

## Prejudice and IQ-testing

By Sheila Lahr

I WAS surprised to note that Dan Katz in reviewing *The Race Gallery, the Return of Racial Science* (WL27) appears to accept that intelligence can be measured objectively and without regard to the values, or demands of bourgeois society.

Surely, IQ testing has long been exposed as being class and gender based. Even open-ended testing to provide opportunities for the more creative had no effect upon the main purposes of IQ testing. As we know, in the 1920s, the American authorities presented newly arrived immigrants with IQ tests for completion, based on the English language and American middle-class culture. Failure resulted in the immigrants being dubbed "simple-minded" and many underwent sterilisation. As did many black people.

*"Researches into human intelligence have generally been skewed to arrive at an end result to fit, or form, prejudice."*

In fact, even in Canada this took place as witness a report in *The Daily Telegraph* (27.1.96) which reveals that the Alberta Eugenics Board, which operated from 1928 to 1972, sterilised 2,844 people, Native Indians making up 25% of these although they were only 2.5% of the population.

If racial "science" is again becoming popular, it is in response to depression, unemployment and advancing technology which makes human beings redundant. Under capitalism, the onus for poverty must be placed upon the poor whose own "stupidity" leads them to live in deprived inner cities, or take up crime and drugs. Certainly, I would have expected socialists to understand this.

Dan Katz and your readers must know that researches into human intelligence have generally been skewed — such as in the case of Cyril Burt — to arrive at an end result to fit, or form, prejudices.

In Katz's final remark, he posits the question of attitudes to be taken should black people be shown to be less intelligent than white. Does he mean *all* black people, against *all* white people? The difficulty in this is that research material can cover only a small and selective sample of

the population and generally aims to arrive at a certain answer!

I would put the following question to Dan Katz. If he were dropped into what remains of the rain forests, in which Indians have survived for generations, would he be "intelligent" enough to survive?

## When Shachtman moved right

By Laurens Otter

COMRADE Haberkern [WL27] is being disingenuous in trying to claim that Shachtman did not move to the right until the 1960s. In 1956, for instance, there was a revolt in the Young People's Socialist League. (Yes, they had been reformed. The earlier lot that had become the YSL was neither the first nor the last generation of the YPSLs that revolted.) This led Doddington and Hoopes (in defiance of Socialist Party of America leader Norman Thomas, who wished to endorse the Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson) to seek presidential nomination.

The revolt was only ended by Thomas reversing his position. (Though this was short-lived; in 1958, the SPA united with the Social Democratic Federation and immediately began moves to liquidate into the Democrats.) Both in 1956 and '58 Shachtman voted with Thomas (as did the majority of the ISL).

Comrade Haberkern is right that I conflated the Attorney General's list hearing with an HUAC one; but it would be very funny if he was also right that there was no HUAC hearing, since the ISL circulated to world Third Camp groups a duplicated document entitled "Max Shachtman's evidence before HUAC" discussing the subject. As secretary of the skeletal group trying to form an Irish section, I received a copy. There was no question in this that the leaflet was especially written during the Korean War.

Prior to that of course I had seen an article in *Militant* (or perhaps enclosed as an insert) written by resigning members of the ISL youth group, who had turned to the SWP, forming the Young Socialist Alliance. Then John Banks, Allen Skinner and others of the international committee received a statement on the subject from AJ Muste. (The Irish committee did not rate a copy of that, but I was asked to translate it into French for francophone interna-

tional committee members.) It became a matter for discussion for all the non-ISL groups of the American Third Camp.

## 1950 was not 1959

By Ernie Haberkern

I DON'T want to drag out this matter of Max Shachtman and the House Un-American Activities Committee, but I do think it important to nail this particular rumour down. It is an example of a particularly nasty form of polemic which uses Shachtman's personal slide to the right to discredit the Third Camp position and avoid discussing the political issues. The technique involves attributing to Shachtman statements he did not make and actions he didn't take and then attributing these imaginary statements and actions to the full Independent Socialist League as a whole. It all seems plausible because later, after the ISL had dissolved, Shachtman did do and say things similar to things he was falsely accused of doing and saying earlier.

