

Race and Achievement

The Geography of Intellect, By Nathaniel Weyl and Stefan Possony. *Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1963. 299 pp. \$7.95.*

WHEN THE AUTHORS of a book begin by telling you what they mean by it, the reviewer's inclination in this respect is simply to quote them. Thus:

The subject of this book is the distribution of human intellectual ability in space and in time. This is a topic of vital importance to the survival of a civilization based upon the freedom of the individual, yet it is one to which very little serious and systematic thought has been directed. Hence, there are both major gaps in our knowledge and areas which

have been rendered virtually impassable by jungles of prejudice and the ideological fanaticism of both the left and right.

As one reads on, however, it becomes clear that the authors' purpose is not solely or even principally to talk about the temporal and spatial distribution of intellect. This is simply the vehicle by which they transmit their real intention: to make the reader think seriously about the possibility that deterioration in population quality is more than just a present-day threat. That this threat arises from the current political and moral philosophy in this country is made obvious in this book.

Actually, there has been considerable talk about population quality for many years, but it has not been sufficient to generate a public movement toward a satisfactory eugenics program. Most of the talk has been among professional groups; very little of it has been directed at the intelligent non-professional reader. The authors hope to fill this gap.

Each chapter seems to be a separate essay. Chapter I is the introduction and the final chapter, a summary. Of the remaining chapters, only VII and VIII are sequentially related; otherwise, any chapter can be read meaningfully before any other. This in no sense destroys the interest of the book, since each chapter deals with a special topic. The result is a series of essays on a range of topics, all of which are pertinent to the problem of population quality and civilization.

Chapter I is historical ethnopsychology: the study of changes in ways of thinking that are associated with changes in the ethnic characteristics of any specified group of people. The authors seek for causes for these ethnopsychological changes, and the chapter discusses a wide range of possibilities that extend from the meteorological theory of Hippocrates to the recent work of the World Health Organization.

In a book like this, it is wholly unexpected to find a short course in race formation. But in Chapter II, there is an excellent discussion of the biological and physiological concomitants of race. This discussion is very well annotated, and the interested reader may, if he wishes, read widely in this field from the references given. The authors introduce a theory that the month of birth (really the month of conception) is important in determining intelligence. This is to show that tropical climate has a dulling effect on intelligence. While this is a novel notion, and one that shows how daring the authors are, it is also

a notion about which considerably more study is needed.

Chapter III is straightforward meteorology. The purpose is to show how the growth of civilizations depends on climate. This is not just a dumping ground for isolated pieces of information; the authors present a coherent, well-developed discussion of several civilizations and the climatological conditions that were associated with their birth and demise. Moreover, the authors were careful in documenting this chapter, and the footnotes give not only a fine bibliography of articles on climatology, but also a number of explanations and interpretations. Even if one is skeptical about the effects of climate on human beings, one cannot but enjoy the skill with which this chapter is written.

Chapter IV is one of the best in the book. Its thesis is that a civilization cannot arise until there is a leisured class to build that civilization. The existence of a leisured class indicates that a group has already achieved a certain cohesiveness unknown in precivilized groups; it also indicates that the group has a surplus economy. If there were no surplus economy, there would be no way of supporting the leisured class. Thus, the great cave paintings of Cro-Magnon man can be explained as the products of a surplus economy, but how a surplus economy could have existed 70,000 to 250,000 years ago is one of the ingenious explanations presented by the authors.

Civilizations later than the Cro-Magnon depended on irrigation, and the authors describe four "irrigation civilizations." Each supported a leisured class which, by this time, was coming to be known as a sacerdotal class which included scribes, scholars, artists, and priests. For an irrigation civilization, much imagination and reasoning were required; these after all are the hallmarks of civilized man and they became more and more in demand as the civilization grew more and more complex.

The authors present an interesting genetic history of the Greeks, Hebrews, and Romans in Chapter V. One finds here that both the Greek and the Hebrew cultures had their origins in the Minoan culture, but when Greeks and Hebrews went their separate ways each followed a distinct genetic pathway. The Greeks mated with other groups, including the barbarians from the north, became infertile, and ceased to exist as a civilization. The Jews, on the other hand, bred within themselves, and by careful selection of mates, became a superior civilization that still exists.

