

THE RACE QUESTION IN MODERN SCIENCE

THE ROOTS
OF PREJUDICE

by
ARNOLD ROSE



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ARNOLD ROSE

*Professor of Sociology at the
University of Minnesota, U.S.A.*

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INTRODUCTION

Prejudice of one group of people against another group has existed in most parts of the world and at all periods of history. It has not been universal, in the sense that all cultures or all people have displayed it; but it has been prevalent enough to serve as a basis for conflict between nations and between groups within a nation. It practically always involves discrimination, which means mistreatment of people without their having done anything to merit such mistreatment.¹ It has thus been a source of human unhappiness and misunderstanding wherever and whenever it has arisen. Although certain individuals have exploited prejudice to gain political power or economic advantage for themselves, there is no example of a whole people advancing themselves or their civilization for a long period of time on the basis of it. It has been, rather, a blight from almost every standpoint.

Yet there is still relatively little understanding of the causes or even of the effects of prejudice, except on the superficial, obvious level. On later pages we shall see that it has not even been studied by scientists sufficiently to make them certain of

1. We use the term prejudice to refer to a set of attitudes which causes, supports, or justifies discrimination. Since discrimination itself consists of observable behaviour, it is a more useful subject for study. But since in this article, we are searching for *causes* of behaviour, we must direct our attention to the mind of the person who practises discrimination. Prejudice is taken as the mental state corresponding to the practice of discrimination.

its causes, although there have been some startling discoveries and stimulating suggestions. Outside the ranks of social science, most people hold quite erroneous ideas about it—ideas which themselves are sometimes born of prejudice and which are sometimes even detrimental to those holding them. We shall now proceed to consider the varied sources of prejudice, moving from the more obvious and rational causes to the less apparent and unconscious ones.

PERSONAL ADVANTAGE AS A CAUSE OF PREJUDICE

Perhaps the most obvious cause of prejudice is that it creates advantages and material benefits for those who are prejudiced. Prejudice can provide an excuse or rationalization for economic exploitation or political domination. It can enable a man to justify to himself acts that he would ordinarily be unwilling to engage in. It can be exploited by shrewd, self-seeking manipulators when it occurs in other people. It can offer opportunities for taking sexual advantage of minority group women, and it may give people at the bottom of the social ladder an apparent superiority over the minority group. The fact that individuals and groups can and do gain advantages for themselves out of prejudice becomes a cause of prejudice.

Imperialism, especially when practised by persons of European origin on non-Europeans, has frequently been attended by prejudice. Even when there has been no noteworthy development of prejudice in the home country, those who go forth as colonial administrators, traders, or extractors of the natural resources of undeveloped lands, learn that callousness toward subject peoples, and an attitude of racial superiority, will aid them in their venture. Within limits, a harsh manner and exacting demands will gain a large output from workers who have no means of defence or retaliation. Payment of low wages and provision of only a minimum of life needs to these workers will mean larger profits.

Racial, national, or religious antagonisms can be built up to deflect class antagonisms. A relatively small number of exploiters can maintain their dominant position by dividing their subordinates and encouraging them to be hostile to one another. One group may be given the sergeant's role of keep-

ing all other groups in line by force. In return for this they have the satisfaction of being regarded as belonging to the superior group, even though they are themselves exploited. This procedure may be used in a perfectly 'natural' way, so that it is obvious to no one.

Techniques akin to those of imperialism may be employed *within* an independent nation. Prices or rents of houses can be kept at a high level by obliging people to live within certain small, segregated areas. Wages can be kept low for people who are not allowed to work in any but certain exploited jobs. Public facilities and benefits may be kept at a minimum for people who are segregated to the greatest extent.

It is difficult to tell how much of this use of prejudice and discrimination for purposes of exploitation is conscious and how much unconscious. Some that appears unplanned and unconscious is occasionally revealed to be quite deliberate. One young man who had just answered a questionnaire designed to test for anti-Semitism made a revealing remark in this connexion. He said, 'I have no strong feeling about Jews either way' (the test did not show him to be anti-Semitic). 'But I am studying to be a banker, and if my employers are anti-Semitic, I'm going to be anti-Semitic too, as I want to get ahead.' Perhaps we shall never discover for certain how much of prejudice is deliberate and how much unconscious. But that is of little consequence, as the effects and the underlying causes are always the same. Deliberate use of prejudice to exploit a group of people is hardly different from the unplanned and non-directed utilization of group differences to gain every possible advantage from the situation. Both can be considered together as a cause of prejudice.

The gains to be secured may be political as well as economic. Group differences can be fostered to keep a certain party in political power. Modern dictators have been experts in the technique of 'divide and conquer' both to retain power in their own country and to extend their conquests abroad. Studies have been conducted in several countries which show how Hitler secured supporters—now called fifth columnists—by offering them the positions and property then held by Jews and by appealing to a latent feeling of racial superiority. In democratic countries where prejudice is prevalent, some politicians successfully base their campaign for office on theories of racial supremacy. Most of the organizations formed for the apparent purpose of fostering race hatred have been shown to have political domination as their ultimate aim.

Economic or political exploitation as a cause of prejudice has definite limitations. In the first place, it must be balanced against the costs of prejudice to be mentioned in a later section. It is probable that in the long run imperialistic countries could have gained even greater economic advantages if they had not employed prejudice, discrimination and violence. Individuals who exploit prejudice become extreme victims of the psychological costs of prejudice. Another burden they lay upon themselves is the realization that they are exploiting and cheating. Most people dislike thinking of themselves as unfair and dishonest, or without ideals. Even the building up of a psychological defence to rationalize unfairness and dishonesty may be only partially successful; it certainly creates rigidities in the personality. Thus, the advantages of prejudice do not seem great when balanced against its cost. Moreover, there are progressively fewer opportunities for exploitation through prejudice as hitherto subordinated peoples have now organized themselves to stop it. Throughout the world, imperialism is retreating. Exploited minority groups within nations have also made great strides towards improving their position and reducing victimization. They have had active support from many members of the majority group who have realized the costs and dangers of prejudice. Thus, exploitation and domination are decreasing, at least in so far as they stem from prejudice, and they are thus less effective as causes of prejudice.

