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Race obsession; nationalism, 1943.

✓ Pseudo-scientific propaganda for racial imperialism is widespread in the world today. The doctrine of racial superiority was used as a cover for the vicious motives of the last war. It has always been a blind for economic imperialism. The people in the South used it as an excuse for exploiting the colored man and for denying him his elementary human rights and his legitimate opportunities.

✓ It has again been invoked in present day Germany, as a camouflage for economic reaction, as inflammable propaganda material for the purposes of political incitement and stampede, to achieve certain objectives which calm reason would fail to achieve, and as compensation for all the rights and liberties which a Fascist Dictatorship takes away from the citizens of a country.

✓ Some peoples which have a large element of mysticism in their make-up are particularly addicted to race idolatry. Mysticism is at bottom religious romanticism and romanticism is essentially an historic throw-back, a hankering after older forms of social life and organization, a retroversion to herd mores, folkways and myths, to what is thought to be the protoplasmic racial soul. A hundred years ago Heinrich Heine called attention to this recurrent manifestation of mysticism and romanticism among the German people. In the Naziism, the German mass is again manifesting these strong mystic, primitivist and collectivist tendencies. Race has again surged to the forefront of popular interest. *obsession.*

In this economically-motivated race propaganda the possessor of blond hair, blue eyes and long head, the Nordic, is taught to look upon himself as the salt of the earth. His race is creative. His race is superior. The dark-haired, dark-eyed and round-headed man, the Mediterranean or Alpine, not to mention the Asiatic, is inferior. His race is mongrel. It can never rise to leadership. Therefore the Nordic race ought by right to be the dominant race of leaders, rulers and masters.

There is, of course, no pure race in the world. "It is curious," writes

Dr. Maurice Fishberg, "that the Germans have appointed themselves as the only people of true Nordic, hence noble, race, destined to rescue European civilization, despite the fact that Scandinavia and England, nay even Ireland, have a higher proportion of people of this coveted breed. With a view to preventing the elucidation of this point, the German authorities have never permitted an investigation of the racial composition of its population. It is distinctly prohibited to take anthropological observations and measurements in the German Army, the best group of men on whom reliable researches as to race composition of a population can be made under present conditions. The origin of this prohibition dates back to the Franco-Prussian War sixty-four years ago. While the Germans were bombarding Paris some shells hit the Museum of Natural History, of which the eminent anthropologist Quatrefages was the director. Indignant at the destructiveness of the Prussians, Quatrefages wrote a pamphlet "La Race Prussienne" and several articles in the "Revue des Deux Mondes," in which he was satisfied that he proved that the Prussians were not at all Teutonic in race, but were descended from the Finns, whom he classed with the Lapps, alien Mongoloid intruders into Europe. They were thus barbarians with an innate hatred for culture, which they could not appreciate....

"The Germans were very much offended when one of Quatrefages' eminence in anthropology brought it out clearly. It was then suggested that investigations should be inaugurated with a view to proving that the Prussians are unadulterated Aryans, or Nordics, as they are now called. Virchow, with patriotic fervor, obtained permission to take a census of the color of the hair and eyes of the school children of the Empire. To begin with, there was a trick to these investigations. Why were not adults investigated, especially in the army, where they were available? The reason is clear. Measurements of adults would have brought strong support to Quatrefages' charges. Inasmuch as their aim was to

prove that the population is blond, and among children the porportion of fair haired is much higher than among adults, it was thought that these investigations would prove their point.....And what was found by Virchow in his investigations of the school children of Germany? He found that only 32 per cent of the children were of the glorified blond type; 14 per cent of the brunette type and 54 per cent were altogether of what anthropologists call mexed type, or of mongrel origin, as some of the German pseudo-scientists like to refer to individuals who are not altogether of the ideal racial type. It is noteworthy that in the north of Germany the proportion of blond children was not much higher -- 34 per cent. In other words, in a country where efforts are made to glorify the true Aryan type, and the Realpolitik aims at exterminating all others, especially mongrel types, the Nazi "race culturists" have to start with two out of three being of ignoble race or altogether mongrel; or "bastard" as Professor Eugene Fischer the official Nazi anthropologist, calls mixed human types.

