



Religion
and Life

Race and Colour Prejudice

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The most comfortable justification for this exploitation was the theory that coloured peoples were racially inferior. They were not governed by the same standards, and did not share the same emotions as ourselves, therefore, it was unnecessary to regard them as personalities in the same way as we regarded our fellow whites.



THE colour bar was a further rationalisation of this desire to exploit. It began to assume its modern strength and importance in the late 18th century with the rise of economic Imperialism. Racism now became vital to the continued existence of white trade and any tendency on the part of coloured peoples to regard themselves as other than inherently inferior was seen as an attack on white prestige.

In support of these contentions, one school of anthropologists enunciated the theory that the various races of mankind had originated independently of one another, that they had evolved from distinct original species,

and that there were in consequence fundamental biological and psychological differences between them.

This school has flourished in Europe for two centuries. Its outstanding exponent in recent years has been Dr. J. Tiralo, a German writer, whose work was used as a basis for the Nazi "super-race" programme. The war has destroyed the Nazi conclusion, but the false premises find wide acceptance in our own country.

If the premises are sound, then there is some ground for the German conclusion, and we may expect that sooner or later some other racial group will arise and proclaim its superiority to all others. But the fact is, this school of anthropologists is universally discredited. As Ashley Montague points out in his book, "Race, Man's Most Dangerous Myth," there is no biological distinction between races nor has any psychological difference yet been proved.

The superior race theory, whether

it be used by Nazis against Jews, or by whites in exploitation of coloured peoples, has no foundation in fact; it is a rationalisation of the desire for power and privilege.

It is true that in response to certain social and spiritual stimuli, for example, the Hebrew prophets, certain races have advanced more rapidly along certain lines than others; but there is no evidence to show that given the same stimuli, coloured peoples are incapable of parallel advance. In fact, all the evidence is in the other direction, as people like Gandhi, Kagawa, Sun Yat Sen, and Aggrey, of Africa, demonstrate.



IN quality of intellect and character, these men and thousands of their fellows challenge the white man's monopoly of development and in many cases reduce his arrogance to humility.

We recall also that when our white ancestors were still in the barbarian

stage, many coloured peoples had attained a high degree of civilisation and culture.

The common belief that where there is interracial mixture, the half caste offspring will manifest the worst characteristics of both races, is another aspect of the doctrine of racism. But not only does the anthropologist dismiss this belief as sheer nonsense, he affirms that the "rise of civilisations blossoming with genius were caused by cross breeding." There is a sound genetic basis for such a statement; it is an established fact that the mixture of ethnic groups in the past has been one of the great creative forces in the progress of mankind.

This question is likely to be brought into great prominence in the near future. Millions of coloured peoples in recent months have shown that they are smarting under the humiliations to which they have had to submit in the past. Pearl Buck speaks of this tension as "Tinder for to-morrow." For the next half century it will remain one of the major considerations especially for us who are destined to play so active a part in the Pacific Area.

Two facts make a reasonable ap-