'nation'; language, religion, art, law, even food, gesture, table manners, clothing, and sport all play their part. So also does the sentiment of kinship, for the family has extended some of its age-old glamour to that wholly different and much newer aggregate, the 'national' unit. I would stress the contrast between family and nation, since the family is an ancient and biological factor, while the nationality is a modern conception and product, the result of certain peculiar social and economic circumstances. The family has been produced by Nature, the nation by Man himself.

Before the Renaissance, that is to say before the
fifteenth century, nations or national States in our sense of the word did not exist, though there were composite human aggregates related to the tribes of an earlier cultural stage. For the moment we will call the sentiment which holds tribes and nations together ‘group-sentiment’. To call it ‘racial’ is to beg a very important question which it is the purpose of this pamphlet to discuss. It is, however, clear that even in the pre-Renaissance stage group-sentiment was a complex thing, certain elements being derived from the idea of kinship, certain others from local feeling, from economic necessity, from history, from custom, or from religion.

The transference of the idea of kinship to the ‘group-sentiment’ of nations has been fateful for our civilization. For while the idea of kinship is one of the most primitive emotional stimuli, the sentiment which it arouses is also one of the most enduring. It is for this reason that the authors of moral and legal codes have frequently found it necessary to protect the State against aspects of group-sentiment which induced hostility to foreign elements. The Bible is full of allusions to such checks. ‘The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God’ (Leviticus xix. 34). ‘One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord’ (Numbers xv. 15). One of the most gracious parables of Jesus is devoted to the discussion of who is our neighbour (Luke x. 25–37), and the very basis of Christianity is the proclamation ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus’ (Galatians iii. 28).

Throughout the history of civilization the establishment and regulation of group-sentiment among those who are held together mainly by political bonds has been one of the chief aims of statecraft. To achieve this the idea of kinship has been pressed into ever wider service. It has been expanded beyond the family, to embrace the tribe, then the loosely knit federation of tribes, and finally the yet more extensive aggregate, the nation.

The Brotherhood of Mankind

When religions and philosophies have claimed and empires have sought to be universal, the idea of kinship has been extended beyond the limits of the nation-state. Prelates have been the shepherds of many flocks and commonwealths have become families of nations. In all ages law, reason, and religion alike have laid emphasis on the brotherhood of all mankind. It was an ancient philosopher-poet who said, ‘I am a man, and nothing that is human do I deem alien from myself’; and a murderer who yet earlier asked, ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’

But especially the common elements that all men share have been the theme of the great spiritual leaders. Malachi’s question ‘Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?’; the beautiful treatise on the love of God as inseparable from the love of our fellow men, known as the First Epistle General of John, and St. Paul’s assertion, ‘He
hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth’, have all been echoed by a myriad voices. The community of mankind is a sentiment which has particularly appealed to teachers. ‘The same sky covers us all, the same sun and stars revolve about us, and light us all in turn’, said the great Czech educator Comenius (1592–1671).

Of all studies the most universal is that which we call science, and with its advent in the seventeenth century the unity of mankind became especially emphasized. Such was the principle which the great French philospher Blaise Pascal (1623–62) detected in the continuity of research in the sciences. ‘The whole succession of men through the ages should be considered as one man, ever living and always learning.’

The Idea of Nationality

Mankind, however, has shown itself to be still unprepared to accept the idea of universal human brotherhood, and has often denied it most loudly when maintaining the universal fatherhood of God. Tribal, religious, and national sentiment have, time and again, overruled the sentiment for humanity. The idea of nationality has yielded as fruit that patriotism which has proved itself one of the strongest forces known to history, second perhaps only to religion. It is hardly necessary to emphasize the part played by patriotic sentiment in the moulding of Europe. The passionate desire for freedom from foreign domination—which we may note is very far from the desire for freedom itself, with which it is often confused—was one of the preponderating political factors of the nineteenth century. In Germany it broke the power of Napoleon and later created an empire; it freed Italy from the rule of Austria and made her a nation; it almost drove the Turk out of Europe and stimulated nationalist sentiments among the Greeks and among all the peoples of the Balkans. It has also been the main idea in the formation of the ‘succession states’ since the War of 1914–18.