"Archeologists have found ample evidence to the effect that prior to the advent of the Teuton population in the northern regions of Germany, the population consisted mainly of Slavs, and they were preceded by the Finns, who were Mongols,.. It is noteworthy that most of the creative genius in Germany comes from the regions inhabited by the Swabians and the Franks who have round heads, while Pomerania and Mecklenburg, which have a very large proportion of long-headed blonds, are practically devoid of high talent. It appears that the greatest men in Germany have been in fact largely brunettes and had round heads; they were lacking in the traits which are glorified by the race maniacs....

"A curious feature of the whole Nazi race discrimination is that its leader, its deity, is a brunette with Slavonic features; not at all of the Teutonic, or Nordic race; so are his most active collaborators in his efforts to rid Germany of all non-Aryan race elements.

Anyone who has even a smattering of history knows that all through the dark centuries following the collapse of the Roman Empire, Europe was a veritable stamping ground of peoples, tribes and races, who moved to and fro across its face in vast migrations, mingled and co-mingled, and mixed their bloods with the indigenous populations, so that today there is not one people in Europe which can rightly claim racial homogeneity. And archaeology has established that in pre-historic times the processes of racial fusion were equally operative. The term "Aryan" as applied to race is a misnomer. Professor Max Muller, who invented the term "Aryan" as designating a linguistic group declared: "To me, an ethnologist who speaks of an 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. It is worse than a Babylonian confusion of tongues -- it is downright theft."

Again there are no superior races. There are no races endowed by nature with superior qualities of mind or character. There are races more favored than others by circumstance, by environment, by geographic position, by the fertility of the soil or by the treasures underneath the soil. There are advanced races and backward races but no superior races. There are differences between races but no biologic gradations.

The vaunted superiority of the peoples of Northwestern Europe is of very recent date and is due largely to the shifting of the lanes of commerce from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, and to the rich deposits of coal and iron found in their mountains. If these races had possessed superior natural endowments, they would have evolved the first civilization of mankind instead of the last. They would have been civilized long before the Chinese were civilized or the Babylonians or the Egyptians, or the Greeks or the Romans or the Arabs. Actually they were barbarians when these people were evolving great civilizations and carving highways for human progress.

Up the the fourteenth century the Prussians were heathens and barbarians. They were not even Christianized. Up the twelfth century England, as far as civilization was concerned, was practically unknown. England and Scandinavia and Northern France and the Netherlands and Germany were up to the last millennium, as far as human progress was concerned, negligible. They need not have existed at all. These "superior" peoples were utterly unknown when Greece -- a Mediterranean people of Oriental admixture -- was blessing mankind with a galaxy of poets, philosophers and artists whose gifts remain to this day unmatched for excellence by any Nordic people. They were unknown when a little Asiatic people, the Jews, was evolving a God-idea which is today the cherished faith of two-thirds of mankind. They were practically unknown to civilization when the Arabs were building universities in Cairo, Cordova and Bagdad. Nearly all that northern Europe has today of art, literature and religion, -- of the essential values of social life -- have come to it from Asiatic and Mediterranean peoples. It is therefore supreme arrogance for any one racial group to regard itself as the sole creator and monitor of civilization.

Furthermore, no race remains permanently dominant. No race retains a position of supremacy for more than four or five centuries. Races are like individuals. The individual has his period of infancy and of adolescence. Then comes his period of maturity when he is able to give expression to his powers and to make his substantial contributions to society. Finally and inevitably old age sets in and senility. No individual, however brilliant, can resist the weariness and the exhaustion which comes with age. Neither can any race. Races too have their periods of infancy and early development. Then comes their short golden age of maturity when they fashion out of the genius which is theirs those gifts which become their legacies to mankind. And then the reaction sets in, -- intellectual and spiritual exhaustion. The race

goes to seed. Five hundred or even a thousand years may elapse before the race will experience a new ferment and stir, before it will begin to forge its way anew to another cycle of creative life.

Again, as Professor Franz Boas has declared: "It is incorrect to assume that all the members of a racial group possess uniform characteristics because they are similar in some respects. All people who are blonde and have blue eyes have not the same characteristics and there is no reason to give inordinate weight to this single feature....The whole concept of race lacks ~~the~~ in clarity, and a great error is committed in assuming that people who look alike in some respects must be alike in all respects.....A good many indications show that differences are determined more by environment than by racial descent."

