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28 February 2017, by robm

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New Lahore blast – Awami Workers Party condemns the ongoing attacks by the religious fanatics in different parts of Pakistan

27 February 2017, by Awami Workers' Party

This is to express our deep sympathy with those whose loved ones lost their lives today at Lahore blast. 8 martyred and several dozen injured at Mumbai Resturant at Lahore Defence Housing Society.

Awami Workers Party condemns the ongoing attacks by the religious fanatics in different parts of Pakistan, 12 during the last seven days. The fanatics have declared an all out attacks on our culture, democratic traditions and the ways of our life.

The state must not abandon its policy to delink itself with religious fanatics. There should be no good and bad Taliban, they are all the same, some are doing blasts now, others will do later.

There must not be any hint of talks with fanatics. They are the neo fascists, all the democratic and progressive forces must unite to fight at all levels. Most of the Madrassas are the home ground for the promotion of fundamentalism.

The state must nationalise all the major Madrassas. The state must not give any subsidy to Madrassas. The state must spend at least 10 percent of the total budget on education instead of present 2 percent.

There is no military solution to fundamentalism. They have to be an ideological confrontation with the fanatics.

There is no going back, we will be victorious and individual terrorists will lose.

Farooq Tariq

Spokesperson

Awami Workers Party

How science has been abused through the

ages to promote racism

26 February 2017, by Tim Crowe

Individuals have used race to divide and denigrate certain people while promoting their claims of superiority. Some of these individuals were, and are, respected in their time and their fields. They include philosopher and scientist Robert Boyle and sociologists like Hans Günther. Others who've been guilty include biologists like Ernst Haeckel and historians such as Henri de Boulainvilliers.

What is the history of racially based classifications of humans? And does it have any scientific validity?

Starting with Kant

The eminent philosopher Immanuel Kant was arguably the first "scientific racist". He maintained that dark-skinned Africans were "vain and stupid". He insisted that they were only capable of trifling feelings and were resistant to any form of education other than learning how to be enslaved.

By contrast, Kant maintained, light-skinned Caucasians were "active, acute, and adventurous".

Renowned German anthropologist Johann Blumenbach used skull anatomy to divide humans into five races:

- Caucasians (Europe and western Asia);
- Mongoloids (eastern Asia);
- Malays (south-eastern Asia);
- Negros (sub-Saharan Africa); and
- Americans (North and South America).

But he disagreed with the common view that humans from sub-Saharan Africa were inferior. Blumenbach's "benign" racial categorisation persisted well into the 20th century.

Samuel Morton drew on refined, quantitative assessments of skull anatomy to provide further "scientific evidence". He claimed that interracial intellectual variation is reflected by the interior volume of the skull, and that this justified the use of Blumenbach's groupings to determine relative racial superiority.

He regarded the Caucasian as:

… distinguished by the facility with which it attains the highest intellectual endowments

and Africans as

… joyous, flexible, and indolent; while the many nations which compose this race present a singular diversity of intellectual character, of which the far extreme is the lowest grade of humanity.

"Scientific racism"" was used to justify the ownership of slaves , as well as colonialism. It reached its pinnacle in eugenics, a "science" espoused by the British statistician and sociologist Francis Galton at the end of the 19th century.

Eugenicists advocate the "improvement" of humanity by promoting reproduction between people with desired traits and reducing reproduction between people with less-desired traits. Eugenics featured in race-related legislation like Nazi Germany's Nuremberg Laws and apartheid-era South Africa's edicts.

Genetic evidence

Genetic studies have examined "racial" variation from a molecular perspective. My early mentor Richard Lewontin , an evolutionary biologist from the University of Chicago, was a pioneer in this. His research suggested that 90% of modern human genetic diversity is found between individuals within populations. The tiny balance is due to variation between populations.