All the movements towards national unity that were so characteristic of the nineteenth century present certain features in common. Among these we would note especially the rise of a myth, so similar in all these cases that we must suppose that it is a natural way of thinking for peoples in like circumstances. Among all the newer and almost all the older nationalities a state of freedom from external political domination has been fictitiously supposed to have existed in the past and has been associated with a hypothetical ancient unity, itself considered as derived from an imaginary common inheritance. The implications of this unity are usually left vague. A ‘nation’ has been cynically but not inaptly defined as ‘a society united by a common error as to its origin and a common aversion to its neighbours’.

The economic movements of the nineteenth century gave rise to unparalleled social and political dislocations. The resulting conflicts have by some been interpreted as originating from an incompatibility of ‘racial’ elements in the populations involved. But such incompatibility, if it be a reality, must have existed for many centuries in the
populations before these disturbances declared themselves. Such explanations therefore inevitably lead to an inquiry as to the extent to which the claims to ‘racial unity’, which are involved in recent nationalist controversy, have a basis in reality.

A further question necessarily arises in this connexion. Even if we assume that for any given national unit it were possible to establish a specific physical type—which it is not—would there be any evidence for the view that it were best that this type should be fostered and its survival encouraged to the exclusion of all other types? In coming to a conclusion we must remember that every people has ascribed to itself special powers and aptitudes. Such claims may, at times, assume the most ridiculous forms. There is not one but a multitude of ‘chosen peoples’. Some of the most sweeping claims made for the British, by Kipling for instance, are closely similar to the claims made for the tribes of Israel by the authors of certain Biblical books.

Truly ye come of The Blood; slower to bless than to ban. Little used to lie down at the bidding of any man.

There’s but one task for all
One life for each to give,
What stands if Freedom fall?
Who dies if England live?

With The White Man’s Burden may be compared the forty-ninth chapter of the book of Isaiah:

The Lord hath called me from the womb. . . . And he said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. . . . It is (too) light a thing thou shouldst . . . raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth.

. . . That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, show yourselves!

When, too, we read in Madison Grant’s The Passing of the Great Race that the greatest and most masterful personalities have been of Nordic type we can make a shrewd guess at its author’s general appearance! A flaw in his line of thought is that the very same claims are made by many groups that are by no means predominantly Nordic. Passages claiming leadership of the world can, in fact, be elicited in abundance from French, German, Italian, Russian, and American literature, to say nothing of the literatures of smaller groups. Nations, races, tribes, societies, classes, families—each and all claim for themselves their own peculiar, real, or imaginary excellences. This is a common human foible, but there are times and circumstances when it may become an epidemic and devastating disease.

The Meaning of ‘Race’

The term ‘race’ is freely employed in many kinds of literature, but investigation of the use of the word soon reveals that no exact meaning can be attached to it. The word ‘race’ is of Hebrew or Arabic origin, and entered the western languages late. It was originally used to denote descendants of a single sire, especially of animals. Later in English and French it became applied to human beings, as in the phrase ‘the race of Abraham’ in Foxe’s Book of Martyrs (1570 edition, the first occurrence in this sense in English) or in a spiritual sense the ‘race of Satan’ in Milton’s Paradise Lost (1667). The word
was not employed in the Authorized Version of the Bible, where it is represented by the words 'seed' or 'generation'.

The word 'race' soon acquired a vagueness that it has never since lost. This vagueness has given the word a special popularity with a group of writers who deal with scientific themes, though they themselves are without adequate scientific equipment. From such writers it has descended to the literature of more violent nationalism.

It is instructive to look up the word race in a good dictionary. The vagueness of its usage will at once become apparent. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines 'race' in general as:

'Group of persons or animals or plants connected by common descent, posterity of (person), house, family, tribe or nation regarded as of common stock, distinct ethnical stock (the Caucasian, Mongolian, &c., r.), genus or species or breed or variety of animals or plants, any great division of living creatures (the human, feathered, four-footed, finny, &c., r.); descent, kindred (of noble, Oriental, &c., r.; separate in language & r.); class of persons &c. with some common feature (the r. of poets, dandies, &c.).'

A word is often none the worse for being inexact in its usage; many words indeed are valuable for this very reason. But it is necessary, in dealing with scientific subjects, to distinguish carefully between the terms that we use in an exact sense and those which are valuable for their very vagueness. The word 'race', if it is to be used at all, should find its place in the latter class.