There are other apparent advantages of prejudices. We can only refer briefly to the difficult subject of men of the dominant group taking sexual advantage of minority group women. 'Gains' of this sort are obviously balanced by social losses for the dominant group as a whole. A society in which there are frequent demands for casual and loveless sexual intercourse is not a well-organized or satisfying society, either to its men or to its women.

Finally, as John Dollard has pointed out, there are some prestige gains in a society based on prejudice. If people have no other basis of prestige, they get a certain satisfaction simply out of being members of the dominant group. Although they are at the bottom of their own racial, national, or religious groups, they can feel superior to the minority groups. The weakness of this kind of gain is surely obvious: the prejudiced person who gains a prestige satisfaction out of feeling superior to a minority group is diverted from other, more important, kinds of prestige satisfaction. He loses ambition, and allows

himself to be manipulated by those higher on the prestige scale in his own dominant group. People who live under such unfavourable circumstances that they might be expected to join reform or revolutionary movements are sometimes kept from doing so by reluctance to lose the trivial prestige that raises them above the minority group.

IGNORANCE OF OTHER GROUPS OF PEOPLE AS A CAUSE OF PREJUDICE

Prejudice is nearly always accompanied by incorrect or ill-informed opinions regarding the people against whom it is felt. Many of the false beliefs take the form of what social scientists call 'stereotypes'. These are exaggerations of certain physical traits or cultural characteristics which are found among members of the minority group and are then attributed to all members of the group. When stereotypes exist, an individual is judged, not on the basis of his own characteristics, but on the basis of exaggerated and distorted beliefs regarding what are thought to be the characteristics of his group. All members of the group are falsely assumed to be alike, exceptions being ignored or their existence denied.

Stereotypes take strange forms. They are usually unfavourable to the subordinated group, but not always. Stereotypes about Negroes in South Africa and the United States, for example, depict them as brutal, stupid, and immoral, but also as happy, generous and faithful. This pattern makes sense in terms of the effort to use Negroes as servants and unskilled workers, because the 'good' traits seem to justify their treatment as childlike subordinates and to indicate their satisfaction with this treatment.

A stereotype applied to one group of people at one time may be applied to another group at a later time. In England during the seventeenth century the Scottish Lowlanders were stereotyped as coarse, cruel, and animal-like people. By the nineteenth century, this stereotype was applied no longer to the Scots, but to the Irish. Stereotypes can change very rapidly: in Western countries before 1940, the Japanese were thought of as sly but weak, rigid and unimaginative. After the outbreak of war with Japan in 1941 the stereotype of the Japanese still included slyness, but shifted to include

toughness and resourcefulness as well. After the victory over Japan in 1945, and the beginning of a successful occupation, the stereotype dropped slyness and substituted gullibility.

A stereotype applied to a group of people in one country may not be applied to that group in another country, but rather to another minority group. The stereotype about Jews in Central Europe includes a belief in their strong sexuality and tendency towards sexual perversion. This is not the case in the United States, where, although there are other stereotypes regarding Jews, the sexual stereotype is applied rather to Negroes, especially in the Southern states.

The ignorance which supports prejudice has a great range. It may take the form of false information about people's physical characteristics, cultural practices, or beliefs. It may take the form of myths about superhuman powers or child-like weaknesses. The prejudice of Germans about other peoples included stereotypes about the French as immoral degenerates, about the British as bumbling fools, about the Americans as narrow-minded wastrels, about the Russians as stolid and stupid ignoramuses, about the Jews as scheming perverts. This is just an illustration of the astounding range of ignorance that can occur in one modern country.

Stereotypes and other incorrect beliefs about groups of people are not necessarily least frequent when there are many members of the minority group about, who, through their appearance and behaviour, disprove the false beliefs. The strongest prejudice and the largest number of false beliefs about Negroes are to be found among the whites of South Africa, who live among a black population which outnumbers them by four or five to one. There are many more stereotypes about Negroes in the Southern states of the United States than in the Northern states, although Negroes form a much higher proportion of the population in the former than in the latter area. But no generalization can be made in the opposite sense either: areas with a small minority group are not necessarily freer of stereotypes about their members than are areas where they exist in large numbers. In Germany after World War I there were proportionately few Jews living in Bavaria. Yet there were apparently many more false beliefs about Jews in Bavaria than in cosmopolitan Berlin, where there were more Jews. Until a few decades ago there were more false beliefs about American Indians in North America, where they were few in number, than in South America, where they are much more numerous. These and similar facts disprove

the widely held opinion that prejudice is strongest where minority races are largest.

One of the requirements for ignorance about a group of people is social isolation, which can occur even where there is considerable contact. People can live next door to each other as neighbours, one person can even work in another's home or shop, but still they will not necessarily get to know each other as human beings. Both physical and social segregation usually accompany prejudice: they are among its effects, but also among its causes, as they promote ignorance and ignorance bolsters prejudice.

Ignorance among the mass of people enables the propagandist for economic exploitation or political domination to gain his ends more easily. If one group of people knows nothing about another group or has false beliefs about it, it is susceptible to the camouflaged demands of the exploiters. People can even be misled as to whom their real enemy is by a propagandist who plays on their ignorance.

It is apparent from this brief discussion (a) that ignorance takes the form either of absence of knowledge or of false belief; (b) that ignorance itself is not so much a direct cause of prejudice as it is a pre-condition or bolster of prejudice. In the latter capacity, ignorance is a more important factor in prejudice against some groups than it is against other groups. Where it is a significant factor, information which fills gaps in knowledge or contradicts false beliefs can be a valuable weapon against prejudice. Not only does such information weaken directly one of the supports of prejudice, but it partially nullifies the propagandist's attempts at exploitation.

RACISM, OR THE 'SUPERIORITY COMPLEX', AS A CAUSE OF PREJUDICE

The problems of intergroup relations may be classified according to three types. One kind is political in motive. This intergroup tension is based on a struggle for power. Such rivalries have been frequent in international relations, and a modern example of them may be found in the long-standing hatred between France and Germany. Sometimes one country may contain two groups struggling against each other for political power. Much of the violence, discrimination, and prejudice

that has divided the Serbs and Croats in Yugoslavia was of this nature.

