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Only

SO-CALLED RACIAL IQ DIFFERENCES
IRRELEVANT FOR WHATEVER DEFINITION
OR PROJECT OF PEACE

by

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DISCUSSION PAPER

on

Panos D. Bardis 's

*PEACE AS A PROJECT OF INTERRACIAL
SYNTHESIS*

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So-Called Racial IQ Differences Irrelevant for Whatever Definition or Project of Peace.

Commentary to PANOS D. BARDIS's : Peace as a Project of Interracial Synthesis.

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1. - I am almost sure that my radical criticism to the above mentioned paper will reveal my deep ignorance on the subject rather than the logically weak points - if any - of Prof. Bardis's scientific contribution.

This stated, I feel free to express my views on some of the points dealt with in the paper.

The first impression is that the arguments, however brilliant and rich in doctrinal references, do not bring forth any reasonable conclusion.

If words have a meaning, in fact, to speak of peace "as a project of interracial synthesis" would imply an effort to "put together" different "races" as a way to achieve peace, or achieving peace through the harmonization of racial differences.

But I did not see any development or step in advance made in this direction. Apart from this, Prof. Bardis simply assumes that "races" exist, and he does not even take into account the ad hoc studies promoted by UNESCO, which arrive at sharply different conclusions.

In particular, Prof. Bardis implies that races, rather than identifying purely physical (biological) differences, refer to cultural (intellectual) discrepancies and unbalances. This is proved in my view beyond any doubt when he speaks of "interracial synthesis". If races were purely biological categories they would defy any synthesis (or the expression would not have any sense). One can put together only what is amenable to be harmonized (as, for instance, cultures).

Prof. Bardis seems to be fully persuaded with the results of Arthur Jensen's research, and his only doubt, or dilemma, is how to escape the embarrassing practical consequences of those conclusions.

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I am not an expert of IQ tests, but it seems to me pretty clear that tests - however consciously unbiased, and however sophisticated they are - reflect the system of values and preferences of the "judge". They are perhaps important tools to identify "particular abilities", but certainly not a "general intellectual capacity". What they actually do is compare two (or more) different cultures in terms of one of them (the culture of the "judge"). But this is absolutely not correct from a methodological point of view. Briefly, if one compares a "State" and a "Tribe", one can use neither one nor the other as a model. Only the concept of "political system", ranking higher on the "abstraction ladder", will perform the function properly.

Simply imagine what would come out from a test devised by a Chinese or an African scholar. A European or an American "patient" would be "broken to pieces".

But let us assume for a moment that there are objective differences between and among races, as far as intellectual capabilities are concerned. So what ? Would that be an obstacle to a peaceful cooperation ? Would that really imply an existential situation of conflict if I am less intelligent than the Author of the main paper ?

That is why I do not understand the point Prof. Bardis is trying to make. But I repeat, perhaps I misinterpreted his statements. Actually, I am sure I did.

Anyway, in my view, races per se are irrelevant to peace. What is rather relevant is culture, which is not synonymous with race. Though different races may have different cultures, this is not always true. Do you really believe a black New Yorker behaves, coeteris paribus, in a very different way vis-à-vis with a white inhabitant of the "Big Apple" ? The fact that "the average (italics ours) IQ of blacks is 15 points lower than that of whites" depends, most probably, on the different environmental conditions and on the limited opportunities which characterize their lives. Normally these tests are made in USA, but can we be sure they would give the same results if applied to Blacks in their homelands ? Let me say here that should Whites be "tested" in Africa according to local standards, their average IQ would not be as high as we presume.

2. - What I want to stress here is that culture, not race, is important for peace, because different cultures give rise to different concepts and definitions of peace. And different concepts of peace are likely to lead to war.

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Take for instance peace in the great civilizations of the world. It implies different dimensions, and each of them may be in contradiction with the others.

So peace in the Hebrew tradition (shalom) and in the experience of Islam is an adjustment to the will of God, compliance with His will. So it may coexist with war. In ancient Greece and in Rome (eirene, pax), peace has to do with the status quo of the "polis", of the Republic, of the Empire. Peace is no longer linked with the divine law. Pactum (agreement) derives from pax. Here peace has to do with civil law. In Christianity, peace has Hebrew and Roman connotations (bellum justum, but also status quo). This is our Western tradition : the concept of peace does not necessarily imply the absence of war. In the Eastern civilizations, on the contrary, the concept of peace changes dramatically. Here peace means a "well ordered state of mind" (santi), absence of violence, absolute (in India), or relative (in China) lack of interest for the social and political situations.

Let me classify four different possible interpretations of peace :

- 1) peace as absence of war (negative peace),
- 2) peace as absence of conflict,
- 3) peace as absence of violence (positive peace),
- 4) peace as non-violence (ahimsa).

So, the global concept of peace implies :

- the realization of justice, both divine or human ;
- the maintenance of public order ;
- the equilibrium of the soul (mind).

One can easily see that these three factors are mutually contradictory, the only solution being the fighting for peace with non-violent means (Gandhi's teaching). But even here the problem is to know whether non-violence is always conducive to the attainment of justice.

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But there is another possible connotation of peace : peace "as a project of interracial synthesis", as Prof. Bardis puts it. In my opinion, this normative idea of peace relates to the third category above mentioned, i.e. to positive peace, seen as a yet unattained standard of achievement, whereby all human rights may be fully enjoyed by everybody, white or yellow or black, irrespective of his (or her) idiosyncratic capabilities and attitudes. This means also that science should select more relevant topics to deal with, and refuse to serve wishful thinking-hypotheses that clearly aim toward justifying all types of violence, last but not least cultural violence, as the one manifested through culture-bound tests on IQ. In claiming this I do not go against scientific wertfreiheit. On the contrary, I simply refuse a "naïve" methodological and behavioral approach that has no historical and epistemological ground, and that leads reason to work against humanity and common sense.

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