

Aryan Invasion Theory and Politics: the Case of David Duke

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There are, broadly speaking, three political movements which have taken an interest in the Aryan invasion debate. The first consists of European colonialists and racists, very active before 1945, as in the Nazi schoolbooks where the Aryan Invasion Theory (AIT) was used as the perfect illustration of white dynamism and military superiority (whites entered the dark-skinned people's country, not the reverse), white racism (Aryan invaders devised and imposed the caste system to prevent miscegenation), the perennial threat of racial mixing (the upper castes are visibly non-white, proving that their ancestors succumbed to the seduction of dark-skinned beauties), and the destructive results of such racial mixing (Indians have not contributed to scientific progress for centuries, unlike their whiter ancestors, and they were no match for a small number of white British invaders). Likewise, in 1935 Winston Churchill declared that the British had as much right to be in India as anyone else there, except perhaps "the Depressed Classes, who are the native stock", meaning that most Indians were the progeny of invaders equally foreign in origin as the British.

The second group is the anti-Hindu front in India, including Christian missionaries, so-called Ambedkarites, Dravidian separatists, Marxists and, just now joining the AIT bandwagon, militant Muslims. All of these proclaim to be concerned with -- or just to be -- the natives of India, dispossessed by the Aryan invaders who brought Hinduism from outside. While the political animus of this group entirely stems from Indian conditions, viz. the anti-Hindu struggle, their intellectual source of inspiration, mainly through Christianity and Marxism, is largely Western.

The third group is lined up against the first two, in that it opposes the AIT: the Hindu nationalists. Seeing the disruptive and separatist uses to which the AIT has been and is being put, they feel they need to support the refutation of the AIT.

In Western academic accounts of the political aspects of the AIT, attention is mostly directed at the third group, and this in a uniformly negative and demonizing sense. The second group is practically ignored (though the academics concerned function willy-nilly as its intellectual support base), and the first group is relegated to the past. Contemporary AIT theorists are convinced that they themselves are entirely free from Aryanist fantasies and from colonial or missionary ulterior motives; and that no such pressure is exerted upon them by politicians or public opinion in the West, which after 1945 has completely lost interest in the "Aryan" question. They are indignant that Indian critics dare to

even mention racism among the ideological motives behind the defence of the AIT.

This perception and self-perception among Western AIT scholars is worth a closer analysis, but in the present article I want to focus in particular on the assumption that for Western public opinion, the Aryan question is a dead issue. I will draw the readers' attention to a revival of the racist use of the AIT as the prime illustration of the racist worldview.

Revival of racism

David Duke holds a minor elected office in the Republican Party in Louisiana, where he served a term as state representative and narrowly missed being elected as governor. On the latter occasion he got 60% of the White vote in spite of being financially dwarfed by his opponent, so he clearly resonates with a sizable section of public opinion. As founder of the National Association for the Advancement of White People, he is now the undisputed leader of a reviving White racialism, keeping to a middle course between those who have only an occasional relation with race issues, like Pat Buchanan or Joseph Sobran, and those who have completely reduced their political action to race issues, often also overstepping legal boundaries, such as the Ku Klux Klan (of which Duke used to be a member until he got frustrated with its counterproductive extremism and bad image) and the Aryan Nation.

David Duke's recent book, *My Awakening* (Free Speech Press, Mandeville LA 1999) is undoubtedly a testimony to his competence as a political activist and influencer of public opinion. It is much better written than Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, with which it shares a semi-autobiographical format and a number of ideas, esp. on the alleged Jewish world conspiracy. One cannot deny Duke a certain erudition, quoting as he does from a wide range of prestigious publications somehow useful to his message, such as Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's *The Bell Curve* (1994). He appeals to the fear of American Whites for the prospect of being numerically overwhelmed by Third World immigration, and seems himself to be the perfect illustration of a tendency to shed existing inhibitions about racism in proportion with the gradual sliding of the White majority into minority status. Indeed, the very name of his organization NAAWP, a pun on the NAACP (C for Colored), sends the message that Whites can claim the same identity-based rights which Blacks have recently claimed, from separate holidays (Kwanzaa, Martin Luther King day) to separate dormitories in college.

Though I am not closely familiar with the American situation, I think it is safe to predict that this book will soon be the Bible of the growing circles of Whites who, uncomfortable with actual or looming minority status, will seek stronger assertion of their racial identity. Consequently, I expect political scientists to analyze this book inside out, and I will presently confine myself to Duke's remarkable chapter on India.

Encounter with India

Like many Western tourists, the 21-year-old David Duke who spent a few weeks in India in 1971 was overwhelmed by the conspicuous poverty of the people:

“Millions in India live out their lives on the public streets in the dried mud. There they are born, and there they bathe, eat, sleep, excrete and copulate. As attested by the teeming population, the one thing they seem to do best is breed.” (p.515)

This teeming population worries him, and he mentions with approval that a lady he knows always gives condoms and only condoms when someone comes by to collect money for some Third World project. What makes matters worse for Duke is that it is precisely the lower and “inferior” castes which have sex and procreation as their only pastime, so that the average genetic quality of the Indian population diminishes with every generation.