A second class of intergroup tensions arises from differences of religious belief. The history of the West was marked for many centuries by violence between Christians and Muslims and later between Catholics and Protestants. Part of the modern conflict between Fascism, Communism, and democracy is caused by a difference in belief, although most of it is based on a struggle for political power. Belief differences between groups frequently involve the notion that non-believers are agents or advocates of sin, heresy, corruption, or some other form of evil. To persecute them is to do justice or perform a service for the Lord. Belief differences are especially associated with prejudice when one group has a strongly developed conviction that its own beliefs are superior to all others. Such an ideology has been more strongly developed in connexion with the Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Shintoist religions than with the Hindu, Buddhist, Confucianist, and most forms of pagan religion. It is perhaps for this reason that prejudice is more frequently found where followers of one of the former religions are dominant. This is true even though some of these religions consider unfairness and violence to be abhorrent.

Whereas intergroup tensions based on the struggle for power or on differences of belief have existed since the beginning of recorded history, the third type—racism—seems to be largely a modern phenomenon. It was at least rare until its modern development less than two centuries ago as a perversion of early biological science, and it still has not spread much into cultures other than those of the West. That there were physical differences among people had always been obvious, of course. Some individuals of ancient and medieval times regarded individuals with different physical features as obnoxious (although others considered such physical differences to be especially interesting or desirable). Yet all men, whatever their physical traits, were regarded as human beings (or at worst fallen angels), quite different from the creatures called animals. When the natural historians of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were classifying and describing species, they introduced the notion that men were to be classified into five races, which could be graded like species of animals, into higher and lower. Scientific biologists soon corrected this early error by showing that mankind was of one origin and that racial differences were later developments, so

that no one race could be ranked higher than any other. Nevertheless, the concept of races was seized upon and elaborated into a whole new basis for intergroup antagonism which is now called racism.

Racism is a set of popular beliefs which includes the following elements:

1. The differences between groups—differences in body and in mind—are all due to hereditary biology, and nothing can change them. According to this theory, for example, if Negroes are, on the average, not as intelligent as whites, this is due to their heredity and can no more be changed than their skin colour.
2. A second part of this theory is that habits, attitudes, beliefs, behaviour and all the things we *learn* are determined for us before we are born. For example according to this popular theory, Jews are born to be sharp businessmen and Japanese are born to act in an insincere manner.
3. All differences between a minority group and the majority group are thought to be signs of inferiority. For example, according to this popular theory, Jewish religion, Catholic religion, and the Negro's expression of religion are all inferior to the white Protestant's religion.
4. If there should be biological crossing of the groups, the children will be more degenerate than either of the parent groups. Civilization—including family life, religion and morals—will disappear and men will become savage animals. The details of what would happen if there were 'intermarriage' are usually left to the imagination, and just the ugly word 'mongrelization' is used to suggest the results. Because of this, everything must be done to prevent the two groups from having easy social relations with each other. For example, if parents allowed a Jewish boy to 'date' a Gentile girl, the two might want to get married, and the children of such a marriage would be 'lost'—according to this theory. Another example: if Negroes were allowed to eat in the same restaurants as whites, they might become so bold as to ask whites for their daughters' hands in marriage—according to the racist theory.

These racist beliefs have become so widespread, so unconscious, and so traditional among many peoples of the West that racism may be regarded as an independent cause of prejudice today. Some social scientists consider it to be the only really important kind of prejudice between peoples, and they use the term 'race prejudice' to refer to all the things

we are considering in this article. Where racist beliefs occur they apply as much to religious groups, national groups, or groups of other types as to the strictly racial groups defined by anthropologists.

To understand better how racism has become a root of modern prejudice, it is important to examine its history in several countries. One of the first countries in which it developed was the United States. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Negro slavery was well established in the United States. Little attempt was made to justify it, however, except on the grounds of economic convenience and the fact that it had existed for a long time. Many people, including large slaveholders, were in favour of abolishing it as incompatible with the growth of democracy. Prejudice was not particularly associated with slavery, since white people accepted freed slaves on their own merits and since many wealthy white people allowed their slaves to go free. Certainly there was no prejudice against Negroes on any of the racial grounds we have just examined.

About that time a great new profit was discovered in slaves: the invention of the cotton gin and of a process for extracting sugar from cane, coupled with new facilities for international trade, made the Southern states a region of great potential wealth. This required cheap labour that could be held to the unpleasant task of growing and picking cotton and sugar cane. Not enough free people would do this work; not even immigrants from Europe, brought over especially for the task. So, many more Negro slaves were brought in (although this was now illegal); the area of cotton growing was greatly extended; many people grew wealthy rapidly; and the South maintained a precarious dominance of power in the nation as a whole because of its wealth. During this period pressures were exerted to abolish slavery: other countries were abolishing slavery, it was now considered to be immoral and barbarous; and some of the poor whites of the South did not like a system which gave all power to the wealthy slave owners. In this setting, the concepts of racism served perfectly as a justification. The Negroes were declared to be a childlike race, which must be directed in work for its own good and which must be kept inferior to the poor whites for the good of civilization. Prejudice of the racist variety took hold of the South and has remained there to the present day.

In Western Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century, racism was a doctrine elaborated only by a few

writers. This does not mean that there was no prejudice, but simply that prejudice was then religious and cultural in character rather than racial. At first, racism had little popular appeal, as democratic and humanitarian ideology was generally dominant over the older aristocratic ideology. By 1870, however, the aristocrats, in a desperate search for tools and allies to support their waning power, seized upon racism as a useful propaganda device. In Germany two groups of politicians discovered that by building up anti-Semitism, at that time a weak remnant of an ancient religious antagonism, they could also build their own political strength. One of these groups was led by court chaplain Stoecker and other 'romantics', who wanted to create a new kind of reactionary social order much like modern Fascism. The other group was led by Chancellor Bismarck who was trying to maintain himself in office against the opposition of the growing Liberal and Socialist parties. The latter had Jewish leaders, and anti-Semitism seemed a useful policy even though Bismarck was not personally anti-Semitic. His successors in the German Government continued to use anti-Semitism until it became part of the popular tradition.

In Russia, the corrupt and inefficient Tsarist government also sought to gain political support by adopting racism. In 1880 the Tsarist police began a programme of propaganda against Jews which was racist in tone, and instigated the first of a series of pogroms against them. The device did help to divert the peasants and some city workers from their real troubles for a number of years, but nevertheless the Tsarist government ultimately fell.