This view was confirmed by subsequent studies based on DNA by, among others, Lynn B. Jorde and Stephen P. Wooding . The DNA among all human populations is 99.5% similar. Populations of the geographically much more restricted chimpanzee exhibit more than four times the genetic variation that's found between human populations. Chimpanzees are humans' nearest living evolutionary "relative".

Their research shows that when humans are studied from genetic or anatomical perspectives, the pattern that's discovered is not diagnosable geographically discrete clusters. The norm is gradual, geographically uncorrelated variation in traits and genes. This is even true within peoples who are traditionally thought to be racially homogeneous. There is no evidence of evolutionarily significant racial variation in either genes or anatomy.

The exception is skin colour. Around 10% of the variance in skin colour occurs within groups and about 90% between groups. People living near the equator have darker, more melanin-rich skin than those who live at higher latitudes. Darker skin is strongly selected for because it is a natural sunscreen that limits harmful effects of high ultraviolet rays.

Recent genetic studies indicate that skin colour may change radically within 100 generations because of natural selection.

Genetic racism revived

This overwhelming scientific evidence has not prevented recent studies based on DNA allele frequencies from claiming that there are as many as eight races of humans.

British scientific journalist Nicholas Wade used these studies to claim that natural selection between "races" produced differences in IQ, the

efficacy of political institutions and countries' levels of economic development.

These genetic studies are fundamentally flawed for three reasons:

- Taxonomic studies aimed at determining the validity of races should be based on characters. These are features that are invariant within populations. They should not be based on traits like eye colour and gene alleles, which vary within populations.
- Samples used in the DNA-based studies mentioned above were "cherry picked" geographically to maximise differentiation between human populations, and
- The DNA-based evolutionary racial "trees" were generated by a statistical technique that is designed to produce tree-like patterns which reflect average, not absolute, differences between sampled items. This technique formed the basis of an approach to the construction of evolutionary trees called "phenetics". It has been decisively discredited and generally abandoned.

Evolutionary origins

DNA and anatomy-based findings support the "Out of Africa" theory . This holds that modern humans originated in Africa. Archaic African Homo erectus immigrated into Eurasia between 1.4 million to 1.6 million years ago.

About 90,000 to 92,000 years ago, a second form of humanity, modern H. sapiens, also emigrated out of Africa. This species replaced populations of Homo erectus already in the north.

Attempts to justify the scientific reality of human races warrant no further discussion. They cannot be used to assess racial "superiority". "White" and other non-African people are in fact evolutionary refugees from Africa. After settling in Eurasia, it took only an evolutionary heartbeat for them to lose much of their epidermal melanin.

Dark-skinned humans outside of Africa are descended from migrants who "regained" their "blackness" in equatorial regions elsewhere.

The Conversation

Sandinism or "Danielism"?

24 February 2017, by Hans-Peter Renk

Having been the hegemonic party from July 1979 until February 1990, the FSLN lost the presidential election to Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, candidate of the Union nacional opositora (UNO), a grouping of right, centre and even left (the Socialist Party and the Communist Party) parties! The UNO also won the legislative elections. This defeat put an end to the revolutionary process that opened in July 1979, with the fall of the Somoza dictatorship, and for sixteen years enabled neoliberal governments to govern the country, liquidating most of the revolutionary conquests of the previous decade (including the agrarian reform). From a political-military organization, born in the armed struggle against the Somozist dictatorship, the FSLN became a political party competing for power through the electoral process. Apart from the consequences of its defeat and the disquiet caused by the *piñata* (privatization of state property for the benefit of the FSLN and its leaders), Sandinism was not insensitive to the (political and ideological) consequences of the implosion of the "socialist camp with the Soviet Union at its head "(a famous formula of the 1950s), which was then considered as a counterweight to US imperialism by several sectors of the Latin American (and world) left.