Since the Jew became an outcast within the civilization wherein he lived, he was more easily able to preserve his ethnic identity. In addition, the persecutions suffered by the Jew acted as a biological selection device which contributed further to his superiority. The culture of Rome, which owed so much to the Greeks, destroyed itself through infertility, some of which was deliberate (infanticide, abortion, homosexuality) and some of which was accidental (lead poisoning).

Beginning with Chapter VI, the authors seem to be intent on driving home the notion that, if we do not watch out, all the brain power which was selected out and preserved by man's long struggle through thousands of yesterdays would be lost. Here we see how genius is selected out—first in the Medieval period, then after the Reformation. Among all the national groups for which estimates of genius are given, the Jew leads, and this is not surprising. This chapter also contains a summary of the effects of religion, nationality, and communism on the preservation of genius.

Chapters VII and VIII discuss "intelligence" tests and their use in disclosing racial differences. The authors show a very considerable understanding of psychological tests, but they persist in confusing IQ with standard score, and they insist on defining intelligence as that which is measured by an intelligence test! There is further the very questionable assumption that the scores obtained by the recruits of World War II were directly comparable to the scores obtained by Terman's subjects (school children) in 1915. Perhaps we should not altogether blame the authors for these things; many otherwise respectable psychologists commit the same errors.

The discussion of race differences is quite inclusive. Some readers may think that the authors are biased in their treatment of Negro-white differences because the authors pay no attention to the environmental explanation of these racial discrepancies in test score. This is because the authors were unable to find any factual evidence that the Negroes poor performances on psychological tests is related to their environment.

Chapter IX is a short course in physical anthropology, and it is done so neatly that it will not frighten the layman. It can be read and enjoyed by those who never before had heard of physical anthropology. The authors play with all sorts of theories about the causes of race differences—even to a study of the scores obtained at the Olympic Games. If they had doubled the length of this chapter, it might have been better; one

has the feeling that too much information is packed into too small a space.

Chapter X is concerned with the relationship between the dynamic qualities of a specified group of people and the type of culture that this group has produced. The authors show that civilizations are not entirely the product of social forces, but that both the civilization and the social order produced by a group of people are the objectification of the innate qualities of the collective mind of this group. Several instances of this are discussed in the chapter, leading to the conclusion that, with few exceptions, the civilizations that characterize the temperate and cold areas of the earth are superior to those that characterize the countries of the warmer areas. Throughout this chapter, the implication is that population quality is highest in the countries with the strongest work drives.

Chapter XI discusses the relationship between population quality and national policy. This raises many practical questions. What policy is to be followed with respect to that segment of the working population that is made permanently idle because of automation? In giving help to the "emerging" nations, what policy shall we follow? How far can the United States indulge in a policy for the control of the size of populations at home and abroad? What can be done to raise the quality of all populations, our own included? These questions must be answered; the authors hope that they have contributed toward an answer.

In the opening chapter, the authors suggest that this country is threatened—perhaps with extinction—by the degeneration of our political and moral philosophy. In Chapter XII, the authors discuss the ways by which such philosophies can be destroyed. In general, when a nation loses its political will, the nation disappears. That this country is in danger of losing its political will is indicated to the authors by the rise in "liberalism" and "progressivism." The authors would wish to see our pseudo-intellectuals (liberals) supplanted by a genuine creative minority—something that we have been at pains to prevent by our doctrines of equality and by our acceptance of the environmental explanation of differences among peoples.

The authors close their book on a depressing chord. From the factual point of view, it seems clear that there are qualitative intellectual differences among races and nationality groups which are inherited. But despite the clearness of the factual evidence, there are many who prefer not to accept it and who appeal to religion or to

political philosophy for counter arguments. These are the persons who support the Cult of Mediocrity, which is inimical to any type of elite. Since an elite is what makes a civilization great, there is the possibility that the devotees of the mediocrity cult will destroy what is left of civilization. The Cult has already gained dominance over the educational philosophy of the country, so that we are concentrating our effort on the education of people who will never contribute to progress.

Reviewed by F. C. J. McGURK