

## THE EQUALITARIAN DOGMA

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Up to World War I, it is probable that American scientists who gave the matter any thought at all believed the Negro race to be natively less gifted than the white. Thus, the Negro was generally considered to be less intelligent and more indolent than the white, and to be somewhat lacking in the fundamental traits of honesty and reliability. This judgment was concurred in by most white Americans.

Social scientists today do not often accept these onetime common-sense judgments. Instead, they hold that racial differences are skin deep: that whereas the black African differs from the white European in the breadth and depth of his civilization, there are no genetic or native factors to account for these differences; that all races are potentially equal in ability and differ only in their opportunity to achieve. Usually the social scientist will include motivation as a cause of racial differences, together with discrimination and prejudice.

This view that, except for environmental differences, all races are potentially equal has been called the *equalitarian dogma*.<sup>1</sup> It has spread through many of our colleges and universities and is widely accepted by sincere humanitarians, social reformers, crusaders, sentimentalists, and (ostensibly) politicians. Many ministers of religion, convinced that the concept of the "equality of man" is in keeping with the ideals of Christian brotherhood and democracy, have joined the social scientists. Last, but by no means least, the Communists vigorously defend the equalitarian dogma. Only the man in the street, uninstructed in social anthropology, remains puzzled and reluctant.

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<sup>1</sup> Use of the word "equalitarian" in this paper is limited to the meaning indicated above. I do not intend the broader meaning: that of belief that all men should have equal political and social rights, a concept not debated here.

Equalitarianism (or egalitarianism, as it is sometimes called) finds its chief support from at least two clearly identifiable sources: the allegedly scientific group who have "proved" equality, and the religious groups who accept this proof and, on the basis of it, assert that belief in racial differences implies "superiority" and "inferiority" and is unchristian, shameful, and blameworthy. Each camp supplements the other. The social scientists turn to moral denunciation when their evidence is feeble, and the religious fall back on "science" to bolster up their ethical preachments. From these two directions the American people have for more than thirty years been subjected to a barrage of propaganda unrivaled in its intensity and self-righteousness. Today in many departments of psychology, anthropology, and even genetics, the equalitarian dogma has been installed as a major premise not to be questioned. Budding young scientists of independent mind jeopardize their careers by challenging the dogma and may be silenced by strong disapproval. Many college students have been indoctrinated and parrot the equalitarian arguments without competent familiarity with the evidence, shifting from the "scientific" to the moralistic position as the occasion requires. The northern press and many influential magazines, together with radio and TV programs, confidently proclaim equalitarianism.

How can we account for today's shift from a general belief in native racial differences to acceptance of the equalitarian dogma? There are, I believe, five sources which have stimulated and directed the propaganda barrage mentioned above. Let us examine these in order.

#### *Influence of "Modern" Anthropology*

By far the most potent assault upon native racial differences from the scientific side has come from the work of Franz Boas, who may be thought of as the "father" of the equalitarian movement. Boas came to this country from Germany in 1886 and for thirty-seven years (1899-1936) was professor of anthropology at Columbia University. Boas and his followers actively and aggressively championed equalitarianism, discounting any evidence tending to show that Negro-white differences may not be environmentally determined. But the cultural anthropologists rarely use objective measures recognized as valid for judging the comparative abilities of racial groups. Hence their conclusions, though confidently announced, are often subjective and unconvincing.

The view presented here is that psychological tests offer the best—i.e., most valid—quantitative data for the determination of racial differences. The best recent survey of the comparative standing of American Negroes and American whites on a number of mental tests may be found in *Testing of Negro Intelligence*, a book written by A. M. Shuey, published in 1958. (It is indicative of the power—and lack of tolerance—of the equalitarians that none of the university presses to which this book was submitted was willing to publish it.) This book covers forty-four years, from 1913 to 1957, and analyzes some 240 studies. Negro-white comparisons are made of pre-school children, grade and high school pupils, college students, gifted and retarded children, soldiers, delinquents, racial hybrids, and Negro migrants. A brief summary of the relevant findings follows.