And finally, genius is the monopoly of no one race, and civilization is the achievement of no one people. Dr. Paul Radin in his recent work, "The Racial Myth," wisely remarks: "In terms of a generation, we may, at times, get the impression that ability is confined to a specific corner of the earth and to a specific people. When the time unit, however, is lengthened to two generations, doubt begins to arise; and when it is further lengthened to a century, our initial impression proves to be completely incorrect. Then it is borne in upon us that Europe is an indivisible cultural unit; that race, nationality, language and religion, and social status are secondary. The Catholic agnostic Laplace is found side by side with the Protestant agnostic Kant and the devout Protestant sectarian Faraday with the devout Catholic Pasteur; the history of the theory of relativity passes in continuous procession from the Russian Lobatchewsky to the Hungarian Bolyai, the German Riemann, the Russian Jew Minkowski, and the South German Jew Einstein; wireless telegraphy begins experimentally with the Englishman Faraday, is given mathematical expression by the Scotchman Clerk

Maxwell, proved experimentally by the German Jew Hertz, and obtains practical application by the Italian Marconi."

✓ Racial conceits and pretensions are ripe in the world today and as long as these race mythologies and blood cults persist so long will races not meet, and world unity will remain, as heretofore, an unrealized dream.

✓ There is far more race idolatry in the world today than ever before in the history of mankind. There was no color line in antiquity. The Greeks were conscious of their cultural superiority but they did not attribute it to biology. They claimed excellency on the basis of their civilization, not their blood. The Romans were splendid racial cosmopolites. Roman citizenship was not restricted to any one racial group within the far-flung empire. The Jew was proud not of his race but of his religion, and the proselyte to the faith was welcomed into the life of the race. The Jews regarded themselves as the chosen people not because of their racial traits, but because of having been selected to be the servants of Jahweh to carry His moral law to the world. They were a covenanted people, a kingdom not of supermen, but of priests... Their prophets kept them from excessive pride by reminding them:

"Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me

"O children of Israel? saith the Lord.

"Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt

"And the Philistines from Caphtor

"And Aram from Kir?"

Jahweh was the God of all nations. Israel's prerogative lay only in arduous moral and religious pioneering. When that ceased, when Israel no longer wished to bear the burden of religious leadership, it knew itself to be rejected of God.

✓ The Jew refused to inter-marry not on the ground that the resultant racial

admixture would produce an inferior type, less gifted artists, scientists, or musicians. There was but one reason throughout the ages: "Lest he will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other Gods." The Jew persisted in racial uniqueness in order to preserve the integrity of his faith. The heathen who was a scholar was held in far Higher repute by the rabbis than an ignorant High Priest who could trace his descent from Aaron himself. "God created only one Adam," declared a Rabbi, "in order that in future times no man shall be warranted in saying: I came from better stock than you do." And another Rabbi declared, "I call heaven and earth to witness, be he man or woman, young or old, rich or poor, Jew or non-Jew, according to his deserts will the spirit of God descent upon him." In its highest ethical ranges, the law of Israel drew no line of distinction between native and foreigner. "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But 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."

✓ Christianity, of course, took over the prophetic, universalistic from concept of Judaism, emphasized it, enlarged upon it, and carried it to the far corners of the earth. "The God that made the world and all nations therein, he being Lord of Heaven and earth.....made of one blood (ἐξ ἑνὸς γένους) every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." The organic racial oneness of the whole human family is nowhere in the Bible more clearly and forcibly enunciated. And again: "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him." The entire concept of race which is fatalistic and exclusive is subordinated to the concept of faith which is volitional and all-inclusive "And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." (Gal. 3.29).

✓ It is therefore no accident that Nazi racialists have been led to a repudiation of both the Old and the New Testaments and are invoking anew the dethroned tribal Gods of primitive heathen Germany. And it is no accident either that the great Christian leaders of present-day Germany have clearly seen the menace in atavistic Nazi racialism to the spirit and mission of their historic faith.

✓ The Middle Ages knew very little of that racial chauvinism which is so rampant in our day; There was no talk of race purity in the Middle Ages. It was with the rise of nationalism and of colonial imperialism among the Northwestern European peoples, particularly during the last century, and the consequent exploitation of the backward races that the necessity arose of finding some ideologic justification for such exploitation. It soon appeared in the form of pseudo-scientific theories of race superiority. These theories gained prestige and popularity as the European nations proceeded to conquer, subject and despoil backward peoples. Some apologists even employed High Church terminology such as "bearing the White Man's burden" to savor the miserable mess of imperialistic pottage by means of which European peoples robbed other races of their birthright of freedom. The "White Man's burden" became the black man's curse and the brown man's and the yellow man's.

