

RACE AS A FACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

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(Abstract)

I. Very little is definitely known concerning racial differences, more particularly psychological differences. Authorities in the fields of ethnology, anthropology, biology, psychology, history, sociology, etc., disagree upon all questions connected with racial variations. These authorities vary all the way from those who believe that inherent mental differences are very marked (Keane (1),* Ripley (2), *Figures in parenthesis refer to bibliography. Le Bon (3), Hoffmann (4), Mecklin (5), Dowd (6), through those who are uncertain as to the extent of such differences Ratzel (7), Galton (8), Haberlandt (9), Thorndike (10), Ward (11), Tenney (12), Giddings (13), Boas (14), Ripley (15), to those who hold that such differences are slight or negligible in comparison with environment Boas (16), Myers (17), Spiller (18), Thomas (19), Woodworth (20).*

II. In order to look forward with any degree of certainty to the improved world order for which so many people are hoping as the outcome of the present war, it is necessary to have more light upon the physical and particularly the mental differences between races, and upon the psychology and sociology of racial contacts; for the problem of race affects every possible type of international agreement, and any settlement reached without giving it full and scientific consideration will prove impracticable. The factor of race complicates the international situation by giving rise to the following problems:

(a) The problem of geographical distribution and climatic influences (21, 22, 23). Upon the presence or absence of certain physical qualities of endurance, resistance, pigmentation, etc., may rest the geographical distribution of large masses of men. There is a considerable difference of opinion among authorities as to the ability of white men to live in the tropics even under the best sanitary conditions. If the future should prove that Major Woodruff is correct in his contention that "the black man should be within 25 or 30 degrees of the Equator....the olive....flourishes best at 35 to 45 degrees, etc., it is entirely conceivable that there may be in time a fairly well defined racial grouping according to latitude. *Owing to varying opinions expressed at different times, it has been necessary to include certain authorities in more than one group.

In such a case, will the contacts between the racial groups thus formed be peaceful, or will there be friction? It must be remembered that friction may exist because of dislikes and prejudices, regardless of the matter of superiority. Moreover, it is possible that the deleterious effects of tropical climate and other environmental conditions may cause one race to be for all intents and purposes inferior, even though it is able to survive these conditions, and though its native endowment is equal to that of other races. The inferiority so caused may make self-government permanently impossible, and may thus open the way for international conflicts.

(b) The problem of undeveloped territory (25, 26).

If one race or several races prove inferior in ability to secure stable and adequate government, and to develop economic resources, what arrangements can be made enabling the world to secure those resources? Here is an opportunity for two sorts of conflicts—(1) between superior and inferior races; (2) between various groups in a superior race, each of which desires control.

(c) The problem of adaptation to modern civilization (27).

If psychic differences exist, will they put one race ahead of the others in ability to meet the needs of modern life, as, e. g., by perfecting inventions and developing complicated economic and political organizations, or will the other races be able to imitate with sufficient exactness and rapidity to keep up with the procession fairly well? Upon the answer of this question depends in large part the future organization of the world state, which in the first case must always remain an empire, but in the second case may ultimately develop into a federation.

(d) The problem of racial differences and democracy.

Even if it is impossible to declare any race superior or inferior, because of gifts so varied that comparison is out of the question, will these variations of gifts be so great as to render democracy in a country of mixed races an impossibility, or to prevent the formation of a democratic world state? Professor Giddings has pointed out the fact that democracy can exist only where there is sufficient background of common standards and ideals to render cooperation possible. Where this background does not exist, there will be the rule of bosses, damagogues, aristocrats, or strong individual monarch, who seize power because the people fail to stand together. Will racial differences prove negligible as separating factors, as modern science develops and knowledge becomes more widely diffused, or will they make common standards impossible, and thus seal the doom of the democratic world state?

III. Though much has been written on the subject of race, the problems presented in this paper are not yet solved. It may be a long time before their solution is possible. Meantime, at the close of the war some practicable method of dealing with unstable and undeveloped peoples must be found. It is not necessary to assume that these peoples are permanently inferior, but no one can be so blinded by the democratic ideal as to deny that they are at present in many ways, behind the most highly developed groups. Therefore, we cannot hope for an immediate solution of the great conflict in a wholly democratic world state, but only in some arrangement which will truly "make the world safe for democracy" in so far as democracy exists, and make it safe for democracy in so far as it is able to develop. Whether we can reasonably hope that time will bring democracy everywhere is a question depending largely upon the matter of race, and the only way to answer that question is to make a patient and unprejudiced search for complete information.

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