It has frequently been asserted that 'race' is of the essence of nationality, and sometimes 'race' and 'nation' have been used as almost interchangeable terms. So far has this gone that many nationals, if questioned, would reply that their compatriots were all of one 'race', with a proportion, more or less insignificant, of 'aliens', who, by some means or other, have acquired their national status. A very little reflection and knowledge will show that this view is untenable. The belief, however, survives in many quarters where it should have become extinct, sometimes with the idea of 'stock' substituted for 'race'. Our statesmen, who should know better, often speak of the 'British race', the 'German race', the 'Anglo-Saxon race', the 'Jewish race', &c. Such phrases are devoid of any scientific significance. The speakers should usually substitute some such word as 'people' or 'group' for the word 'race' if they desire to convey any meaning.

It was a remarkable consequence of the Great War that, perhaps for the first time in history, peace treaties were directed towards the revision of the political map on lines which aim at having a basis in so-called 'ethnic realities'. For this purpose the 'racial' argument was constantly put forward in terms of what, in the current phrase of the time, was called 'self-determination', with occasionally some regard for the rights of the so-called 'racial' (usually linguistic or cultural) minorities.

In the discussion which accompanied the settlement of the peace treaties there was inevitably much confusion of thought in regard to these so-called 'racial questions'. As an illustration of the lengths to which such confusion of thought may go, it may
be mentioned that in the discussion on the Polish Corridor it was even suggested as a means of finding the ‘racial’ affinities of the inhabitants of the area involved, that the question might be settled by consulting the voting lists of the last election!

‘Race’ and ‘Blood’

Associated with the vague idea of ‘race’ is the idea, almost equally vague, of ‘blood’. The use of this word as equivalent to ‘relationship’ is itself based on an elementary biological error. In fact there is no continuity of blood between the parent and offspring, for no drop of blood passes from the mother to the child in her womb. The misconception is very ancient and encountered among many peoples on a low cultural level. This false conception gained scientific currency from a mistake of Aristotle, who held that the monthly periods, which do not appear during pregnancy, contribute to the substance of the child’s body (Aristotle, De Generatione Animalium, I, § 20). The curious reader will find Aristotle’s error repeated in a work in the Apocrypha, The Wisdom of Solomon (vii. 2). The modern knowledge of the physiology and anatomy of pregnancy disposes completely of any idea of a ‘blood-tie’ or of ‘common blood’ in its literal sense. Such blood is not ‘thicker than water’. On the contrary, it is as tenuous as a ghost! It is non-existent. It is a phantasm of the mind.

But quite apart from this venerable misconception, and the widespread misunderstandings that arise from it, it is evident that the actual physical kinship, which is frequently claimed as ‘race feeling’,

must be fictitious. In many cases it is, in fact, demonstrably false even in the very simple and lowly forms of social organization. To speak of ‘kinship’ or ‘common blood’ for the populations of our great complex modern social systems is to talk mere nonsense.

We may take a familiar example of a lowly social organization from the Scottish clans. These, in theory, were local aggregates of families connected by kinship and each bound thereby to their chief. As an historical fact, however, these local units included settlers who came from other clans. This mixture of relationships would naturally, in time of crisis, entail a divided allegiance. Such a danger was overcome by the enforced adoption of the clan name. Thus when the MacGregors became a broken clan and the use of the name was forbidden, its members averted the evil consequences of their outlawry by adhesion to other clans. Rob Roy (1671–1734), the famous outlaw and chief of the Gregors, adopted his mother’s name of Campbell, and thus became an adherent of the Duke of Argyll.

Similarly in Ireland there was a system of wholesale inclusion of entire classes of strangers or slaves with their descendants into the clan or into its minor division, the sept. Those so adopted regularly and as a matter of course took the tribal name. In the exceedingly ancient ‘Brehon Laws’, which go back at least to the eighth century, there are regulations for the adoption of new families into the clan and even for the amalgamation of clans. Kinship, or rather what was treated as kinship, could thus actually be acquired. It could even be bought. A
number of legends of early Greece and Rome tell of similar clan fusions. Adoption into the tribe thus constantly becomes a fictitious blood-tie, and among many peoples of lower culture the ceremony of adoption is accompanied by actual physical interchange of blood. Many analogies in more advanced cultural units suggest themselves.