✓ Modern nationalism has fallen under the blight of this race idolatry, particularly among a people like the Germans who are not empire-builders and therefore politically provincial and among whom ~~national~~ national unity is a quite recent achievement and hence still a matter of hallelujah. The novel doctrine is now being loudly proclaimed that a nation must be racially homogeneous and every national within the state who can not trace his ancestry back to the racial stock of the majority is an alien and an intruder. Racial minorities are almost everywhere disadvantaged in the modern state.

✓ Racial imperialism like religious imperialism is a stumbling block in the way of human progress. What is required in our day is not super-heated race apologetics but a generous way of life which will give each race the opportunity to live its own life, to express its own soul and to contribute its unique values to the commonalty of human life. Our age needs a form of good will which will not only tolerate differences but which will gladly use them for the enrichment of life.

Stop
There are people who would like to acquire good will through assimilation. They know that intolerance, in the last analysis, is due to the existence of differences -- racial differences, cultural differences. They would therefore do away with intolerance by obliterating these differences.

But that is paying too high a price! The thing gained is less than the thing surrendered. To use Benjamin Franklin's phrase, "That is paying dear, very dear, for the whistle."

I like to be on the best of terms with my neighbor. I invite his friendship even as I proffer mine -- but only on one condition: that he respect my individuality even as I respect his. He must take me for what I am even as I take him for what he is, not for what each of us would like the other one to be. I am what I am. I have been molded by centuries of distinctive cultural experiences. I am a unique racial precipitate. I wish to remain what I am. I am ready to acknowledge that my neighbor has the same right to retain his individuality and his racial and cultural distinctiveness. It is on the basis of such contrasts which are not conflicts that I would build a real comradeship of free men and good works.

I am Hebrew and not Anglo-Saxon. I am Hebrew and not Teuton, Gaul or Slav. I never will be anything else. I do not wish to take on, as protective coloration, the manners, attitudes and points of view of the Anglo-Saxon, Teuton,

Gaul or Slav. I do not wish to take on the livery of any man in order to enjoy the privilege of being in his retinue. I wish to be myself. Any other basis for good will is spurious. Any movement for good will which demands of me self-abnegation, is a hostile attack. The man who would be my friend only if he can convert me to his way of living and thinking and believing, is not my friend. He is my enemy. He does not like me for what I am. He would like to see his own reflection in me.

The Jew who casts aside his distinctiveness for the sake of fellowship with other groups will bring nothing to that ultimate communion of minds which alone makes up human fellowship. He will bring to that hoped-for fraternity nothing but a masquerading self, a spurious and washed-out personality. He will have nothing to give. He has destroyed his uniqueness. It is only an integrated, vibrant and affirmative personality which has something to contribute to a community of personalities.

Begin ✓ There are some very high-minded men in our country who rightfully would resent any charge of racial intolerance, who nevertheless by their fond hankering after an American social and cultural unification, a sort of American "gleichschaltung," are unconsciously contributing to that very intolerance which they would repudiate. They are opposed to the existence of various social groups, based largely upon racial identity, in American society. They assume that there must be only one social group in America, and one thoroughgoing cultural totalitarianism. They regard all distinctive cultural groups in America as socially baneful. The Jewish community is therefore sometimes criticized by these people, who are clearly not anti-Semitic, for its separatism, its solidarity and its refusal to assimilate.

✓ To which the spokesmen of the Jewish group reply that cultural uniformity is not a prerequisite of American democratic society, that such uniformity is not intrinsically preferable and that cooperation and good-will in common national tasks are possible in spite of the existence of differences.

When it is maintained that the self-consciousness of the Jewish community in this country has been "socially baneful", they ask: Wherein? Have the Jews refused to participate in the political life of this nation as citizens? Have they refused to send their children to the public schools of the country and its institutions of higher learning, preferring to isolate themselves in parochial schools or in denominational colleges? Are they not represented largely in all the cultural activities of American life, in literature, the arts, the sciences and the professions? Are not Jewish business men eager to join all the "characteristic" American business groups, the lodges and fraternal organizations wherever they are admitted? Have Jews ever refused to join non-Jewish social clubs, or professional associations, when invited? Have Jewish workmen not joined in the labor movement in this country? Have not Jewish communities pooled their philanthropic efforts in many of our large cities in common community chests? Have Jews not shared in all the national movements making "for the enrichment of our common life?"