In France there was the famous Dreyfus case, in which anti-Semitism was used as a political weapon.

Racism was thus a body of traditions—some general, some specific—that became part of the popular culture of some Western countries but not of others. Where it was accepted, it influenced people to think in terms of biological race superiority and to act in a violent and prejudiced manner towards certain minority groups. Wherever it has existed it has superseded, or at least become interwoven with, all other bases of group antagonism.

IGNORANCE OF THE COSTS OF PREJUDICE AS A SOURCE OF PREJUDICE

Many people believe that the harmful effects of prejudice are felt only by those against whom it is indulged. There can be no doubt that restriction of employment opportunities, lack of access to facilities (both publicly and privately owned) that are meant to serve the population in general, the presence of bias and antagonism in law enforcement officials, and many other manifestations of prejudice, are directly harmful to those people whom they affect. But it is not so obvious that those who feel the prejudice, and who enforce the discriminations which are its visible manifestations, are themselves victims of their own attitude and behaviour. This misunderstanding might itself be regarded as one contributory root of prejudice, since few people would so strongly maintain a kind of behaviour which they considered to be harmful to themselves. It is therefore necessary for us first to examine the ways in which prejudice is harmful to the prejudiced.

1. In the first place, there is the direct economic waste entailed by failure to use the full productivity of manpower and the fullest demands of the market. In so far as people are kept unemployed because of prejudice, or are employed at lower tasks than they are capable of handling, there is waste. Every employer loses by not hiring the most efficient workers available, and every consumer loses by having to pay higher prices for his purchases. The loss is most serious and most obvious during periods of manpower shortage, but it can be demonstrated to exist at other times also. It usually takes an indirect form, and thus is not readily apparent to most persons. Also, as we have seen, some people benefit directly from prejudice, and so are especially unlikely to notice the indirect loss. While prejudice is just one among many sources of loss, it is seen to be a significant one when we note its connexion with low standards of living in several parts of the world. In such regions, even if natural resources are abundant and there is no overpopulation, prejudice keeps productivity per person low. The Southern states of the U.S.A. provide an obvious illustration of this.
2. A second type of economic cost of prejudice is that which arises out of social problems which are aggravated. Much of this cost is borne by a government budget. Where pre-

judice creates social problems, the government must control or alleviate them. Even a government run by the most prejudiced people finds it imperative to control communicable diseases and epidemics, maintain a police and jail system, offer some protection against accidents, and provide a minimum of direct relief so that starvation will not be too obvious. The costs are frequently more direct. The bad health of a group of people kept down by prejudice creates an unhealthy environment for the prejudiced. The costs of crime are met not only by the government but also by the criminals' victims.

3. A third group of costs is to be measured in terms of time wasted before being translated into terms of money. A casual inspection of the front pages of the world's newspapers would indicate that the people of countries where prejudice prevails spend much time in discussions on how to treat minority groups. Only in prejudiced countries are congresses and parliaments frequently engaged in debate and legislation concerning minority groups. Many of the private organizations ranging from businessmen's groups and unions to sports groups and social clubs in these countries find it necessary to take time to consider how and in what degree to apply their prejudiced policies in specific cases. In terms of the primary aims of these congresses and organizations, such activity is a waste of time. The group could turn its attention to matters more directly connected with its own well-being, or it could release its members sooner to pursue their own interests.

Then, too, the existence of more laws and rules creates more opportunities for litigation and for contesting the rules. Give people a grievance and an enormous amount of time will be spent in indulging it. The prejudiced peoples of the world impose on themselves a huge burden simply by obliging themselves to decide how and to what extent in specific cases they shall hold down the people against whom they are prejudiced. This burden has to be measured in terms of time and mental energy.

4. A fourth cost of prejudice is seen most clearly in the relation between nations today. Each nation is anxious to gain the goodwill or respect of other nations, whether its ultimate aim be peaceful accommodation or domination. Diplomacy, international economic assistance, participation in world organizations, and all other governmental activities directed towards other nations, are aimed at

acquiring prestige and influence. These efforts on the part of some nations are partially nullified by acts of prejudice within those nations. Few people will regard with complacency acts of violence and discrimination against members of their own race or nationality in another country. And many other people wonder whether an ally is to be trusted if it engages in acts of prejudice against minority groups. While prejudice is only one factor among many, a survey of international attitudes today would show that there is no complete trust or respect for nations in which prejudice prevails.

The diplomatic efforts and goodwill activities of these nations cannot have their full influence. This is especially true when the diplomats themselves manifest prejudice against their allies.

Fully two-thirds of the people of the world today are members of races towards whom much prejudice has been shown. Some of these people have now formed important nations, and others show signs of developing in that direction. It is these peoples especially which regard prejudice in other nations as part of the foreign policy of those nations. Much of the rational and expensive efforts in the diplomacy of the latter nations is thus wasted by prejudice.

5. Thus far we have been counting the measurable economic waste caused by prejudice. There are also psychological forms of waste that cannot be easily translated into money, time or effort, although their effects may be more devastating in the long run. Our fifth damaging effect of prejudice on the prejudiced arises from the fact that it creates barriers to communication. A great deal of knowledge and culture is lost to prejudiced people, because they will not meet and talk with those who have this knowledge and culture. There is little realization on the part of the prejudiced of how much they miss in this way, but the lack of recognition does not alter the fact. As the hitherto subordinated peoples have secured independence, they have turned particular attention to learning and science. Though they have a great deal of lag to make up, some of their developments in this field are already approaching those of the hitherto dominant peoples. Thus the barrier to communication created by prejudice is having an ever-increasing damaging effect on the prejudiced.
6. Prejudice serves as an outlet for frustration, as we shall

have occasion to emphasize on later pages. A number of studies have shown that the presentation of a frustrating situation will, in most circumstances, increase prejudice towards any group that happens to provide a convenient outlet. Since the prejudices we are concerned with are manifested by whole groups of people, the frustrations which give rise to them must be extensive and serious ones. Such frustrations arise from external circumstances such as economic depressions, lack of satisfaction in family relations, and so on. These are admittedly difficult problems. But prejudice does not solve them. At best it can temporarily relieve the feeling of frustration. This temporary relief is harmful, since it prevents the search for, and action towards, the real solution of the frustration. This point will be given fuller attention in a later section.

