

"All Men Not Created Equal"

By Donald MacDonald

The resurrection in the minds of "educated" men, of ideas that have decently died, can only be accounted for by a sort of ghoulishness that such minds revel in.

Recently Dr. Riddle announced in "Time" his unique discovery that men are not created equal, and the revelation was exploited by that weekly purveyor of news on its front page. It is soberly announced that this discovery was the result of profound research extending through "three decades"—and we are warned that this profundity "must be learned, digested, and assimilated before unreason ceases to be a threat to democratic government."

Inferentially this is a direct denial of the fundamental principle incorporated in the Declaration of Independence: "All men are created equal." As a boy in grammar school I was taught the obvious meaning of that statement, and it is irritating to read rather constantly in the current magazines the vulgar misinterpretation which men of intellectual position place on that great and inspiring document. Also, it is annoying to feel compelled to dissipate such pseudo-scientific puerilities. Recently one of the "intelligentsia," in one of the high-brow magazines, also made the great discovery that even Thomas Jefferson had observed the fact that all men are not created equal, and had revealed it in his proposed educational system for Virginia.

It seems impossible that anyone could be so obtuse as to imagine that Thomas Jefferson contended that all men are equal in their innate mental or physical characteristics. Such uniformity would simplify many social and economic problems. Once a Mexican shoe-manufacturing concern went on this principle and made shoes all one size—No. 12. Almost everyone is Mexico could get the shoes on; nevertheless the venture was not a success.

Even at that the variations between human individuals is not very

great, either physically or mentally. From a half mile up in the air the only differences that could be observed are that some men are bald and some are not. There must be differences among the ants, but we can't observe them. Cantonese Chinamen all look alike to me. But we are so close to each other here that microscopic differences are visible. In intellectual capacities among normal men the differences are about as significant as the differences in height. Most of the differences between men as regards capacity are differences in energy, which quite frequently measure differences in desire or fear only.

But in any case it seems absolutely necessary to point out that neither Thomas Jefferson nor any of his contemporaries ever thought that all men were six feet tall or could run the hundred in "ten flat", or were capable of writing a criticism of the Einstein theory. They had in mind simply that there are no gradations of rank or opportunity in Nature.

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then a gentleman?"
as old John Ball said. They merely gave terse expression to the truth that it required law and political action to create the artificial distinctions of rank from serf to king; that the same political means were employed to give to a particular class the (legal) right to steal wealth from the producers of it. Perhaps they should have been more explicit. "Equal right to all and special privilege to none" was their solution. They traced every social disease to a special privilege, and an encroachment by the State on the rights of individuals. "That government is best which governs least."

Times have changed. Muddled thinking prevails. The very party of Thomas Jefferson is centralizing all power in the State. Nobody apparently now understands or believes in the objective by the phrase "All men are created equal." The same writer who made the astounding discovery of the contradictory dumbness of Thomas Jefferson spoke also of the "underprivileged poor"—an impossible term, indicative of abysmal ignorance, but significant nevertheless. Its general use by half-baked social writers who have an awful ability to write without thinking indicates that their foggy objective is the reverse of that of poor dumb Thomas Jefferson. They aim by some mystical justification or rationalization to centralize all power in the State. They wish to regulate all individuals—except themselves, of course, as they with their super intelligence will do the regulating. Their wish is "Special privilege to all and equal rights to none." In this lurid light the term "underprivileged" is quite revealing. One can understand how such advanced thinkers believe that Jefferson thought that all men wore the same size hat.