

Fascism in psychoneurology

Lev Vygotsky

The profound crisis which has afflicted bourgeois psychology during the past few decades has assumed new acute, ugly and repulsive forms, hitherto unknown in the history of psychological science, after the fascist coup in Germany. The new regime has accelerated catastrophically the growth of and exposed a great number of hitherto vague, not fully recognized, masked tendencies, and as a result, a basic infrastructure within the system of fascist psychology has been created with the most astonishing speed during the past year. The political demand of the new regime acted as a catalyst in the process of degeneration and decay which had previously become woven into the general fabric of the crisis and has led to a state of unprecedented poignancy.

There cannot, of course, be any discussion of the creation of a new psychology in a time as short as that which has elapsed from the establishment of the fascist regime. Fascism began to penetrate psychology in a different way. It rearranged the ranks of German psychology by bringing into the foreground everything reactionary which previously existed in it. But this alone would not have been enough. As has already been said, it was also necessary to knock together, in the shortest possible time, a system of psychology which would correspond to the entire fascist ideology.

German catalogues in the fields of philosophy, psychology and pedagogical science suddenly abounded with such titles as: 'A Study of Family and Heredity' or 'A Study of Race'. The most reactionary idealistic schools hurriedly began to reassess their material and rearrange it in such a way that it could be used as a factual base for fascist psychology.

Spranger, one of the most outspoken and consistent propagators of the bourgeois point of view in psychology¹ has set out to lay the foundations for a German nationalist idea, using the medium of psychological research into personality. Granted, soon after the coup, the newspapers announced that, as a form of protest, Spranger had resigned his Berlin University post. But it appears that this brief period of protest has now been replaced by zealous service to the cause.

Spranger has always advocated the idea of the existence in psychology of different forms of life, various types of personality. For Spranger, these forms of life ['Lebensformen'] are first and foremost national forms. In his widely known work

entitled 'The Psychology of Adolescence', he says that the structure of adolescent personality which he is describing characterizes a German adolescent. And he says that a Jewish adolescent would exhibit entirely different traits, and as far as the Russian emotional type is concerned, despite evident similarities, what all of us are experiencing is an apprehensive feeling of a far reaching strangeness. But even within the German national type, he distinguishes the educated adolescents: 'we might have called them bourgeois, had not this depiction by now become a superficial political slogan'.²

Another very famous German psychologist, Ach,³ approaches the problem of the launching of fascist psychology from another angle. If Spranger dwells on the problems of nationality, then Ach decided to choose a more acute problem. For many years this researcher was involved in investigating problems of the will, and he studied the influence of determining tendencies both in internal and external human activities. And now, as it turns out, this establishment of the laws of determinist psychology ['Determinationspsychologie'] was found to have a fundamental application to the problem of the leader. Ach read a paper about determinist psychology and its significance for the problem of the leader at the Psychology Congress in Leipzig in 1933. In this paper Ach investigated the purity of the origins of his own theory. He examined all the stages in the development of determinist psychology, beginning in 1904, and he came to the conclusion that his psychology had always exhibited the sharpest contrast with regard to the individualistic liberal interpretation of mental life.

In this way two basic ideas came through which are obviously called upon to play an organizing role in the entire system of fascist psychology: the first idea is that of a national type, the second idea is that of voluntarism⁴ and the problem of the leader.

But the most extensive efforts to found a fascist psychology were attempted by a third German psychologist, Erich Jaensch, a scientist of world renown, who has extensively elaborated the problem of perception and memory from the eidetic and psychological typology point of view.⁵ Jaensch published a special treatise entitled *The Situation and Tasks of Psychology, its Mission in the German Movement and in the Cultural Reform*. In this book, Jaensch presents an entire system of fascist psychology, a system which is likely to determine the direction and fate of the fascist branch of German psychology for the foreseeable future. Like Ach and Spranger, Jaensch also draws direct connecting threads from his earlier research to fascist psychology and, therefore, on the basis of this book, it is quite easy for us to observe the route which these tendencies, now revealed in their most cynical form, have been following in German idealistic psychology long before it became their fate to be assigned the mission of serving the German nationalist movement, and what this mission brought with it which is new and which has undoubtedly marked out a new stage of the psychological crisis, a stage of unprecedented and extremely intense degeneration of bourgeois scientific thinking.

Jaensch's book is permeated by militant feeling. What the author had in mind was for it to serve as a warlike manifesto for the creation of a new . . .⁶ It is for this reason that psychology and the German movement ought to march in step and at the same

time psychology must interpret and illuminate, using the light of reason, the instinctual aspirations which are laid down in the nationalist movement. Therefore, in order to be able to cure this decrepit idealism, Jaensch seeks to find new strength for it among German peasantry, that is to say, the landowners. 'The philosopher', he says, [1933, p. 98], 'stretches out his hand to the peasant'. This is how a union of the bayonet and the idea, and scientific psychology and storm troopers can be achieved.

