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Jensen ?

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Department of Genetics

Campus Totalitarians *JL Jensen EL*

The alarming concept that extremism in the hands of allegedly idealistic young radicals is no vice is beginning to undermine the very foundations of academic freedom.

The extent of the erosion of principles without which free society cannot survive has been underscored by reports of a deliberate campaign of harassment conducted by militant New Left students against Dr. Arthur Jensen, an educational psychologist at Berkeley. Dr. Jensen has come under attack for a research paper, published in the Harvard Educational Review, which suggests that hereditary factors, in addition to environmental ones, may account for lower averages in I.Q. scores shown by Negroes and other disadvantaged groups.

The question is not whether the Jensen research is valid. There is much evidence that it is being abused by some who want to bolster their racist prejudices, although this was clearly not Dr. Jensen's intention. As Dr. Joshua Lederberg, the Nobel Prize geneticist at Stanford University, has pointed out, the study serves as a reminder that diseases, malnutrition or dietary imbalances, either during prenatal or early childhood stages or as a consequence of conditions of past history, may have to be investigated further for their influence on the heredity of various ethnic groups. While Dr. Lederberg disagrees with some aspects of the Jensen hypothesis—particularly the doubts it throws on compensatory education programs, which at best are still in their experimental infancy—he also leaves no doubt that its publication was a scientific contribution and should be treated as such.

This is the heart of the matter. The young totalitarians who have harassed Dr. Jensen and whose tactics of pressure and smear have led to the resignation of one of the scholar's staff members pose a threat to the future of free inquiry that can no longer be ignored. A campus on which classes must be shifted to secret meeting places in order to avoid disruption may soon cease to be a campus at all.

There is special irony that these outrages against free speech are being perpetrated at Berkeley, where the student rebellion originated under the banner of the Free Speech Movement. The subjugation of science—including theories of heredity—to the orthodoxies of political revolutions have been the mark of Fascist, Nazi and Stalinist totalitarianism. Surrender to such tactics cannot be tolerated on the American campus.

Mr. Harry Schwartz
The New York Times

Dear Harry:

I was very pleased to see this.

Perhaps a much smaller issue, but I am a little abashed about my pedagogic skill if I left open the possibility that early environment could influence the heredity of ethnic groups.* I know that I might be hypersensitive about the precision of the vocabulary in my own specialty. Let me point out, at least to you, that there is no issue about influencing the heredity (the genes) of the children. What we are talking about is ~~xxx~~ exclusively about the ~~interaction~~ complicated expression of a given heredity.

Unfortunately, Shockley's militant obscurantism has to provoke this kind of reaction.

All the best

JL Jensen
Joshua Lederberg

** except by natural selection, which I did not discuss; Joe also did in an utterly unsupportable fantasy.*