As usual, Otter when confronted with documentary evidence shifts his ground. The original charge is not that Shachtman "moved to the right" but that he "had written pamphlets for use by the American forces for dropping on Korea." And that the ISL had endorsed this. Since the documentary evidence I cited refute this, the narrator of this fairy tale resorts to a garbled account based on hearsay of Shachtman's move in the late fifties to dissolve the ISL into the Socialist Party and (what is not the same thing) to turn the SP into a ginger group within the Democratic Party.

With the exception of Hal Draper and Gordon Haskell everyone was for going into the SP. There was great excitement over what seemed to be the bright prospects for the American socialist movement following the collapse of the CP. But the majority of the ISL did not support Shachtman on his "entrism" perspective on the Democratic Party. And neither did the majority of SPers. I mention this because Otter's account is so garbled and the history here is important for understanding the current state of the American left.

But what does it have to do with his original charge? To be for working in the Democratic Party is not necessarily to be pro-west in the Cold War. In fact, the left liberals, ex-CPers and Stalinoids in and around the SP gravitated towards the "realignment faction" and it was the left-wing YPSLs who embarrassed people by the anti-Stalinism. In any case, the one leaflet (not the imaginary pamphlets) had been written in 1950 (before the Korean war) and the Shachtman passport case and the ISL campaign around that case took

place in 1953. What is the relevance of Shachtman's behaviour in 1958 and 1959, on other issues, after the dissolution of the ISL, to the original charge?

For that matter, if Otter was a subscriber to *LA* then he had to have read the original coverage of this whole issue. The ISL didn't keep it a secret. What happened in 1959 to shock him that he didn't know about in 1953?

According to Otter it was three things:

1. The startling revelations in the *Militant* by YSL dissidents who had left to help form the Young Socialist Alliance. It would, of course, be an *ad hominem* argument were I to casually mention that these sterling comrades were Jim Robertson and Tim Wohlforth. But you must agree that it would be a strong *ad hominem* argument.

2. A leaflet which Otter saw at the time but which he no longer apparently has.

3. A statement by AJ Muste which he never saw and whose content he doesn't really know.

I suspect that comrade Otter and the other members of the international third camp tendency (which I had never heard of before) were embarrassed by Shachtman's embrace of the Norman Thomas types in 1957-8 and shamefacedly admitted that they had been taken in by "the Shachtmanites." When comrade Otter states that he and his friends "refused adamantly to consider entrism" I can understand why any ISLer, regardless of his or her other views, would have (rightly or wrongly) written them off as sectarians.

Otter's remarks in his November letter [WL26] indicate that his general information on the ISL is based on hearsay. It is just nonsense to speak of a Burnham-MacDonald faction in the WP. Burnham resigned formally one week after the organisation was formed and had dropped out in effect before the organisation was formed. Burnham and Joseph Carter had collaborated in the debate over the "Russian question" but they were not a faction and MacDonald wasn't involved with them in that endeavour. MacDonald and Burnham's articles on Russia were reprinted in the same issue of *Partisan Review* in 1941, by which time both were out of the WP. Their articles have little in common except that they agree Stalin's bureaucracy (and Hitler's) were a new class. You can only imagine that to be a faction if you imagine that the whole world is divided into factions.

That is why I suspect Dunayevskaya (Forest) is the source of this disinformation. The only formal faction that existed in the WP was the Johnson-Forest group. Nobody else functioned in that way. Differences were debated openly with a view to persuading the other comrades and the idea of an ideological grouping trying to seize organisational control was foreign to the comrades outside of the Johnson-Forest people.

By the way, further evidence that Otter is really talking about the Shachtman passport case, not HUAC, is his mention of

MacDonald and Burnham as witnesses. This was in the passport case in the mid '50s.