7. Recent researches have shown the correlation between prejudice and other kinds of rigidity and narrowness, at least in Western culture. While the cause is not yet clear, the connexion is so strong that it may fairly be inferred that the maintenance of prejudice will be accompanied by a closed mind towards anything new and an inability to accept and reciprocate fully any human relationship. Clearly, anyone who has these personality defects is missing much of what life has to offer.
8. Prejudice is partially characterized by fear and anxiety in relation to the groups against which it is directed. In Europe during the Middle Ages, many people terrified themselves and their neighbours with beliefs that Jews were agents of the Devil and that they engaged in ritual sacrifices of Gentile children. Many of the minor Nazis of modern Germany were convinced that Jews were engaged in an international plot to enslave their country. Prejudiced people everywhere exaggerate the numbers and power of the minority groups in their home areas. These and other facts indicate that a feeling of terror is a motive for an act of terrorism. The fears and anxieties are based on false beliefs, but the psychological pain they cause to those who feel them is real enough. Prejudice thus contributes to unhappiness.
9. When prejudice is part of the culture of a people, it can shift its direction from one group to another. The history of countries where prejudice has existed shows that different minorities have been the objects of prejudice at different times. The objects of prejudice are not as stable

as is commonly thought. The immigration of a new nationality group to a country where prejudice is entrenched—as of Indians to South Africa or of Chinese to the United States—can be the basis of a new focusing of prejudice which had previously been directed to another group. The development of tensions between governments—as between France and Germany in 1914 and 1938 or as between the Vatican and Germany in the late 1930s—can become the basis of popular false beliefs and discrimination against peoples or religious groups. No group of people is safe from prejudice when any other group is already its object.

10. Closely associated with prejudice is disrespect for law and unwillingness to settle disputes peacefully. When one group of people is prejudiced against another group, it is generally unwilling to apply the usual laws and standards of behaviour to the persons who are the objects of prejudice. Violation of the law when it is to be applied to such persons is one of the most typical forms of discrimination. In many countries of the world it has been found that unchecked violence and deprivation of civil rights directed against one group can easily spread to all other groups. When laws are misused or ignored, they become weakened, and illegality becomes part of the entire culture. Where a dangerous cultural practice exists, any person or group may become its victim.

Yet there can be little doubt that prejudiced people believe that prejudice cannot be directed against them or that it has no harmful effects on them. If they understood the consequences of their own attitudes and behaviour, they could at least question their own prejudices. This has not only been demonstrated logically, but also empirically, by direct questioning of prejudiced people. Even when aware of the action of prejudice on minority groups, they are not aware of the *reaction* of prejudice on themselves. Ignorance of the full consequences and repercussions of prejudice is thus a pre-condition or necessary cause—although not a sufficient explanation—of prejudice.

THE TRANSMISSION OF PREJUDICE TO CHILDREN

We may digress from our discussion of the specific causes of prejudice to consider how it is passed along from generation to generation. It is customary in countries where racism prevails to assume that it is natural and inevitable that one group should disdain or look up to another. We have already seen that prejudice is frequently a result of deliberate propaganda: yet the fact that it is often found in fairly young children gives rise to the incorrect assumption that it is inborn. Actually, prejudice is learned. Studies show that it can be learned by children as young as four years old.

The teaching of prejudice takes place in the same informal manner in which other aspects of non-material culture are taught. Children may be taught prejudice by their parents, their teachers, their friends, their Sunday school teachers. Parents are the most important influence. While some parents do not want their children to be prejudiced, others teach prejudice to their children because they themselves grew up to believe that it was proper and natural. Parents teach prejudice to their children by their own behaviour, by their expressions of disgust, by forbidding certain associations, by their choice of observations, by their indications as to what is humorous or degrading, and so on. Sometimes older people will even make fun of children to get them to be prejudiced. But much of the time older people do not realize that they are teaching prejudice to children. At the dinner table, while the children are listening, a mother will tell her husband about her troubles with the Negro or Polish maid. Not only do the children absorb this, but they also come to imitate her behaviour towards the maid, which unconsciously expresses her prejudice in almost every act.

At church or Sunday school, Christian children may learn from the Bible story that 'the Jews' killed Christ. Biblical scholars point out that only a few Jews were against Jesus, and that most of them thought he was a good religious teacher. It was the Romans who punished people at that time and they believed he was dangerous to their government. But Sunday school teachers do not always point out these facts. To make matters much worse, they sometimes identify the people of ancient Palestine with the Jews living in present-day Europe and America, and transfer the blame for a crime that

happened two thousand years ago on to people who are living today. Other religious and folk teaching has similar myths which promote prejudice in children.

Some school text-books help to create prejudice. Surveys in several countries have revealed that text-books, especially history books, give derogatory descriptions of people of other nations and disparage minority groups within the nation itself. An immigrant group, for instance, is not usually described in terms of what its members hold dear and consider proper. Rather, the immigrant group is judged by the standards of the majority group. People may be loyal, hard-working, kindly and ambitious, but if they are poor and ignorant and have not yet learned the customs of their adopted nation, they are looked down on in some text-books as well as by most of the native-born people.

Older children teach prejudice to younger ones. Children quickly develop rules about all sorts of things, and each member of the neighbourhood gang is expected to follow the rules. If prejudice is one of the 'rules' in the community, older children are sometimes even more forceful than parents in teaching prejudice to younger children. Sometimes they make up stories about how dangerous or stupid members of minority groups are. These stories are imaginative child's play, but their effect can be very powerful in determining future attitudes. One study of prejudice among adults showed that quite a number of people claimed that their prejudice arose from bad childhood experiences. But when the stories were examined more closely, it was found that the incidents were not known to have actually happened, but were mostly scare stories circulating among the local children. The number of crimes committed by Negroes, Mexicans, and other minorities is actually much smaller than many people think.