If a Scottish or Irish clan is of 'mixed blood', what likelihood is there of purity of descent among the millions that make up the population of any great modern nation? How can there be an 'Anglo-Saxon race', a 'German race', a 'French race', and still less a 'Latin race', or an 'Aryan race'? Historically, all the great modern nations are well known to be conglomerations and amalgamations of many tribes, and of many waves of immigration throughout the long periods of time that make up their history. This may be well seen in southern France, where in Provence the Greek colonies of Marseilles and elsewhere became, at a very early date, integral parts of the population of Gaul. More familiar examples are to be found in the population of the British Isles, which has been made up from scores of waves of immigrants from the third millennium B.C. until the present time. Britain has thus been a melting-pot for five thousand years! Among the more modern waves was that of the Huguenot refugees, who fled from France to the eastern counties of England, and formed five per cent. of the population of London after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the Flemish settlers who came at a somewhat earlier date to South Wales. Both have long ceased to be separate groups and those who number Huguenots and Flemings among their ancestors cannot be distinguished among the extremely complex mixture which forms the population of the country. In particular it may be stated that, from the earliest prehistoric times to our own, the wealthy and densely settled south-eastern part of England has been the recipient of wave on wave of immigration from the Continent. The existence of anything that can be called a 'race' under such conditions is mere fantasy.

The special form of group-sentiment that we call 'nationality', when submitted to analysis, thus proves to be based on something much broader but less definable than physical kinship. The occupation of a country within definite geographical boundaries, climatic conditions inducing a definite mode of life, traditions that gradually come to be shared in common, social institutions and organizations, common religious practices, even common trades or occupations—these are among the innumerable factors which have contributed in greater or less degree to the formation of national sentiment. Of very great importance is common language, strengthened by belief in a fictitious 'blood-tie'.

But among all the sentiments that nurture feelings of group unity, greater even than the imaginary tie of physical or even of historic relationship, is the reaction against outside interference. That, more than anything else, has fostered the development of group-consciousness. Pressure from without is probably the largest single factor in the process of national evolution.
'National Types'

It may, perhaps, be claimed that, even admitting the incorporation into the nation of many individuals of 'alien blood', it is nevertheless possible to recognize and differentiate the true 'stock' of a nation from the foreign. It is sometimes urged that the original stock represents the true national type, British, French, Italian, German, and the like, and that the members of that stock may readily be distinguished from the others. The use of the word or the idea of 'stock' in this connexion introduces a biological fallacy which we must briefly discuss.

Certainly, well-marked differences of 'national type' are recognized in popular judgement—we all know the comic paper caricature of the Frenchman, the German, &c.—but it is very remarkable how personal and variable are such judgements. Thus our German neighbours have ascribed to themselves a Teutonic type that is fair, long-headed, tall, slender, unemotional, brave, straightforward, gentle, and virile. Let us make a composite picture of a typical Teuton from the most prominent of the exponents of this view. Let him be physically as blond and mentally as unemotional as Hitler, physically as long-headed and mentally as direct as Rosenberg, as tall and truthful as Goebbels, as slender and gentle as Goering, and as manly and straightforward as Streicher. How much would he resemble the German ideal?

As for those so-called 'national types' that travellers and others claim to distinguish, we may say at once that individuals vary enormously in the results of their observations. To some resemblances, to others differences, make the stronger appeal. Between two observers attention will tend to be directed to entirely different characters in the same population. Furthermore, a general conclusion as to the character of any given population will depend on how far the material examined is what statisticians call a 'true random sample'.

A traveller who lands at Liverpool, and carefully explores the neighbourhood of the great industrial area by which that port is surrounded, would form a very different view of the bearing, the habits, the interests, the speech, in fine, of the general appearance of the population of England from one who landed at Southampton and investigated agricultural Hampshire. Both would obtain different results from one who landed in London, and all three from the painstaking investigator who undertook a tour of observation from Land's End to John o' Groats. Observations in Normandy or in Bayonne will give a very different impression of the French from those made in Provence, while a superficial anthropological observer from Mars who had landed in certain corners of North Wales might, for a time, easily imagine himself among a Mediterranean people, and even in some spots among a people of an older, 'palaeolithic' type. Samples of the mixed population of the United States, formed from peoples of the most varied origin, might give an even more distorted impression of the general social and material conditions of its inhabitants, if the observations were confined to the east side of New York, to the Scandinavian belt of the Middle West, to the Creole
population of New Orleans, or to the country districts of New England.

When, in fact, the differences which go to make up these commonly accepted distinctions between 'racial stocks' and nationalities are more strictly examined, it will be found that there is very little in them that has any close relation to the physical characters by which 'race' in the biological sense can be distinguished. It is more than probable that, so far as European populations are concerned, nothing in the nature of 'pure race' in the biological sense has had any real existence for many centuries or even millennia. Whether it has ever had, since the days when man first became man, is a problem which is still unsolved.