(1) I.Q.'s of American Negroes are from 15 to 20 points, on the average, below those of American whites. (2) Negro overlap of white median I.Q.'s ranges from 10 to 25 per cent (equality would require 50 per cent). (3) About 6 times as many whites as Negroes fall in the "gifted child" category. (4) About 6 times as many Negroes as whites fall below 70 I.Q.—that is, in the feeble-minded group. (5) Negro-white differences in mean test score occur in all types of mental tests, but the Negro lag is greatest in tests of an abstract nature (for example, problems involving reasoning, deduction, comprehension). These are the functions called for in education above the lowest levels. (6) Differences between Negro and white children increase with chronological age, the gap in performance being largest at the high school and college levels. (7) Large and significant differences in favor of whites appear even when socioeconomic factors have been equated.

It seems clear that the evidence from psychometrics does not favor the equalitarian dogma; in fact, just the opposite.

### *Hitler and the Nazis*

Undoubtedly Hitler's unspeakable cruelties and the absurd racial superiority theories of the Nazis set up a favorable climate for the proponents of the equalitarian dogma. It is easy for the equalitarian to argue that acceptance of the *fact* of racial differences is a forerunner of notions of racial superiority, discrimination, prejudice, and persecution. The argument is fallacious. Recognition of differences in ability between men and women and between children and adults does not lead forthwith to prejudice and

persecution; in fact, often the contrary is true. Recognition of the talents of many Negroes for sports and for various forms of entertainment has, if anything, improved the feelings of the white majority toward Negroes generally.

### *Rise of African Nationalism*

The struggle for freedom and self-determination by the various peoples of Africa has aroused the sympathy of most of the people of the world and has undoubtedly strengthened the emotional appeal in the idea that all men are born equally endowed. But emotionally founded beliefs can be deceptive. As is well known, the African Negro has been self-governing throughout most of his history, the colonial period being relatively short (only eighty years in the Belgian Congo). In the several thousand years of recorded history, the black African has never constructed an alphabet, created a literature or a science, produced any great men, or built up a civilization. Toynbee, the eminent British historian, has written that of the twenty-one great civilizations of the past, not one has been Negro. To be sure, we are often reminded of the three kingdoms in West Africa which in the twelfth century briefly attained a cultural level relatively high for that region. But these "magnificent civilizations," as the equalitarian anthropologists call them, were hardly on a par with the then flourishing civilizations of France, Italy, and the Near East. Moreover, Timbuktu, with its allegedly "great university," was Moslem and Arabic (not black African), and the university itself was little more than a large mosque with a few teachers.

### *Supreme Court Decision of 1954*

In May of 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down its decision on desegregation of the schools. This decree was hailed by proponents of the equalitarian dogma, who rightly regarded it as a great victory for their cause. Many people, however, were (and are) still confused by the issue of legal and moral rights and their relation to biological and psychological differences.

### *Influence of the Communists*

Undoubtedly the Communists (and their supporters) have aided in the spread and acceptance of the equalitarian dogma, although the extent and method of their aid is difficult to assess. Direct action as well as subversion

are both in the Communist creed. Communists have used equalitarian dogma as a device to gain converts among underprivileged people and also to foment trouble when possible. Many non-Communists hold the position that the free world must outdo the Communists in acceptance of this belief and must reject any further inquiry into its validity.

It will be apparent that in the writer's opinion the weight of evidence is in favor of the proposition that racial differences in mental ability (and perhaps also in character) are innate and genetic. The story is not finished, and further inquiry is sorely needed. Surely there are no scientific reasons why restrictions should be placed on further research. The equalitarian dogma, at best, represents a sincere if misguided effort to help the Negro by ignoring or even suppressing evidence of his mental and social immaturity. At worst, the equalitarian dogma is the scientific hoax of the century.