

RACE AND INTELLIGENCE

The subject of the alleged relation of race to I.Q. is discussed in an article that appeared in a recent issue of *The UNESCO Courier*.

The author, Dr. Otto Klineberg, a Canadian psychologist, who is at present professor at the *École Pratique des Hautes* at the Sorbonne, and director of the International Centre for Intergroup Relations in Paris, writes that "some 20 years ago there was good reason to believe that the notion of a genetic or inborn racial hierarchy had practically disappeared from the thinking of social and biological scientists concerned with this issue". "The general position," he continues, "could perhaps best be stated in negative terms, namely, that there was no acceptable scientific evidence in favour of such a hierarchy, and that consequently any political or educational program based on the alleged innate inferiority of any racial or ethnic group had no scientific validity."

Dr. Klineberg says that the disappearance of the notion of a genetic or inborn racial hierarchy is "far from complete, however, and the question of innate psychological differences continues to attract considerable attention." He mentions in particular the writings and statements of A.R. Jensen of the University of California at Berkeley and William Shockley, a Stanford University physicist.

TESTS DON'T TELL ALL

Dr. Klineberg refers to the psychological test as the method by which attempts have been made to measure intelligence.

"This," he adds, "is all that would be necessary to settle the question of superior and inferior races if psychological tests were perfect instruments for the measurement of native or innate differences in ability. It is true that they were accepted as such for a long time, at least by some psychologists and educators, as well as by many laymen. We now know, however, that they are far from perfect."

"The successful solution of the problems presented by the tests depends on many factors - the previous experience and education of the person tested, his degree of familiarity with the subject matter of the test, his motivation or desire to obtain a good score, his emotional state, his *rapport* with the experimenter, his knowledge of the language in which the test is administered and also his physical health and well-being, as well as on the native capacity of the person tested."

"It is only when such factors are 'held constant' that is to say, when they are in essential respects

similar for all subjects tested, that we have the right to conclude that those who obtain higher scores on the test are innately superior to those whose scores are lower. This makes it immediately obvious that we must use great caution in interpreting the results when a psychological test is administered to two different racial or national groups. Living under different conditions dissimilar in culture, education and point of view, such groups may differ widely in the test results not because they have an unequal social environment.

"...The influence of poverty or of socio-economic class on test performance cannot be kept separate from the issues already raised. Low expectations as to pupil performance may affect the poor white as well as black; differences in language patterns have been demonstrated in the case of the poor in England (by Bernstein, 1960) and in the United States (John, 1963.)

"The fact of poverty and its consequences acquires importance in this context because of the proportionately greater frequency of poverty among minority groups, and particularly among the blacks in the United States.

"This consideration alone should impose considerable caution in arguing from the inferior test results obtained by black children (an average I.Q. of 85 as compared with the 'normal' 100). Research conducted in many countries and by many psychologists indicates beyond a shadow of a doubt that the test performance of poor white children is markedly inferior to that of the well-to-do; the difference between groups at the extremes of the economic range is in the neighbourhood of 20 points in I.Q., that is to say, greater than that between American blacks and whites.

"To this it is retorted that even when the comparison is between blacks and whites of the same economic level, the difference, though smaller, still persists. All that this really means, however, is that poverty, although of great importance, is not the only factor responsible."

Dr. Klineberg concludes his article with the observation that: "the net result of all the research that has been conducted in this field is to the effect that innate racial differences in intelligence have not been demonstrated; that the obtained differences in test results are best explained in terms of the social and educational environment; that as the environmental opportunities of different racial or ethnic groups become more alike, the observed differences in test results also tend to disappear. The evidence is overwhelmingly against the view that race is a factor which determines level of intelligence".