His explanation for the squalor he witnessed and for its contrast with occasional impressive monuments of ancient civilization is simple: it is $\frac{3}{4}$ what else? $\frac{3}{4}$ the Aryan Invasion Theory. After all:

“Aryans, or Indo-Europeans (Caucasians) created the great Indian, or Hindu civilization. Aryans swept over the Himalayas to the Indian subcontinent and conquered the aboriginal people. (...) The word Aryan has an etymological origin in the word Arya from Sanskrit, meaning noble. The word also has been associated with gold, the noble metal, and denoted the golden-skinned invaders (as compared to the brown-skinned aboriginals) from the West. (...) The conquering race initiated a caste system to preserve their status and their racial identity. The Hindu word for caste is Varna, which directly translated into English means color.” (p.517-518)

So there you have it: Hindus have the longest-lasting racial Apartheid system in the world. Unfortunately they squandered the genetic treasure they brought with them from the far north by mixing with the darker natives: Hindu art testifies to the ancient Hindus' unabashed fondness for sex, and “it was not preoccupation with sex that brought down the high culture as much as it was the racial impact of that obsession. In spite of strict religious and civil taboos, the ancient Aryans crossed the color line. (...) Only a small percentage of each generation had sexual liaisons with the lower castes, but over dozens of generations a gradual change in the racial composition occurred.” (p.518) So that is why the Indians haven't invented the automobile, why they were no match for the British or even the Chinese, why their streets are dirty, why their bureaucrats are corrupt: they lost their racial purity.

All this and the facts

David Duke's brief analysis of Indian society is a shorthand version of the most widespread theory of the Aryan invasion and the caste system. He has not distorted it to suit his own purposes; you can find it like that in many history books (e.g. the late Alain Daniélou's *Histoire de l'Inde*, and publications by leading scholars like Jan Gonda, SK Chatterjee, Gordon Childe, FBJ Kuiper, the early Asko Parpola, H Kulke & D Rothermund). You also find it in the missionary-supported pseudo-Ambedkarite movement which, unlike Dr. Ambedkar himself, fervently believes in and propagates this racial version of the AIT, the only difference being the respective evaluations of the contending races: pseudo-Ambedkarites and Dravidian separatists consider the dark-skinned natives the good guys. Yet, the world of scholarship is beginning to take its distance from this "Aryan apartheid" theory.

At this point I might quote some Hindu nationalist historians who question the AIT and especially its racial version, but such brown-skinned people would not carry conviction with the Duke school; so let me quote some German-originated White professors instead. In a very recent book, *Aryan and Non-Aryan in South Asia* (edited by Johannes Bronkhorst and Madhav M. Deshpande, Harvard 1999) Hans Heinrich Hock and Thomas Trautmann have, so to speak, replicated the Hindu nationalist questioning of the racial interpretation of certain Vedic allusions to ethnic conflict. Both conclude, after surveying all the passages formerly quoted in support of the racial interpretation, that there is little reason to interpret terms like *varna*, "color", in terms of skin color, and that reference to blackness in enemies has the well-known metaphorical meaning of secrecy or evil. Prof. Hock also points out that many leading Aryans are explicitly described as dark-skinned: Krishna, Draupadi, Arjuna (in spite of his name, "pale"), Nakula and Damayanti (p.154), and he might have added Rama and some of the Vedic seers.

The struggle between Rama and Ravana was not one between a white Aryan and a black Dravidian, as Tamil separatists claim: Ravana was dark-skinned, alright, but also a descendent of the Vedic Pulastya clan and competent to perform Vedic ritual, while the Aryan Rama was equally dark-skinned. Other scholars including Asko Parpola had earlier shown that the traditional enemies of the Vedic Aryans, viz. the Dasas, Dasyus and Panis, were principally the Iranian cousins of the Vedic Aryans (all three ethnonyms exist in Iranian, not in the supposedly aboriginal Indian languages like Dravidian and Munda), who on average were at least as white as the latter. While one can never exclude that in such a racially diverse country like India, opposing armies were sometimes markedly different in skin colour, there is simply no testimony in the copious native literature to the kind of grand racial apartheid design imagined by David Duke and like-minded people.

As for the present, not too much should be made of the appreciation of fair skin color in marriage advertisements: the aura which blondes or otherwise whitish women carry is pretty universal and doesn't require an Aryan Invasion scenario

as explanation. If an explanation is needed, it is more likely the influence of white foreign rulers: Aghans and Turks in the past, British more recently. In religion, a North-Indian Jat or Yadav (intermediate castes) will respect a Tamil Brahmin for his Vedic learning even though the latter is usually darker than the former.