I do not wish to accuse comrade Otter of bad faith. I don't think he is acting in bad faith. Most of us fit what we hear as gossip or read casually into some sort of framework and after a while we have a nice little story. Why quibble if HUAC and the Attorney General are confused with one another? China, Korea? 1950 or 1959? Who cares? I know I have done this kind of thing before myself. It is only when I go back and check the facts that it becomes apparent how I inadvertently distorted them. Unfortunately, in this case, comrade Otter didn't check, or was unable to check, his facts.

For what it is worth, I suspect that this mysterious ISL leaflet if it is ever found will turn out to be a reply by the ISL to the charges made against it in the *Militant* and will contain essentially the same information as is in the *LA* article. I can find no mention of this document in the *Mimeographia* and by 1970 Hal Draper would have been only too happy to document Shachtman's lapse if it had occurred. I can't imagine him letting it go by unchallenged in 1950 and, for that matter, I can't imagine Shachtman doing that sort of thing in 1950. By 1960 or 1965 I would be surprised to hear he passed up such a chance.

Editor's note: unless someone contributes additional "hard" information, this discussion is now over.

## Three fronts to the class struggle

By Mike Fenwick

THE ARTICLE by Karl Kautsky (WL27) casts light on how the British Labour Party was seen by European Marxists at the time of its formation.

It is with the second part of the article that I would like to take issue. Not as some form of polemic against some long dead opponent but to point out the continuance today of some of his misconceptions.

Part II of the article deals in some detail with the relationship between the Marxists (specifically the Social Democratic Party (SDP)) and the Labour Party. I want to examine Kautsky's concept of the party he considers the ideal. Fundamentally his mistake seems to be to accept the technical division of labour inside the British labour movement.

He outlines the three areas of class struggle as per Engels, ideology, economics and politics. He then checks them off against the various elements

that make up the movement.

Trade unions = industrial, check.

Labour Party = politics, check.

SDP = ideology, check.

Admittedly he thinks it would be better if they were all contained in one organisation, but at least they are all there. In Kautsky's concept of the party the different elements will keep their different functions even inside a united organisation. The SDP will control the ideology and propaganda, the politicians go to parliament and the trade unionists be good trade unionists, albeit with a bit of socialist rhetoric to hand.

Is it unfair to accuse the most respected Marxist of his time, Lenin's teacher of being so crude and mechanistic? No, his own party, the SPD, had exactly this sort of structure. Kautsky, "the Pope of Marxism", was the head of the SPD's ideological priesthood who put the formal Marxist gloss on the activities of the practicals — the politicians and the trade unionists. The reality of their formal Marxist orthodoxy was finally exposed in 1914, when the SPD supported the Kaiser in the First World War.

The point is that the three elements of the struggle mustn't just be represented, but integrated root and branch throughout the party. At the level of individuals, the revolutionary party can't just accept comrades as trade unionists etc. It wants Marxist trade unionists who increase the prestige of the party, not just through exemplary routinism but through their ability to argue and fight for the party's ideas and politics. Each member should be capable of intervening into and on behalf of the party in all three areas of the class struggle. A 'class-conscious' party is going to require fully rounded, class-conscious members, rather than rely on a bureaucracy or elite to pull the elements together. Or, worse, a group of ideologues who "are the compass and rudder" of the "tremendous ship", the mass party, as Kautsky describes the relationship between the SDP and Labour Party.

If we restricted ourselves to fighting inside the Labour Party on the level of ideas alone, "spreading socialist comprehension among the mass movement", we'd reduce ourselves to passive propaganda, failing to challenge the leadership in politics and industrial struggle. Unable to make the connections between the leadership and the trade union bureaucracy's ideology and their privileges and position, we would always be 'right' but we'd always lose. If socialism was designed to make socialists feel better about themselves this would be fine. If its purpose is to change society, you must stretch yourself to take up the

other areas of struggle. Unlike *Briefing* — to take a good current example — you will not try to exist on moral outrage alone, safe in the knowledge that you at least are “unrepentant.”

