

tries. Nevertheless, I believe it can be done. The number of inhabitants per acre of arable soil is only a fraction of that in Java. The science of economic botany has certainly not reached the limits of its fruitful research, much less of its application to the soils and climates of southern and eastern Asia. That science is not yet bankrupt either in Cambridge, Calcutta or Chungking.

KIRTLEY F. MATHER

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

### ON "RACIAL" DIFFERENCES

PROFESSOR GARRETT'S comments on the psychological differences between races<sup>1</sup> affords an almost classic example of the confusion which marks the use of the word "race," and underscores a plea entered some months ago<sup>2</sup> for the utmost clarity in terminology where problems of human endowment and its transmission are to be studied. Reference is especially pertinent to his statement that "investigations of race differences in this country have regularly and consistently found differences as between the Negro and white."

In making such a statement, the fact is quite overlooked that one of the groups referred to is not biological, but "racial" only by definition. The Negro in the United States is a mixed type; research carried on almost two decades ago showed that, at that time, of a series of 1,551 adult males, only 22 per cent. did not know of white or Indian ancestry.<sup>3</sup> Admitting the smallness of the sample, it would be hazardous to place the proportion of those among the American "Negro" population of unmixed African descent—that is, biological Negroes—at more than 30 per cent., with the large probability of a much smaller percentage of unmixed Negroes to-day. A "Negro," in the United States, is thus a person of any degree of African ancestry. Biologically, he may be a white person with one Negro great-great-grandparent. It is only in this country that we find "Negroes" with blond hair and blue eyes.

What, then, does it mean that tests "regularly and consistently" find differences between the Negroes and whites? Quite aside from the fact that, as Dr. Garrett says, students "have not always known what their tests were measuring," it would seem that the ultimate significance of these differences is that the sociological group known in this country as Negroes, for historical reasons, in vast majority comprise members of the economic underprivileged group, and as such, have neither the incentives nor the educational background to make the showing in tests attained by

whites. Nor should it be overlooked that certain white groups of underprivileged status test about the same as the Negroes.

Whether there are racial differences in innate traits or not, it would seem to be essential to any scientific approach to the problem that the student at least work with groups belonging to different races, and not make a case for racial differences where the distinction is one of degree rather than kind, and which is social rather than biological. One can thus agree wholeheartedly with Professor Garrett's remark that the "distinction between fact and interpretation should be clearly made."

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY,  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

### SCIENTIFIC INTERCHANGE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SOVIET RUSSIA

DURING the first two years of the present war and the period just preceding it, scientific communication between the United States and Soviet Russia was greatly reduced. Because of difficulties of language, distance and the absence for many years of normal diplomatic relations, scientific interchange between these two countries was never as active as it should have been, considering the similarity and importance of their scientific development.

Among the steps which are being taken to improve and facilitate scientific interchange between American and Soviet scientists is the program of the Science Committee concerning the exchange of scientific publications. We are regularly receiving through VOKS, the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, and through the Soviet Embassy copies of Russian scientific journals, new books and manuscripts intended for publication in the United States. Arrangements are being made to put these promptly into circulation through the usual channels of abstracting and reviewing journals, the manuscripts being submitted to American scientific journals.

In return, this committee is arranging for shipments of recent scientific books, and particularly of journals issued since 1941, to Soviet libraries and institutes. It must be remembered that not only was normal communication interrupted, but many libraries in western Russia have been destroyed, and the scientific collections must be replaced. One shipment of books, reprints and journals has been sent to Kiev, where the university buildings, together with libraries and museums, were destroyed by the Nazis a few days before they retreated. Others will follow as received and as shipping space is available.

Persons who have copies or files of journals which they would like to give to a Russian scientific institute or a Russian colleague are urged to communicate

<sup>1</sup> SCIENCE, n. s., 101: 16-17, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> SCIENCE, n. s., 100: 50-51, 1944.

<sup>3</sup> M. J. Herskovits, "Anthropometry of the American Negro," p. 15, pp. 177 ff. 1930.