Nationality depends on Cultural, not Biological, Characteristics

In considering the characters of different nationalities it will generally be found that the distinctive qualities upon which stress is laid are cultural rather than physical and, when physical, they are very often physical characters that have been produced or influenced by climatic and cultural conditions. Stature is certainly in part a function of environment. Pigmentation—fairness or darkness—unless submitted to scientific record and analysis, is illusory. How many Englishmen could give an accurate estimate of the percentage of dark-complexioned or of short people in England?—which is in fact a country whose inhabitants are more often dark than fair, more often short than tall. Expression must obviously be determined largely by the content and habit of thought. Men's faces have, stamped upon them, the marks of their prevalent emotions and of those subjects on which they most often and most deeply think.

In point of actual fact, the most crucial factors on which most observers' judgement will depend will be dress and behaviour. In dress, the use, degree, and contrast of colour at once attract the eye. In behaviour, facial expression, gesture, and speech attract much attention. These, however, are cultural factors, the results of fashion, imitation, and education. It is true that attitude and movement and the use of the voice have physical bases. But it is, nevertheless, certain that in virtue of their patent transmission by imitation they must be regarded as mainly dependent upon a cultural inheritance. It is interesting to note that in Hitler's book *Mein Kampf*, his 'racial' characterizations and differentiations, more especially of the Jews, are based not on any biological concept of physical descent—as to the essential nature and meaning of which he exhibits complete ignorance—but almost entirely on social and cultural elements.

The Myth of an 'Aryan Race'

Apart from these general considerations, certain fallacies of unscientific 'racial' conceptions, and in particular the myth of an 'Aryan race', call for separate discussion.

In 1848 the young German scholar Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900) settled in Oxford, where
he remained for the rest of his life. The high character and great literary and philological gifts of Max Müller are well known. About 1853 he introduced into English usage the unlucky term *Aryan,* as applied to a large group of languages. His use of this Sanskrit word contains in itself two assumptions—one linguistic, that the Indo-Persian sub-group of language is older or more primitive than any of its relatives; the other geographical, that the cradle of the common ancestor of these languages was the Ariana of the ancients, in Central Asia. Of these the first is now known to be certainly erroneous and the second now regarded as probably erroneous. Nevertheless, around each of these two assumptions a whole library of literature has arisen.

Moreover, Max Müller threw another apple of discord. He introduced a proposition which is demonstrably false. He spoke not only of a definite Aryan language and its descendants, but also of a corresponding ‘Aryan race’. The idea was rapidly taken up both in Germany and in England. It affected to some extent a certain number of the nationalist historical and romantic writers, none of whom had any ethnological training. It was given especial currency by the French author de Gobineau (see p. 24). Of the English group it will be enough to recall some of the ablest, Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), J. A. Froude (1818–94), Charles Kingsley (1819–75), and J. R. Green (1837–83). What these men have written on the subject has been cast by historians into the limbo of discarded and discredited theories.

In England and America the phrase ‘Aryan race’ has quite ceased to be used by writers with scientific knowledge, though it appears occasionally in political and propagandist literature. A foreign secretary recently blundered into using it. In Germany the idea of an ‘Aryan’ race received no more scientific support than in England. Nevertheless, it found able and very persistent literary advocates who made it appear very flattering to local vanity. It therefore steadily spread, fostered by special conditions.

Max Müller himself was later convinced by scientific friends of the enormity of his error and he did his very best to make amends. Thus in 1888 he wrote:

I have declared again and again that if I say Aryas, I mean neither blood nor bones, nor hair, nor skull; I mean simply those who speak an Aryan language. . . . When I speak of them I commit myself to no anatomical characteristics. The blue-eyed and fair-haired Scandinavians may have been conquerors or conquered. They may have adopted the language of their darker lords or vice-versa. . . . To me an ethnologist who speaks of Aryan race, Aryan blood, Aryan eyes and hair, is as great a sinner as a linguist who speaks of a dolichocephalic dictionary or a brachycephalic grammar.