Thus we see *how* children, and adults, learn prejudice. Like most other things, they learn it from each other, and especially is it true that the old teach the young. As it passes on from generation to generation, it changes a little. It comes to be applied to new minority groups, and once in a while it ceases to be directed at what were formerly minority groups. Sometimes it grows stronger and sometimes it gets weaker. But it is always taught in the same way as games, good manners, swear words, or anything else in the non-material culture.

The teaching of prejudice is, of course, not inevitable. Some parents, even those who live in dominantly prejudiced

cultures, bring up their children to be broadminded and free from prejudice. Also, children and adults who have been taught prejudice can un-learn it. Wise parents, teachers, friends, and books can explain the errors and dangers of prejudice. General education or a religious or humanitarian impulse can lead to a self-examination which sometimes dissolves prejudice.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PREJUDICE

Thus far we have been considering prejudice in its rational aspects—as serving a certain purpose, or as a result of ignorance or as a kind of tradition which is learned. There is also an irrational function which it fulfils, for it apparently satisfies a psychological need. This is a very important factor, for without it prejudice might die a natural death after a few generations, if people realized that they were dupes of a few persons who exploited prejudice or that they were blind followers of a harmful tradition.

People have different theories as to what constitutes the psychological basis of prejudice. Some of the theories have been disproved by scientific studies by psychologists and sociologists, yet are still believed by many people.

One such idea is that prejudice always arises instinctively against people who are different. This may be called the 'dislike of differences' theory. When some people are asked why they dislike Negroes, they will say it is because Negroes are so black and dirty, or because Negroes are dangerous. Others will say they do not dislike Negroes, but that you cannot treat a Negro as you can a white man, because a Negro is like a child or an animal and cannot act like a man. All these statements are expressions of prejudice. They assume that there is something about the minority group which naturally causes the majority group to regard it as inferior.

There are several things wrong with the 'dislike of differences' theory:

1. It does not explain the stereotyping that goes with prejudice. Many Negroes are no more dangerous or dirty than many white men. Most Negroes are not even black, and a few are so light-skinned that they can pass as whites. If Negroes do not always behave like fully responsible people,

that in itself is partly due to prejudice. Even if the prejudiced person maintains that most Negroes have these undesirable traits, he will admit that there are exceptions. Yet he is prejudiced against the exceptions too.

2. There are a lot of differences among people against which there is no prejudice. And there are many places in the world where people of different races and religions live together without prejudice. Red hair is just as striking a characteristic as dark skin, and yet few people have prejudice against people with red hair.
3. The 'dislike of differences' theory does not explain the fact that prejudiced people make contradictory statements about those against whom they are prejudiced. Prejudiced people say they dislike Jews because the latter are 'always trying to push themselves into places where they are not wanted', and also because 'Jews are clannish; they keep to themselves'. Prejudiced people observe that 'Negroes are lazy, and have no ambition' and yet they are the first to strike down a Negro who tries to secure education or a better job or home.

Another largely fallacious theory of prejudice is that people become prejudiced because of unpleasant experiences with members of minority groups. It is true that a bad experience with a person can make one dislike that person ever afterwards. But why should the dislike be turned to all people with the same colour of skin or the same accent? If a fat person does one some harm, one does not forever thereafter hate all fat people. If one has a quarrel with a member of the Baptist church, one does not feel the need to fight all Baptists. Obviously, a lot more is needed to explain prejudice.

One of the most important steps in understanding prejudice was taken when the psychologists developed the 'frustration-aggression' theory. In simpler language this is called the 'scapegoat' theory. It is based on a great deal of sound scientific knowledge. Studies of human behaviour have shown that some people are steadily prevented from doing the things they want to do and are consequently not happy. This is called 'frustration'. Then they are likely to strike at something or try to make somebody else unhappy. That is, they become 'aggressive'. When, as often happens, a person cannot hit back at the specific thing that makes him unhappy, he finds a substitute. Among the ancient Hebrews, there was a periodical ceremony of driving into the desert a goat 'burdened with the sins of Israel' to perish there. We still use the term

'scapegoat' to refer to an innocent substitute who gets punished for someone's troubles or anger.

Everyone uses a scapegoat. An occasional action, when we are stopped from doing something we want to do or become angry for some reason, is to kick a chair or other convenient object or throw something on the floor. Small children do this frequently. Little harm is done if the scapegoat is not a living creature, but sometimes a man will beat a dog or a child, not so much because of what the dog or child did as because the man is angry about something else. One who is reprimanded by his employer will sometimes come home and pick a fight with his wife. He cannot talk back to his employer so he vents his anger upon his wife. The dog, the child, and the wife are scapegoats, and they suffer because they are scapegoats.

Occasionally a whole group of people, perhaps a whole country, feels frustrated. Perhaps such people do not know what the trouble is, or perhaps they do know but there is nothing that can be done about it. They may feel frustrated by bad economic conditions, unemployment, low pay, as many Americans in the Southern states have been for a long time. Or they may feel frustrated by failure to become the leading nation of the world, as the Germans were after losing World War I. Nothing they do seems to bring prosperity or glory to their land, and so they take it out on a scapegoat. It is frequently a low grade politician who says 'Here is your scapegoat. It's the cause of your trouble. Kick it and you'll feel better'. According to the theory we are considering, this is why there has been so much prejudice and violence against Negroes in the American South, and against Jews in Nazi Germany.

In any country, some people feel more frustrated than others. Some people are unable to earn even the basic necessities of life. Others get these, but fail to achieve higher ambitions. Some children are frustrated by not doing well at games, or by not getting enough affection or support from their parents. Some children feel that they are unfairly treated by teachers. There are various ways of meeting frustrations:

1. By trying to eliminate the frustrations.
2. By keeping away from the things that are frustrating.
3. By understanding the inevitable character of the frustration and deciding that it is necessary to put up with it, at least for a while.
4. By refusing to realize the cause of the frustration, and taking it out on some scapegoat.

Certain politicians benefit by leading people to scapegoats. One thing that helped Hitler to secure power in Germany was his persuading the German people that the Jews were the cause of all their troubles. In South Africa politicians are sometimes elected to office after a campaign devoted merely to raising white people's fears about Negroes. Some writers and radio speakers become popular and wealthy by telling people to hate the bankers, or the English, or the Jews. This may sound odd to anyone who looks at the situation objectively; but it does not sound odd to people who have troubles and do not know what to do about them. They feel a little better by having a scapegoat, just as each one of us feels better by kicking or pounding something when we are angry. Thus, people often follow the politicians who make them feel better. But having a scapegoat does not really solve any problems. In fact, people are steered away from the solution of their real problems when they have a scapegoat. The only one who benefits is the politician or the writer, as he gains power over the whole people by being the leader in kicking the helpless scapegoat.

