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CITIZENS INTERRACIAL COMMITTEE OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY
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STATEMENT ON INNATE DIFFERENCES IN INTELLIGENCE BETWEEN NEGROES AND WHITES PREPARED BY PROF. OTTO KLINEBERG(COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY)

This statement was signed by 18 distinguished social scientists and released to the press October 16, 1956. The signers are:

Otto Klineberg Columbia University	Anne Anastasi Fordham University
Theodore M. Newcomb University of Michigan	Stuart Cook New York University
Gardner Murphy Menninger Foundation	Isidor Chein New York University
Nevitt Sanford Vassar College	Marie Jahoda New York University
Robin Williams, Jr. Cornell University	Kenneth Clark City College of New York
David Krech University of California	Bingham Dai Duke University
Jerome Bruner Harvard University	Irving Lorge Columbia University
Allison Davis University of Chicago	Solomon Asch Swarthmore College
Daniel Katz University of Michigan	David Rapaport Austen Riggs Foundation

In connection with the process of school desegregation and the difficulties with which it has been accompanied in certain areas, the question has again arisen as to the existence of innate differences in intelligence between Negroes and Whites. The present statement is directed to that question. Those who have signed it are not on this occasion taking sides with regard to the problem of desegregation as a whole, nor with the manner or the rapidity with which it should be accomplished. They are for the moment concerned only with the facts and conclusions accepted by scientists with regard to racial comparisons in inborn intellectual capacity.

A number of years ago, at a time when Nazi race theories were receiving much publicity, several scientific organizations placed themselves on record as opposed to the conclusion that race was a determiner of innate psychological characteristics; their position was that no such relationship had ever been scientifically demonstrated. These organizations included, among others, the American Anthropological Association (in 1939) and the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, a division of the American Psychological Association (in 1938). More recently (in 1950) a group of distinguished social scientists meeting in Unesco House in Paris issued a Statement on Race which reads in part as follows:

> Whatever classification the anthropologist makes of man, he never includes metal characteristics as part of those classifications. It is now generally recognized that intelligence tests do not in themselves enable us to differentiate safely between what is due to innate capacity and what is the result of enviromental influences, training and education. Wherever it has been possible to make allowances for differences in enviromental opportunities, the tests have shown essential similarity in mental characters among all human groups. In short, given similar degrees of cultural opportunity to realize their potentialities, the average achievement of the members of each ethnic group is about the same.

Two years later an equally distinguished assembly of geneticists and physical anthropologists, also meeting in Paris, pointed out that:

> The scientific material avalable to us at present does not justify the conclusion that inherited genetic differences are a major factor in producing the differences between the cultures and cultural achievements of different peoples or groups. It does indicate, on the contrary, that a major factor in explaining such differences is the cultural experience which each group has undergone.

In 1953, a Statement submitted to the United States Supreme Court by more than thirty American social scientists, included the following:

> The available scientific evidence indicates that much, perhaps

> all, of the observable differences among various racial and national groups may be adequately explained in terms of enviromental differences. ... It seems clear, therefore, that fears based on the assumption of innate racial differences in intelligence are not well founded.

These statements still stand, and in our judgment represent the consensus among experts who have studied this question as objectively and as scientifically as is at present possible. We know of no new research which would reverse these conclusions.

Those few specialist who take a different position usually do so on two major grounds. The first is that Negro-White differences in intelligence test scores persist even when the two groups are "equated" for social and educational opportunities. To this we would point out that such "equation" is exceedingly difficult to achieve, since the opportunities related to test performance are by no means easy to assess in quantitative terms. We do know that the intelligence quotients of Southern Negro children improve markedly after a perior of years in the schools available to them in New York or Philadelphia.

In the second place, it has been argued that the differences in I.Q. persist even when "noncultural questions" are used. We would deny the possibility of devising a "noncultural" test in the light of our present understsnding of the problem.

In the early days of testing, many psychologists believed that the elimination of the handicap due to language was equivalent to eliminating the influence of culture in general. One psychologist, for example, Professor Florence L. Goodenough of the University of Minnesota, devised a performance test consisting of "Drawing a Man." She regarded this test as "culture-free." Many investigators have made use of this test, and they have been able to demonstrate that,

contrary to the earlier view, the results are indeed affected by many aspects of previous experience. Professor Goodenough herself has now recognized this fact, and very honestly and courageously points out her former error. Writing with Dale B. Harris on "Studies in the psychology of children's drawings" in the Psychological Bulletin for September, 1950, she expresses the opinion that: "the search for a culture-free test, whether of intelligence, artistic ability, personal-social characteristics or any other measurable trait is illusory." She goes on to state that her own earlier study "is certainly no exception to the rule" and adds, "The writer hereby apologizes for it."

No one can deny that at the present time the intellectual achievement of American Negro children, particularly those who come from segregated schools, is lower on the average than that of White children, nor that a reasonable amount of time must elapse before the gap can be closed. We would interpret the difference in terms of the whole pattern of educational opportunities associated with the social enviroment, and which may affect both the physical and mental development of the child. Even those few scholars, however, who prefer an explanation in terms of race, indicate that there is overlapping between the two racial groups. Overlapping is usually defined technically as the percentage in one group which is superior in test scores to the median or average score obtained by the other. In every comparison with which we are familiar in this field there is some degree of overlapping. This means more than that some Negro children do better than some White children. It means that some Negro children do better than the average White child, in spite of all the handicaps to which the former have in the past been subjected.

The conclusion is inescapable that any decision to use differences in the average achievement of the two racial groups as a basis for classifying in advance any individual child, Negro or White, is scientifically unjustified.

October 2, 1956.

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Department of
Community Services
L.A. County