Max Müller frequently repeated his protest, but alas! ‘the evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones’! Who does not wish to have had noble ancestors? The belief in an

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1 The word *Aryan* was first used quite correctly by Sir William Jones (1746–94) as a name for the speakers of a group of Indian languages.
‘Aryan’ race had become accepted by philologists, who knew nothing of science—and the word was freely used by writers who claimed to treat of science though they had no technical training and no clear idea of the biological meaning to be attached to the word ‘race’. The influence of the untenable idea of an ‘Aryan race’ vitiates all German writings on anthropology which are now allowed to appear. If the term ‘Aryan’ is given a racial meaning at all, it should be applied to that tribal unit, whatever it was, that first spoke a language distinguishable as Aryan. Of the physical characters of that hypothetical unit it is the simple truth to say that we know nothing whatever. As regards the locality where this language was first spoken, the only tolerably certain statement that can be made is that it was somewhere in Asia and was not in Europe. It is thus absurd to distinguish between ‘non-Aryans’ and ‘Europeans’.

There is no need to trace in detail the history of the Aryan controversy. It will be enough to say that while the Germans claimed that these mythical Aryans were tall, fair, and long-headed—the hypothetical ancestors of hypothetical early Teutons—the French claimed that the Aryan language and the Aryan civilization came into Europe with the Alpines (Eurasiatics), who are of medium build, rather dark, and broad-headed. The decipherment of the language of the very ‘Jewish’-looking Hittites—which was certainly Aryan—and the discovery of certain Aryan languages in North-West India throws a new complexion on the whole question of the origin of the Aryan languages.

Both the German and the French views cannot be entirely true, but both may be partially or entirely erroneous. In so far as the cultural origins of our civilization can be associated with any particular physical type, it must be linked neither with the Nördic nor the Eurasiotic, but rather with the Mediterranean. As regards the general physical measurements of the existing population of central Europe, the prevailing physical type is Eurasiotic rather than either Nördic or Mediterranean.

The Jews

A consideration of this ‘Aryan fallacy’ leads us to two so-called ‘race problems’ which are of immediate political importance—the Nördic and the Jewish. Beginning with the latter, we find that the Jewish problem is far less a ‘racial’ than a cultural one. Jews are no more a distinct sharply marked ‘race’ than are German or English. The Jews of the Bible were of mixed descent. During their dispersal they have interbred with the surrounding populations, so that a number of hereditary elements derived from the immigrant Jews are scattered through the general population, and the Jewish communities have come to resemble the local population in many particulars. In this way Jews of Africa, of eastern Europe, of Spain and Portugal, and so on, have become markedly different from each other in physical type. What they have preserved and transmitted is not ‘racial qualities’ but religious and social traditions. Jews do not constitute a race, but a society with a strong religious basis and peculiar historic traditions, parts of which society
have been forced by segregation and external pressure into forming a pseudo-national group. Biologically it is almost as illegitimate to speak of a ‘Jewish race’ as of an ‘Aryan race’.

**The Nordic Theory**

The Nordic theory, which is a development of the ‘Aryan fallacy’, is in another category. Instead of ascribing racial qualities to a group which is to-day held together on a cultural basis, it takes an hypothetical past ‘race’, ascribes to it a number of valuable qualities, notably initiative and leadership, and then, whenever it finds such qualities in the mixed national groups, ascribes them to the Nordic elements in the population. It then proceeds farther and sets up, as a national ideal, a return to purity of stock of a Nordic ‘race’ the very existence of which is unproved and probably unprovable.

The real source of all these modern ideas of the innate inferiority of certain ‘races’ is the work of the French Count Joseph de Gobineau (1816–82), *Essai sur l’inegalite des races humaines* (1853–5). It is essentially a plea for ‘national’ history. He advocated especially the superiority of the so-called ‘Aryan races’ (see p. 20). The idea was carried to the most ridiculous lengths in the work of his countryman Lapouge, *L’Aryen* (1899), in which the ‘Aryans’ were identified with the ‘Nordic race’. This ridiculous Nordic-Aryan theory, launched by French writers, was eagerly developed in Germany and linked with anti-Jewish propaganda. In the beginning of the present century the East Prussian Gustav Kossinna took up the idea, applied it to prehistoric archaeology, and claimed to make German prehistory—to use his own words—‘a pre-eminently national science’. His naive object was to show that throughout the prehistoric ages advances in culture had been entirely due to peoples whom he identified with the Nordic, Germanic, or ‘Aryan’ peoples, these terms being regarded as interchangeable, though including not merely Germans but also Scandinavians. The ‘Aryan’ cradle was conveniently located in the north-European forest about the Baltic and North Sea coasts.