During times of business depression, when many people are unhappy and frustrated, there is an increase in violence against Negroes in the Southern states of the United States. The big depression of the 1930s saw the birth, in the United States, of 114 organizations which spent their time and money in spreading hate against Jews. Similar organizations were started by pro-Germans in all the free countries of Europe—some of them by agents of Nazi Germany, and others by people who hoped to benefit by German domination of the world. The leaders of these organizations hoped to get control of the governments of their countries by following the anti-Semitic propaganda that had been so successful in Germany. They did not achieve all their aims—Hitler was finally defeated—but they did succeed in creating hatred and fear of Jews. It is known that many of these same people are now waiting for the next depression or the next war to come along so that they can finish their work. They know how to use frustrating conditions for their own advantage.

Frustration explains the force behind prejudice. But it does not explain why certain minority groups are chosen as scapegoats. To explain this, psychologists help us out with another theory—the 'symbolic' theory. This theory is based on the important fact that one thing can stand for something else in the unconscious mind. People often find themselves

liking something, certain foods or some scenery, for example, without knowing why. If such feelings could be traced back to their origin, it would be found that these new foods or new scenery 'remind' people of some pleasant experience in their past. There need not be any real connexion at all. The unconscious mind is always making connexions so that one thing will substitute for another.

There can also be substitutes, or 'symbols' as the psychologists call them, for things disliked. Probably everyone has had the experience of disliking something at first sight, without any reason for doing so. The unconscious mind had made a symbolic connexion there, too.

Now, the question is: Why are certain minority groups disliked by so many people? Obviously, they must be symbolically connected with something very important to many people. Such things would include an interesting life with new opportunities, money, a belief in being kind and just to others, family life and sexual satisfaction, good health, and so on. Toward all these things most people have mixed attitudes: we like them, but we also dislike them. We may be a little afraid of some of these things, or we may wish to rebel against them. But we cannot say so: it is not proper to dislike these important things. So the dislike becomes unconscious, and can be expressed only through a substitute. Minority groups become substitutes for important things in the culture with which they have deep psychological and historical connexions. We cannot publicly admit dislike, or fear, or the wish to revolt against these things. So we apply these attitudes to their substitutes, which are frequently minority groups.

Let us take an example of how this would work out for one type of case. All of us have had the experience once in a while, of disliking a thing that is good for us. Most of us have kicked up our heels at our parents, at our church, at practices that are said to be healthy and so on. That seems to be a natural human way of behaving, if it happens only once in a while. But some people will not admit that they would like to rebel, and these are usually the ones who would most like to do so. They pretend that they adore their parents at all times, that they always have 'pure' feelings about sex and religion and so on. Since this is not *really* the case, they have to give vent to their rebel feelings in some way. And they do so by having prejudices against minority groups.

It is not only a matter of disliking the objects of prejudice; it is also a matter of fear. When people hate something

strongly, they are usually also afraid of it. It is of course sensible to hate and fear certain things, but when the danger is imaginary there is something wrong with the person who hates and fears. That is the situation when there is prejudice against minority groups. Most of the fears connected with prejudice are imaginary, even though they seem real enough to those who have them.

1. Take, for example, the fear of large numbers. Many people who are prejudiced against Negroes, or any other minority group, say that there are *so many* Negroes. They are afraid they are going to be 'overwhelmed' or 'dominated' by Negroes. If these people are asked: 'What percentage of the people in this town are Negroes?' they usually give a falsely high number. The real facts are available to them if they wished to know them. But prejudiced people seem to wish to hold on to fears about the large numbers of Negroes.
2. Another fear is that minority groups have too much power. Prejudiced people say that Jews own the big banks and run the government. Even a little investigation will indicate that this is not so. As a matter of fact, in some countries Jews are kept out of the banking business and out of many government posts because of prejudice. There are no Jews in many of the biggest and most powerful industries.
3. There is the fear that members of the minority may be spying for foreign governments. For years before World War II many Americans were afraid of Japanese spies. When the war came, hundreds of Japanese-Americans were arrested because they were suspected of spying. There were many rumours of various kinds of secret work for the Japanese Government. But when it was all investigated, *not a single* Japanese-American was discovered to have been helping the enemy. The Japanese Government knew about Americans' prejudice and hired only white Americans as spies.

It is wise to be afraid of some things. But the fear that goes with prejudice is always harmful, because it is a fear of something imaginary.

We can now bring together the ideas dealt with in this section: Why do people learn prejudice and hold it so strongly that they do not wish to give it up?

1. It is *not* because people naturally dislike any person who looks different, behaves differently, or speaks in a different manner from themselves. In fact, people pay attention to

- differences only when they have prejudices first. Then they hold themselves apart and despise or hate the differences of the other people.
2. It is *not* because prejudiced people have had unpleasant experiences with minority groups. Some have, and some have not. Those who have had unpleasant experiences with minority groups have also had unpleasant experiences with other people. They remember some unpleasant experiences because they are *already* prejudiced.
 3. In part, people have prejudice because they are frustrated and unhappy in a general way. Depression, unemployment, and low wages are among the main causes of frustration for a country as a whole, but there may be other causes. There are many things which cause fear and anxiety among large numbers of the people. When people do not understand the cause of their frustration, or feel that there is nothing they can do to stop it, they look for a scapegoat. Certain kinds of politicians gain popularity by naming the Negroes, the Jews or some other group as the scapegoat.
 4. People are willing to use these groups as *scapegoats* because the groups have become *symbols* of other things they dislike. They cannot openly show their dislike of these other important things, since they would regard that as improper or foolish. Also, they like or admire the other thing at the same time as they dislike it. So they switch all the dislike over to the symbol—the minority group.
 5. Fear of imaginary dangers is an important part of prejudice. One of the reasons why prejudiced people dislike or hate minority groups is that they imagine all kinds of fearful things about them.