Some SWPers would say: “well, two out of three fronts of the class struggle ain’t bad.” The SWP attitude of “leave the elections to Labour, and the strikes to us”, combined with being oh-so ideologically pure is enough for now. By elections, however, they mean politics in general, and that is not an optional extra. At some stage the Labour Party leadership will have to be challenged politically — when? — for control of our movement. Ritual denunciations won’t suffice, but that is all you get from these “two cheers for the class struggle but leave working-class politics to the reformists” Marxists.

Finally, these three fronts of the class struggle can’t be seen as some mystical trinity; they are the sum of our day-to-day existence under capitalism. At work, watching the news at home, talking to people on the bus, doing an estate sale, these different elements are inseparable in the daily life not only of a socialist organisation but of every individual socialist.

## Sectarianism is not over

By Gerry Downing

IN your reply to John McNulty in *WL27* you are ignoring the fact that Billy Hutchinson is a central leader of an organisation which has merely taken a break from sectarian killings. This group has close links with British and European fascists who see them as soul brothers. Hutchinson has not renounced his past actions as a sectarian killer and makes it quite clear that he would kill again if he saw the need for it. Just a few months ago, leaders of the PUP, who have been engaged in the “peace process”, were convicted of sectarian killings.

“Loyalists who call themselves socialists should be talked to”, should they? It suited the Strasser brothers in Germany in the 20s to call themselves socialists. They also sounded very anti-capitalist at times, and even proposed a pact with Stalin. Some foolish leftists wanted to discuss with them but the German revolutionaries correctly said that this was the “socialism of idiots.”

John O’Brien has already enlightened us earlier in the same issue to what the real problems in “Northern Ireland” are. Honest John Major is doing his best, Sinn Féin are shouting even more loudly than the British (with all the mass media behind them, no doubt) and they are ignoring the real problem. Nobody is seriously listen-

ing to the fears of the Loyalists! Reaction is not getting a fair crack of the whip, O’Brien complains bitterly. When will these bourgeois nationalists realise that the key to the problem is to unite the working class even if the “difficult, truculent, suspicious leadership (of the Loyalists)... are being obstructive”? I doubt if any socialist (if we leave aside the idea of a fascist-socialist as a sick joke) has ever described the Orange Order, which must rank as one of the most reactionary ruling classes on the planet, in these oh so polite terms before.

Do you think it odd that no fascist grouping has mistaken the “PIRA” (British Army speak, that one) or even the INLA as one of their own? Because the struggle against British imperialism is still a progressive one and those who wage it, however politically confused or in the grip of reactionary nationalism they are, represent a progressive force which it is the duty of all socialists to support, particularly those socialists in the imperialist country. But comrade Matgamna once knew this very well when he waged that struggle within the IS in 1969 against their support for sending in the troops. Well, it seems it was OK to oppose sending them in, but not OK to fight for their withdrawal!

So how do we break loyalist workers from the grip of their reactionary ideology and in the process break nationalist workers from relying on Sinn Féin to lead the struggle? This does mean the correct application of the theory of Permanent Revolution, not as some type of objective process, with Gerry Adams fulfilling the role of national liberation leader assigned to him by history. It does involve recognising that whilst there may be no revolutionary nationalist solution to Ireland’s problems it is the duty of revolutionary socialists to form united fronts of struggle with revolutionary nationalists who wish to continue the struggle (it is clear that the Gerry Adams leadership has abandoned it) on the basis that we must construct a revolutionary working-class leadership to win.