This theory is scientifically quite untenable on many grounds. Thus, to take a single point, the earliest of the rough stone monuments (of which Stonehenge is a late and highly developed example, c. 1700–1600 B.C.) go back, even in England, at least as far as 3000 B.C. The culture that they represent spread from the Mediterranean to the Iberian peninsula and thence through France into Britain and beyond to north Germany and Scandinavia. Yet these monuments, involving high enterprise, considered design, and complex social organization, were produced by a people devoid of metal implements and quite certainly not of ‘Nordic’ origin. The skulls from the early English burials associated with these monuments are, in fact, usually stated to be of ‘Mediterranean’ type.

Nevertheless, the Nordic theory speedily became very popular in Germany. It made a special appeal to national vanity and was made the basis of propaganda in the pseudo-scientific writings of the Germanized Englishman Houston Stewart Chamberlain and others in Germany, and of Madison...
Grant and others in America. Hitler—himself anything but Nordic—is completely obsessed by this fantastic theory. Among the absurdities connected with the development of the theory it is perhaps sufficient to mention that Jesus Christ and Dante have been turned into ‘good Teutons’ by German writers. The ‘Nordic theory’ has had a very great effect, not only in serving as a basis for the ‘Aryan’ and anti-Jewish doctrines upon which the Nazi régime is now being conducted, but also as the inspiring influence in a great deal of political agitation which claimed superiority for the ‘Nordic’ in the discussion of legislation determining the recent revision of the immigration laws in the United States.

The facts of the case are as follows. The ‘Nordic race’, like other human races, has no present existence. Its former existence, like that of all ‘pure races’, is hypothetical. There does, however, exist a Nordic type. This occurs with only a moderate degree of mixture in certain limited areas of Scandinavia, and is also to be found, though very much mixed with other types (so that all intermediates and recombinations occur), in northern Europe from Britain to Russia, with pockets here and there in other countries. On various grounds we can be reasonably sure that this distribution is the result of the invasion of Europe by a group largely composed of men of this type—perhaps in the degree of purity in which the type is now found in limited areas of Scandinavia. This group in its original form was probably the nearest approach to a ‘Nordic race’. It is not certain where it originated or when its important migration took place. Several authorities believe that it came originally from the steppes of southern Russia.

The contentions which ascribe to the ‘Nordic race’ most of the great advances of mankind during recorded history appear to be based on nothing more serious than self-interest and wish-fulfilment. In the first place, it is quite certain that the great steps in civilization, when man learned to plough, to write, to build stone houses, to transport goods in wheeled vehicles, were first taken in the Near East, by peoples who by no stretch of imagination could be called Nordic, but who seem in point of fact to have consisted largely of men of the dark, ‘Mediterranean’ type. Secondly, it is true that great advances in civilization have sometimes been observed in history when invaders of a relatively light-skinned type have irrupted into countries populated by other groups—notably in Greece, though here round-headed as well as long-headed elements were included in the invaders. But in such cases, both types appear to have made their contribution, and the result can best be ascribed to the vivifying effects of mixture and culture-contact. Indeed, where the Nordic type is most prevalent, in Scandinavia, there is no evidence of any ancient civilization having been attained at all comparable to that of the Near East, North Africa, India, China, the Mediterranean, or the Aegean. In more modern times the greatest achievements of civilization have occurred in regions of the greatest mixtures of types—Italy, France, Britain, and Germany, to mention only four nations. In all these countries
of 'mixed races' it is rare to find pure Nordic types. The great bulk of the population will contain hereditary elements derived from many original sources. In the highly complex populations of Britain or Germany the pure Nordic type, if it ever existed, is quite irrecoverable, for the population as a whole is an inextricable mixture. The Nordic type may be held up as an object of policy or propaganda, but this ideal is genetically quite unattainable, and will not affect the biological realities of the situation.

Furthermore, when we look into the facts of history, we find it far from true that men of pure or even approximately Nordic type have been the great leaders of thought or action. The great explorers of Britain displayed initiative, but hardly one of them was physically of Nordic type: the majority of the most celebrated Germans, including Goethe, Beethoven, and Kant, were medium or round-headed, not long-headed as the Nordic type should be. Napoleon, Shakespeare, Einstein, Galileo—a dozen great names spring to mind which in themselves should be enough to disperse the Nordic myth. The word myth is used advisedly, since this belief frequently plays a semi-religious role, as basis for a creed of passionate racialism.