PREJUDICE AS A WARPING OF THE PERSONALITY

A number of students have sought to explain prejudice as a type of mental disease. Some mental disorders can be traced to inadequacies in personality development, and prejudice is regarded under this theory as resulting from a particular kind of mis-development. Prejudice arising from this source is quite non-deliberate and cannot be eliminated by rational appeal or the application of laws. Most studies of this aspect of prejudice take the form of a comparison between groups of prejudiced and unprejudiced persons, based on a number

of questions about personality characteristics and personality development. The items where significant differences appear are then integrated into a clinical picture of the 'prejudiced personality'. One study, by Frenkel-Brunswik, Sanford, and others, at the University of California, is based on a detailed comparison between the personality traits of known anti-Semites and the personality traits of known non-anti-Semites. By comparison, the typical anti-Semite was found to be a compulsive conformist, exhibiting anxiety at the appearance of any social deviation. He appears to be a person with little insight into himself, who projects his own undesired traits on to other people, so that he blames people against whom he is prejudiced for traits which are characteristic of himself. He has a tendency toward stereotyped thinking and is unimaginative. He tends to have unconscious inferiority feelings centring mainly in a feeling of sexual inadequacy. He expresses strong filial and religious devotion, but unconsciously manifests hatred of parents and indifference to moral values. He exhibits an aversion for emotionality but unconsciously has a feeling of inferiority toward it. He is prone to aggressive fantasies.

Another study was conducted in New York City by Jahoda and Ackerman. They secured detailed reports on 50 patients who had expressed anti-Semitism while undergoing psychoanalytic treatment, and tried to determine what role, if any, anti-Semitism played in their unstable mental make-up. It appeared that anti-Semitism resulted from some distortion in personality structure and fulfilled certain needs. Anxiety and lack of security in group membership are among the principal traits of anti-Semites. Fearing attacks on their integrity as individuals, these persons counter-attack against Jews, the handiest object. The anti-Semitic personality type in this study, too, has an overwhelming desire to conform, to appear 'respectable' and to attach itself to dominant organizations, and is characterized by outward submissiveness and inward aggressiveness.

Hartley also made a study of the personality traits of the prejudiced person. Since he found that intolerance toward one minority group is usually accompanied by intolerance toward other minority groups, his description applies to all prejudiced people and not only to anti-Semites. The method of study employed by Hartley was to use a social distance test of the type invented by Bogardus, a test requiring respondents to state whether they thought ethnic groups were similar or

dissimilar, a freely written essay on the respondent's 'personality' and a salience test, in which pictures of individuals of different minority groups were shown to the respondents, who were asked to guess their personality and attitudes. Hartley's subjects were students at several colleges. His summary of the characteristics of the intolerant personality follows: 'unwillingness to accept responsibility; acceptance of conventional *mores*; a rejection of serious groups; rejection of political interests; a desire for groups formed for purely social purposes and absorption with pleasure activities; a conscious conflict between play and work; emotionality rather than rationality; extreme egotism; compulsive interest in physical activity, the body and health. He was likely to dislike agitators, radicals, and pessimists. He was relatively uncreative, apparently unable to deal with anxieties except by fleeing from them'.

These studies of prejudice as the expression of a warped personality have certain weaknesses when considered by themselves. But when taken in connexion with other factors underlying prejudice, they add much to our understanding. They probably are most useful in explaining extreme cases of prejudice.

CONCLUSION

On preceding pages we have seen that prejudice is indeed a complex thing. There are background factors and immediate factors which account for its presence in any individual or group of people. This complexity makes it difficult to eliminate prejudice, as action taken against one root does not necessarily affect the other roots. Perhaps we can best summarize our findings by suggesting what kinds of action will contribute toward a reduction of prejudice. These are *not* listed in the order of their importance but simply according to convenience of presentation.

1. One thing would be an intellectual appreciation by prejudiced people of the fact that prejudice harms them, financially and psychologically. Involved in this is a recognition that the gains that seem to come from prejudice are to some extent temporary and illusory. These gains, which can be classified as economic, political, sexual and prestige, sometimes divert the prejudiced person from more

- satisfactory and more permanent gains. Prejudiced people need to be shown how they are exploited because of their prejudice.
2. A second activity helpful in diminishing prejudice would be the provision of accurate information about the minority groups against which there is prejudice. This should include facts which break stereotypes, and explanations of the causes that give rise to differences between minority and dominant groups. Facts of this type are learned not only through books, newspapers and speeches, but through personal contact on a friendly and equal basis.
 3. One of the most important traditions to combat is that of racism. This can be attacked not only when it is applied to minority groups, but also whenever biological explanations are applied to *any* social phenomenon.
 4. Legislation which penalizes discrimination reduces the occasions on which prejudice is made to seem proper and respectable, as well as eliminating some of the worst effects of prejudice. Legislation against discrimination is thus one of the most important means of breaking traditions of prejudice.
 5. A tradition on which prejudice is based can be maintained only by being transmitted to children. If the transmission of prejudice through the home and play group can be counteracted by the school and church while the child's mind is still flexible, prejudice cannot long survive. Also, if the public can be led to consider that manifestations of prejudice are shameful, many parents will refrain from displaying their prejudice in front of their children. Where this happens, children are less likely to acquire prejudice.
 6. Direct efforts to solve major social problems will not only divert people from prejudice, but will remove some of the frustrations that create a psychological tendency towards prejudice. The most important single step of this type is the provision of economic security.
 7. Demonstration that many of the fears about minority groups are imaginary might help to dispel those fears. There is probably a need to inculcate a more thorough understanding of the fact that fear or hatred of a minority group is a mere substitute for real fear or hatred of some other object, towards which people are unwilling to express their true attitude. A general programme of mental hygiene needs to be developed to get people to be honest with themselves.

8. Any effort to develop healthier and saner personalities will diminish prejudice. Such efforts usually require the guidance of psychiatrists.

A concerted programme which included all these activities would, in a generation or two, at least greatly reduce prejudice. But many of these activities are difficult to put into practice. Further scientific research is needed to indicate just how important each of these factors is, and how they can be manipulated most easily. Both research and action aimed at diminishing prejudice are under way in several countries. The future is hopeful if even a small group of people in each country is organized to eradicate this most serious blight on all civilization.