This must recognise that the border, symbolising the Northern Ireland state, is not capable of reform and that the all-Ireland unity of the working class can only be formed when that state is smashed in the course of a socialist revolution. There can be no workers’ unity without workers’ equality and that is impossible in the Northern Ireland state whose mode of existence, the very mechanism of the cross-class alliance that is Loyalism, is built on discrimination. Loyalists must be stopped from carrying out this discrimination, and this will surely entail force against its more fascist and more reactionary wing. Billy Hutchinson can be a socialist when he renounces his past and begins to fight for a united Ireland on that basis, as many people from the Loyalist community have in the past. No Catholic has ever crossed in the opposition direction and joined the UVF or UDA because,

despite your protestations, the Nationalist community basically fights for a non-sectarian society. Mixed marriages have to live in west Belfast, never in east Belfast. You too could be a revolutionary socialist, comrade Matgamna, when you fight for a united Ireland on this basis.

PS. What you mainly criticise in the rest of your letter is the politics of the former People’s Democracy and not the ICMF, which is a new formation.

## Cliff’s head revisited

By Jim Higgins

IF there is a thread running through the articles in *Workers’ Liberty* on the IS/SWP tradition, it is that an organisation with some potential lost its bearings in the early 1970s, adopting forms of party organisation and party life that would have been considered extreme by such luminaries as Harry Pollitt and R Palme Dutt.

It is, for example, a matter of some interest to note that quite recently a number of IS comrades were under threat of expulsion, and one was actually expelled, for the heinous crime of wishing to publish a cultural magazine.

Presumably, every time the Central Committee hears the word “culture” they reach for their pistol.

It was not always thus. In July 1972 the National Committee made it clear that “It [IS] does not have, and cannot have, as an organisation, positions or a line on scientific or quasi-scientific problems... the NC is not competent to commit the organisation to particular conceptions of relativity, genetics or psychology...” [IS Bulletin August 1972].

Of course, that was over 20 years ago. Nowadays, that renaissance man Chris Harman can, without even going into a telephone kiosk, be transformed into a cut-price Zhdanov and happily lay down a party line on such matters as anthropology.

For the all-seeing, all-knowing Central Committee, nothing is too obscure, arcane or difficult to have a definitive line about it.

As the guardians of the ark of the Marxist covenant, the leadership must be ever vigilant to ensure that there is no new thinking that might detract from the prestige of the Central Committee.

Under this sort of regime, democratic centralism confers infallibility on the leadership. It is a role that in the medieval church was performed by God. It must be quite nice for the likes of Cliff and Harman to shout at

people from burning bushes, keep Moses out of the Promised Land and occasionally send down a few commandments incised on tablets.

In 1968 a discussion was started on the organisational form the organisation was to take: whether it was to retain its old federal structure or move on to a democratic centralist structure. The document that initiated the move to democratic centralism in IS was a single sheet of A4 produced by Cliff in June 1968.

It has to be said it was grossly inadequate, but it did say, *inter alia*, "If a branch has 50 members who divide on a central issue 26 to 24 what is democratic about one person casting the votes of 50?"

Not a bad question, and one that he would be very hard pressed to answer today. Back in 1968, he goes on, "If [under a federal system — JH] a minority of the whole organisation — let us say 20% — has one set of policies separating it from the majority, it will not be represented at all — or at most by a derisory number of people on the executive."

You will see from this that Cliff clearly envisaged, and was also promising, representation on leading bodies for minorities. I do not recommend anyone to bring this matter up in the SWP now, unless, of course, they wish to join that other majority, the ex-members of IS/SWP.

The move to democratic centralism, however, was not just another example of Cliff deciding to set the group on its head, or in his own immortal phrase, "to bend the stick." The change of emphasis was directly related to a perception that the group might be able to move from propaganda to agitation.

Work in CND and the LPYS, together with limited activity in the trade unions, had produced a membership of several hundreds with some capacity for activity in a working-class milieu. The background was of the May events in France and of increasing shopfloor militancy in Britain.

The post-war long boom, rested on the shaky prop of arms economy, Labour reformism resorted to legislative control over wages and conditions and at the same time the trade union bureaucracy sought accommodation with the employers and a government-initiated "social contract." The real focus of reform was on the shop floor, at rank and file level.