'Race-mixture' is Beneficial

From what has been said, it will be clear that 'race-mixture' has in the past been beneficial. The British contain strong Nordic and Eurasian elements, with a definite admixture of Mediterranean types. In the Germans there is a very large Eurasian element which includes the Slavonic, while hereditary elements from the Mongoloid peoples have crept in via Russia. Jews entered Germany in the first Christian centuries—long before many of the German tribes had emerged from what is now Russia—and it is quite possible that every man who to-day calls himself a German had some Jewish ancestors. In France the population is largely Alpine, especially in the centre, but there is a strong Nordic admixture in the north and a prevailing Mediterranean element in the south. The Jews are of mixed origin, and have steadily been growing more mixed. America is proverbially a melting-pot. The Japanese are also a mixture of several ethnic types. India is as much a product of repeated immigration as Britain, and so on throughout the peoples of the earth.

In Germany to-day, in order to establish 'Aryan blood', a man must present a pedigree clear of 'non-Aryan', i.e. Jewish, elements for several generations back. The enormous number of cases in which one parent or grandparent or great-grandparent of the most thoroughly 'German' citizens has proved to be Jewish shows how impossible it is to secure a 'pure Nordic stock'. Once more, indeed, the social and cultural plane is the more important. Germany has benefited a great deal from her Jewish elements—we need only think of Heine, Haber, Mendelssohn, Einstein. But during the economic depression the competition of Jews in the professions, in finance, and in retail trade was proving embarrassing, and in the revolution it was convenient to treat the Jews as a collective scapegoat,
who could be blamed for mistakes, and on whom might be vented the anger that must be restrained against external enemies.

It is instructive to compare the treatment of the Jews in Germany with that of the ‘Kulaks’ (that is, well-to-do peasants) in Russia. The Kulaks, by standing in the way of rural collectivization, were an obstacle to the Government’s economic plans: they also provided a convenient scapegoat for any mistakes and failures that might occur. Their persecution was as horrifying as that of the Jews. But, at least, it was not justified on false grounds of mysticism or pseudo-science. Their existence obstructed something which was of the essence of Communist planning, and they had to submit or be killed or expelled. The Jews could not even submit; because a false ideal of race had been erected to cloak the economic and psychological motives of the régime: they could only suffer at home, while some few have succeeded in going into exile abroad.

Culture, not ‘race’, is, again, the crux of the American problem. The danger was that the American tradition might not suffice to absorb the vast body of alien ideas pouring into the country with the immigrant hosts, that the national melting-pot might fail to perform its office, and might crack or explode. When immigrants came in small numbers they could be and were absorbed, from whatever part of Europe they chanced to hail, and in at most two generations they became an integral part of the American nation. Their Alpine or Mediterranean elements stood in the way of the process no more than their previous Czech or Italian nationality. It was the size of the blocks of alien culture to be assimilated which constituted the problem.

Racialism is a Myth

So long as nationalist ideas, even in modified form, continue to dominate the world scene, the large-scale segregation of areas, each developing its own general type of culture, may be the policy to pursue. If unrestricted immigration seems likely to upset such a policy, restriction is justifiable, as with Asiatic races in Australia and the United States. But do not let us in such cases make it a question of ‘race’, or become mystical on the subject, or justify ourselves on false biological grounds.

The violent racialism to be found in Europe today is a symptom of Europe’s exaggerated nationalism: it is an attempt to justify nationalism on a non-nationalist basis, to find a basis in science for ideas and policies which are generated internally by a particular economic and political system, have real relevance only in reference to that system, and have nothing to do with science. The cure for the racial mythology, with its accompanying self-exaltation and persecution, which now besets Europe is a reorientation of the nationalist ideal, and, in the practical sphere, an abandonment of claims by nations to absolute sovereign rights. Science and the scientific spirit are in duty bound to point out the biological realities of the ethnic situation, and to refuse to lend sanction to the ‘racial’ absurdities and the ‘racial’ horrors perpetrated in the name of science. Racialism is a myth, and a dangerous myth. It is a cloak for selfish economic aims which in
their uncloaked nakedness would look ugly enough. And it is not scientifically grounded. The essence of science is the appeal to fact, and all the facts are against the existence in modern Europe of anything in the nature of separate human 'races'.
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