Finally, what are the facts concerning the “inferiority” of dark-skinned Hindus as compared with their supposedly white ancestors of the Vedic age and the latter’s white nephews, the Europeans? It is true that in the past thousand years, India has suffered stagnation and decline, but this was largely due to political circumstances: the Muslim conquest and occupation (cfr. the decline of Chinese science under the Mongol occupation in the 13th century). Note that the Muslim invaders were much whiter than most Hindu natives, yet they destroyed all native universities without building a single new one. While the much-touted science of the medieval Muslim empire was mostly borrowed, Indian science was mostly creative and innovative, witness the Arab name for the “Arab” number system: Rakmu’l Hindi, “Indian numerals”.

Coming to the present, it cannot have escaped Mr. Duke’s notice that most Indian immigrants in the US, already over a million, are mostly of the brainy type. In mathematics, the natural sciences, medicine and computer science, Indians are greatly “over-represented” in the leading institutes in the West. In India itself, the recovery of India’s greatness in scientific achievement has been slowed down for fifty years by Nehru’s imposition of models he borrowed from White ideologues in Cambridge and Moscow, but lately India’s breakthrough in these fields has undeniably been spectacular. If this is what a genetically degenerate people can achieve, perhaps the Duke clan should emulate their example.

How India woke David Duke up

So, David Duke, like many old-school Western scholars and like Hitler before him, sees in the Aryan invasion scenario a perfect illustration of his racist world view. But it gets even better. Duke did not merely add the AIT to an arsenal of arguments which he was already building up in support of his racial politics, as just one more illustration. The AIT, in its racial version, played a completely pivotal role in his decision to devote his life to the cause of the White race.

In the countryside around Delhi, Duke visited a temple, and next to it,

“I saw something that will forever remain in my memory. In the shade sat a little, brown, half-caste Indian girl. She was thoroughly emaciated and resembled some sort of hideous doll except that she moved slightly, and her animated bones and skin had a terrifying effect. (...) On one cheek was an open sore the size of a quarter. More sores covered her arms, chest and legs. Dozens of flies covered each sore, jockeying with each other to feast on her flesh. (...) The child held her hand out to me, begging for a few rupees. I dug my hand deep into my pocket, pulled out all the Indian coins I had, and carefully tipped them into her

dark, skeletal hand. I turned and stumbled back out into the hot Indian sun, my eyes blinded by tears.” (p.523)

Yes, tears for so much human misery, i.e. for a victim of Nehru’s counterproductive Soviet-oriented economic policies, just human fellow-feeling for a suffering child? That is what you would expect in this situation, and it may have been there in young David’s mind, of course. But his belief in the AIT put a most peculiar spin on this experience:

“On the way back to my room I wondered if, in a few hundred years, some half-black descendant of mine would be sitting among the ruins of our civilization, brushing away the flies, waiting to die. Every day our nation grows a little darker from the torrential immigration of non-Whites, high non-White birthrates and increasing racial miscegenation (...) To the plaudits of the media, the Pariahs -- the Untouchables -- are slowly replacing the Brahmin of America and the entire Western world. The hideous skeletal girl in the prophetic setting of that Indian temple was my glimpse of the future of the Western world. (...) The huge populace of modern India cannot sustain the level of culture and economic well-being that its high-caste forebears created. (...) Our race’s struggle for survival and evolutionary advancement became the meaning of my life when I looked into that little Indian girl’s forlorn face (...) I determined that my life would be about awakening the Aryan within every person of European descent. When I grow weary in this battle and I find my character smeared or my personal life attacked, that girl’s gaunt face is there to haunt me, to drive me onward. (...) that girl’s countenance is there to remind me, in the most graphic terms, what failure would mean for our progeny.” (p.523-524)

On seeing this pitiable girl outside a Hindu temple, Duke might have resolved to do something about poverty, unjust international trade relations, foolish economic policies, the starving of Hindu temple personnel and their families by Nehruvian secularism, or any other worthy cause somehow related to this poor girl. But because he believed in the invasion of white Aryans in India and their subsequent degeneration due to their biological Indianization, he resolved to do something entirely different: to blow new life into White racism. Who says that the racist understanding of the Aryan invasion scenario has become irrelevant in the West? It is the Aryan Invasion Theory that gave America the racist politician David Duke:

“Before my journey to India, the racial ideals that I believed in were abstract concepts and principles. In the moment I saw that emaciated child in the ruins, all my ideas were dramatically transformed into the reality of flesh and blood. (...) Seeing the child in the temple changed an intellectual commitment into a holy obligation. (...) I realized that day, in the scorching Indian sun outside that temple, that I had to adopt the spirit of an Aryan warrior who understood that the current struggle of our race transcends the centuries. (...) The flame that ignited in me on that hot August day in India in 1971 is still white hot and imperishable.” (p.525)

If the Aryan Invasion Theory is refuted, or alternatively, if its holds out against the present wave of criticism and gets confirmed and stronger than before, it will have consequences not only in the Indian power equation between Hindus and their enemies, but also in American politics.

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