As the result of a great deal of discussion with trade union militants, the *Incomes Policy, Legislation and the Shop Stewards* pamphlet was written by Cliff to help arm the shop floor militants. Later on the pamphlet on productivity deals was written in the same way and for the same pur-

pose. All of this was clearly in line with the development of IS ideas on the experience of the Minority Movement in the 1920s and the chances of building such a movement in the 1970s.

For the first time, the organisation started to recruit workers with some industrial and trade union experience. I recall quite vividly Cliff and I attending regular weekly meetings with workers at the ENV factory in Acton. This was a factory where Geoff Carlsson had been working for some years and as the result of exceptionally good and patient work on his part, coupled to the general political situation, and the then line of IS, produced a branch at the factory, with an IS majority on the shop stewards' committee, including the convenor and the chairman.

An organisation that wanted to build on this work could not operate as a loose federal structure. It needed to be organised in such a way as to maximise the opportunities that clearly existed in the workers' movement.

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The cadre, whatever its social origins, needed to be firmly oriented on the organised working class. That IS was working far more effectively at that time can be gauged by the Industrial Report to the 1974 conference (I believe that this document was written by Steve Jeffreys), a 48 page printed document that outlines the work and the perspective.

It reports 36 factory branches, a rise in membership among manual workers from 746 to 1,155 out of a total of 3,300. It details 16 rank and file papers and magazines with a total circulation of 70,000 (not 30,000 as I mistakenly reported in *WL19?*).

There were 275 AUEW members, 90 EETPU members, 70 NUM members and 130 health workers. Now, all of this is modest enough if it is measured against the size of the task to be performed. What is tragic is that, over 20 years later, the SWP would be hard pressed to produce a 48 line report on serious industrial work.

It was against this background that Cliff's faction's sharp change of

course, an exercise in stick-bending that required the destruction of at least ten years of concentrated activity, should be seen.

The organisation was now to be wrenched into pursuit of the young, traditionless workers, because the shop stewards and other rank and file leaders were "rotted by 30 years of reformism."

There is a always a problem for members of a revolutionary group who feel that there is something wrong with the political line, or the regime or the behaviour of leading comrades. One is committed to the organisation, contributed to its growth and well-being, in consequence, loath to attack it. One's social life is encompassed within the group, there are friendships and the commitments of solidarity and the debts owed to comradeship in past struggles.

This complex of relationships tends to disarm the oppositionist, making him mitigate and mute his criticism. Unfortunately, while one is nursing one's scruples Cliff and his minions are spreading the poison around the group. The Centre's loyalists often become over-excited. On several occasions, after a heavy night on the beer, they felt the need to give me a late night call to explain the error of my "counter-revolutionary" ways in slurred four-letter words. Such calls can swiftly eradicate any vestiges of sentimental attachment.

The notion that Cliff's faction behaved in the way they did because they were caught in the toils of Leninism and democratic centralism seems to me to be mistaken. In a very real sense, the reason why Cliff flipped his lid was because the EC of the day presumed to tell him democratic centralism meant majority decisions actually trumped his latest intuition, no matter how inspired he thought it was. In small organisations, people like Cliff, Healy and Cannon have a kind of feudal attitude to the group, as if they can exercise their *droit de seigneur* whenever the fancy takes them.

His truly awful three-volume biography of Lenin is basically the justification for Cliff's own actions, sanctified by reference to holy writ.

Democratic centralism is any form of organisation that does not get in the way of Cliff doing what he fancies. It may be recalled that one of Lenin's little tags that Cliff found mouthwateringly delicious went as follows: "On s'engage et puis on voit." This according to Cliff was deeply and profoundly dialectical. When one considers that the closest you can get to Lenin's aphorism in English is "suck it and see", you begin to understand why Cliff thinks he is a Leninist and the rest of us think he is not.