During the 1990s, the FSLN adopted a re-centred policy, allying itself with former enemies (in 2006, the candidate for the vice-presidency for the coalition Unidad Nicaragua Triunfa, led by the FSLN, was a former sympathizer of the counter-revolution in the 1980s) and making pacts with its political rivals (such as the one with the Liberal President, Arnoldo Alemán, in 1998). Divergences with these orientations led to the departure of historical militants and the creation of new political formations, such as the social-democratic Movimento renovador sandinista (Sandinista Renewal Movement, MRS) and the Movimiento por el rescate del sandinismo, (Movement for the Rescue of Sandinism, MpRS) - created by members of the Izquierda Democratica tendency.

Today, the FSLN is controlled by Daniel Ortega (eternal candidate for the presidency) and his close entourage. Of the nine commanders of the national leadership during the 1980s, two (Tomás Borge Martínez and Carlos Nuñez Tellez) have died, only one (Bayardo Arce Castaño) remains in the present FSLN, the other six have retired from political

life or distanced themselves from the line of their former party. One of them, Henry Ruiz Hernández, recently made this bitter observation: "Today, only a political group around the caudillism of Daniel Ortega continues to maintain the acronym FSLN, but there is neither mystic nor norms, programmes, or debates, there is nothing left " [2]

Another element of this mutation: in the 1980s, the FSLN was supported by the grassroots Christian communities, influenced by liberation theology. After his electoral failure in 2001, Daniel Ortega became reconciled with the traditional Catholic hierarchy and more particularly with Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, Archbishop Emeritus of Managua and old enemy of the revolution (in 1996 and 2001, he had specifically supported the anti-Sandinista candidates for the presidency). In November 2006, following a campaign by the Catholic and Evangelical churches, the FSLN parliamentary group voted (along with the right) for a total ban on abortion, abolishing the right to therapeutic abortion introduced in 1893 by the Liberal government of José Santos Zelaya. A few months previously, Rosario Murillo (electoral campaign coordinator for the FSLN, who had become deeply pious) declared on August 15, 2006 to Radio Ya: "We defend and fully agree with the Catholic Church and the other Churches that abortion basically affects women, because we never recover from the pain and trauma of an abortion. When you have resorted to it or you have had to resort to it, you never get over it! [3]

However, despite these new orientations, the return of the FSLN to power (in January 2007) was considered by the Latin American left and sectors close to the "Bolivarian" processes (including in Europe) to be "the second stage of the revolution", defined (including in the Constitution) as "Christian, socialist and based on solidarity". [4] Having joined the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the government of Daniel Ortega was able to implement a series of Venezuelan-funded social programmes - Hambre Cero, Usura Cero, Bono Productivo: between 2008 and 2015, it received $3.612,700,000 under the oil agreement with Venezuela. However, in view of the current crisis, the loans from the public oil company (PVdSA) decreased from $435 million to $309.4 million between 2014 and 2015. [9]

Another problematic issue is the Grand Canal of Nicaragua megaproject, which was awarded to a Chinese consortium in Hong Kong (whose shares have recently fallen by 85 per cent on the stock exchange, the owner's fortune declining from 9 million to 3 million euros, according to *Le Monde Economie* of December 5, 2015). A 116-year concession would allow the group HKDN (Hong Kong Nicaragua Canal Development) to build and operate a transatlantic canal cutting through Nicaragua from east to west for 278 km, including 105 km in the middle of Lake Nicaragua (or Cocibolca), the second largest freshwater reservoir in South America. [10]. This ecologically disastrous project is challenged by the Nicaraguan Academy of Sciences and by the local people who would be expelled from their homes to make way for the canal: "The peasants directly affected by this gamble completely reject the concession. In spite of intimidation, blackmail, deception, threats and direct repression, the government has failed to dislocate the resistance of a popular movement that has already organized 57 marches against the canal, three of them on a national scale. (...) According to the experts, this project has not yet demonstrated that it can be economically feasible, ecologically viable or socially beneficial. Whatever happens, it is clear that the poor in Nicaragua will not benefit from a growth model based on mega-projects that are oriented first and foremost by the interests of transnational corporations and their local partners". [