Using a concrete example it can be demonstrated how, starting from these points of view, Jaensch proceeds to solve concrete political problems and how he attempts to use anthropology and psychology to form a scientific basis for his politics. In the book under discussion, Jaensch finds it necessary to disclaim the opinion which has been ascribed to him, that he had allegedly said that Germany and France are divided by a very deep chasm which exists between these two opposite mental structures, the French and the German, and which excludes any possibility of mutual understanding. At the present time Jaensch is prepared to admit that, from the anthropological point of view, the relations between these two great nations may change for the better. His reasoning is strictly empirical and precise, and in his psychological laboratory he is determining the fates of nations and their relations with one another in exactly the same way as one would usually evaluate the fitness of an individual for one of the professions. Jaensch himself fails to see the incredibly comic side of all these speculations. But the absence of humour probably belongs to the number of essential traits which are inherited along with race and blood, and which are necessary for the development of 'pure German ideas'. 'Every great nation', proclaims Jaensch [*ibid.*, pp. 29-30],

possesses many structures. A nation harbours not only those mental structures which appear as the leading forces in a given period, but other additional ones as well. At the present time in Germany, we are concerned with rehabilitating the basic national type. This revitalization process consists of the amalgamation of the type of the German idealist with the peasant type, who is nearer to the soil. Both of these structures should be able to cross-pollinate one another. The peasant type must be raised up somewhat and the ideal type has to be built up and strengthened from below. In the language of integral typology this signifies an alloy of structures. If other nations also proceed in the same way and follow the path which has been marked out for them and revise their leading structures, then Germans and Frenchmen will be able to understand one another. Every nation incorporates within itself great developmental potential.

It is hard to believe that these lines were written in the fourth decade of the twentieth century. It is hard to believe that the author himself seriously believes in his own idea of the rebuilding of relations between nations based on psychological integral formulas. But Jaensch does everything in his power to persuade us that his ideas are entirely serious. He is not just pretending, he genuinely believes in all this.

Whilst defining the sphere of psychological problems, he fills this sphere exclusively with those problems which, under different circumstances and in other times, might be taken for a fantastic system of ideas symptomatic of some sort of paranoia but which, in actual fact, represent the scientific language of real fascist politics. As

we have already been told, according to Jaensch, the primacy of all ideas belongs to the nationalist movement. Psychology should march in step with the German movement. Psychological anthropology is the most important source for the philosophy of reality and scientific construction of politics. Race and blood, blood and race – this is what underpins everything in the world. A direct connecting thread stretches all the way from the structure of one's capillary network to one's philosophy of life. The scientists are beginning to think in a warlike manner – drastically, straightforwardly and decisively. Where we find a dearth of logic, there begins the philosophy of the imperative.

Oh, lucky Germany! For it did not follow Skalozub's⁷ advice to send its sergeant major⁸ to learn how to become a Voltaire. Instead, the fascist Voltaires themselves voluntarily transformed themselves into sergeant majors of the German nationalist movement.

So what we are now observing is a development of this sergeant major anthropology and sergeant major politics. The relations among various nations are determined by the fact that at the foundations of different cultures lie various mental structures characteristic of the people who belong to a specific national type. The very latest piece of wisdom of fascist philosophy to be declared is critical anthropomorphism, from whose viewpoint Jaensch examines all the basic problems of the fascist regime. As we have seen, he has already managed to solve the basic questions of German politics, both internal and external, from the point of view of integral typology. The indissoluble union between the idealist-philosopher in town and the peasant-kulak in the countryside already serves as just such an anthropological formula. Speaking plainly, this formula signifies that the German philosopher should become totally permeated by kulak ideology.⁹ This is the real meaning, in Jaensch's parlance, of building up from below and furthering the type of the German idealist. The kulak should believe the philosopher when he says that the policies which are in his interests are being carried out based on notions and formulas provided by typological chemistry, that his selfish interests will be satisfied by a return to the original form of German idealism, and that they correspond to a spiritual renaissance of all humanity.

Viewing the situation from the angle of this basic idea, Jaensch solves the problem of the relationship between the individual and the state. He sees the meaning of the coup in Germany as a struggle between two structures, one of which has won a victory under the sign of the swastika and strives to transform the general (the state) into an organic whole, built according to the laws of psychological anthropology, based on the purity of the physical being of the nation, and on the basis of the common formula of blood and mental structure. But critical anthropomorphism would not amount to much even in Jaensch's eyes had it not the ability to understand, with the most disarming simplicity accessible to any average peasant mind of a pure-blooded German, the simple truth that international relations are determined by these same formulas. During each period one type of mental structure becomes the determining trait of national character. The highest type and the most lofty character is, of course,

the German one. It is for this reason that critical anthropomorphism is not interested in the problem of man in general, but just of German man.