✓ Wherein has the group consciousness of the Jews in America been "socially baneful"? What socially desirable activities in American life have Jews refused to share in? Wherein is the Jew holding back?

✓ In what way does the desire of the Jew to care for his own dependents because he understands them best, or to organize in defense of his persecuted brethren throughout the world, or to teach his children the language, history, and literature of his race along with those of the country, or to assist in the upbuilding in Palestine of a homeland for his people where the homeless of his race and the culture of his race may find a haven, or to preserve the beautiful customs of his people which are at one and the same time both religious and social in character (for no distinction between the purely religious and the social ever

existed in Judaism) -- in what way are these (as some one charged) "focal centers of rebellion against common and wholesome social tendencies," and in what way do they interfere in "the common life of the community?" Why has not the Jew or any other individual or group of individuals in a free democracy the right to live his own life in his own way, so long as, to quote John Stuart Mill, "he does not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it."

✓ When it is claimed that if the Jew would surrender everything except his "personal religious views," the anti-Semitic disease would disappear and all would be well with him, these spokesmen reply that the German Jew for decades practised this very theory of assimilation. They tried in all ways not to be different. Their group consciousness had dwindled to a vanishing point. Inter-marriage was widespread among them. There was very easy egress from the group and no ingress to speak of.... Many joined the Christian church or became "konfessionslos." And yet -- such is the patent bankruptcy of this whole thesis -- the most virulent anti-Semitism developed in Germany, and in place of a self-willed "difference" -- a legal, prescriptive and discriminating "difference" was forced upon them as a mark of shame. Even non-Aryan Christian clergymen who certainly never suffered from excessive Jewish group-consciousness have been "differentiated" and stigmatized in the land of classic Jewish assimilation.

✓ "Social unity" or "cultural unity" is just as dangerous a slogan to raise in modern society as "racial unity." In fact the one inevitably leads to the other. In Nazi Germany they have quite naturally been "coordinated" into one German-Nordic-Aryan dogma of infallibility.

✓ Too many noble ideals of mankind are being broken on the wheel of totalitarian obsessions in the world today for liberal churchmen who value

individualism and exalt personality to permit themselves to become champions of "unification" crusades in American life.

What is needed in the world today is not race or religious imperialism, or mystic yearning after cultural or social unification, after the monolithic society, but the courageous reassertion of that liberal, generous tolerant view of life which our present unhappy age has so tragically lost, but to which it will have to return if life is to be livable, and if man and minorities are to be saved from the tyranny of the mass and the curse of regimentation. We must rediscover in our day that vision which enkindled the imagination of the great minds of the Western World in the 18th and early 19th century -- the vision not of fragments of mankind -- nations, races, groups arranged hierarchically and competitively, but the vision of the whole of mankind, of the encompassing brotherhood of all men. It is almost treason today or heresy to talk of mankind. One is in danger of concentration camps if one speaks up of internationalism and world reconciliation. Such is the darkness and spiritual confusion of our age! But if we, men of faith are to remain faithful to the classic ideals of our profession, we must set about rekindling the light of the ideal of one Humanity in the souls of men and we must redirect their aspirations thither. Then the questions of race and nationalism will assume their places of secondary importance in human life, and mutual adjustments will then be made far more simply and naturally than is possible today. The lost perspective will have been restored.

Abstract

Modern nationalism has fallen under the blight of this race idolatry, particularly among a people like the Germans who are not empire-builders and therefore politically provincial and among whom national unity is a quite recent achievement and hence still a matter of hallelujah. The novel doctrine is now being loudly proclaimed that a nation must be racially homogeneous and every national within the state who can not trace his ancestry back to the racial stock of the majority is an alien and an intruder. Racial minorities are almost everywhere disadvantaged in the modern state.

Racial imperialism like religious imperialism is a stumbling block in the way of human progress. What is required in our day is not super-heated race apologetics but a generous way of life which will give each race the opportunity to live its own life, to express its own soul and to contribute its unique values to the commonalty of human life. Our age needs a form of good will which will not only tolerate differences but which will gladly use them for the enrichment of life.

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