With the aid of a very simple argument Jaensch succeeds, using the very same logical technique of systematized raving, in proving that the mission of the German spirit is to lead humanity forward. For this to be achieved one only has to recall that the different mental structures, the various types of personalities, reach their clearest expression among certain age groups of human development. What a lucky coincidence: it turns out that the highest human type, i.e. the German fascist type, corresponds, according to its chemical formula, to the youthful type, who is characterized by a perpetual drive forward towards the achievement of perfection of all humanity. According to Jaensch, this constitutes the meaning of the German movement and the purpose of German psychology, whose only wish is to translate the zoological instincts of militant fascism into the language of scientific consciousness.

All that remains belongs essentially to the realm of trivia – it only remains to outline a programme for solving the most pressing problems of world politics using the methods of the psychological laboratory, and thus to provide a scientific political basis for politics. It remains to explain these liberating typological formulas to all the nations of the world, and by doing so, to establish the sanctity of the fascist bayonet and the power of the German idea in the language of realistic idealism. But all that remains for us is to examine the internal methodological basis of this systematized gibberish. Jaensch is forced to perform several tortuous operations on the living body of German psychology in order to confirm definitively the supremacy of fascism in that sphere of science which has been assigned to his guardianship. After all, German scientific psychology has developed over the centuries. It has managed to gather within itself not only the things which fascism finds useful to appropriate for its needs, but also much which constitutes enormous real achievement in authentic scientific knowledge. Every stone comprising the edifice of scientific psychology cries out against this monstrous raving which Jaensch attempts to turn into scientific psychology. As a result, any genuine scientific knowledge in the field of psychology needs to be liquidated. Within the system of fascist political division of labour, Jaensch has been assigned the task of carrying out the same destruction in the realm of scientific psychological ideas which has already been carried out in the racial political plan. As is well known, Germany after the coup lost its best, its most scientifically advanced and progressive psychologists. As Jaensch is firmly convinced of the fact that all power rests with realistic idealism, and that ideas which are not backed up by the bayonet are not worth a farthing, the only thing that remains for him is to draw ideological conclusions from the actual political repressions.

Jaensch has taken up this task with a lightheartedness and decisiveness worthy of a philosopher-sergeant major. He cannot fail to admit that psychology has gone through a period of serious crisis. But a crisis implies a certain ideological conflict; however, Jaensch is not prepared to base his argument only on the strength of ideas. He is an opponent of any idealism which is unsubstantiated and cut off from reality, and this is the reason why he decides to cope with the problem of the crisis in

psychology in a military manner, in two ticks like this: firstly, there indeed was a crisis, Jaensch announces, but it has been overcome and one cannot say that it is a contemporary one. Secondly, there was no crisis at all. It was a methodological and not a theoretical crisis. When Ebbinghaus' elemental psychology collided with Dilthey's structural psychology, associative psychology was no longer a living theory and it was only used as a research method in opposition to structural psychology. This is why German Gestalt psychology was essentially fighting phantoms when it opposed the atomistic theory of the mind. It was defending a theory against a method. Jaensch cites a verbal opinion of an English friend of his, who had assured him that there is nothing in this movement of psychological ideas, which in any case is the most progressive one of all the psychological trends of our time, which is not already contained in the work of Stout and Sherrington. The idea of a whole which determines its parts is a primordial idea of German psychology. It does not exclude, but presupposes elemental psychology. Psychology's unity can be reconstructed with magical ease. Jaensch teaches us not to say 'either-or', but 'both the one and the other'. Jaensch should be able to deal with Gestalt psychology which, incidentally, has not only last year lost its founder Wertheimer, one of the most outstanding contemporary psychologists, but is now represented in Germany by only one person.¹⁰ So where has Gestalt psychology gone wrong? As Jaensch has already tried to prove for a long time, this theory is flawed due to its materialism, its tendency to a monistic approach to psychological structures and its discovery of a principal unity within the psychological and the physiological structure. Jaensch has always strongly resisted the idea that structures are not purely mental constructions and the scientific objective to bring together psychological theory with physiology and theoretical physics. Incidentally, he has some old scores to settle with this theory. For a long time its representatives have openly suspected the strict scientific character of Jaensch's research, which had always shown a tendency to dilute itself in a boundless sea of idealistic haze. They called his research by its real name. They reproached him for his dilettantism and for his readiness, at any moment, to be unfaithful to precise scientific knowledge and scientific truth in the name of preconceived ideas. As time has shown, they were not sufficiently far-sighted, as they were unable to suspect how far Jaensch would end up going along that road.

Of course, Jaensch is not against physics. On the contrary, as we have seen, he says that it is impossible to penetrate the depths of the mental structure of personality without the use of a crude form of physics. Blood and race determine the purity of ideas. In a certain sense Jaensch goes a lot further than Köhler in reducing the psychological to the physical.¹¹ And essentially, he protests even less against the tendency to understand psychological phenomena in the light of biology. Only he requires a different kind of physics and a different biology.

Jaensch says that the rapprochement between the psychological and physical realms should be sought not in the sphere of well known physical structures, but rather in the sphere of particular physical laws applicable to the mind. Teleoformic [*teleoform*] principles of physics and particular processes, mnemonic phenomena in

inorganic nature, ought to emerge into the foreground here. In plain language what is meant here, is that it is not scientific materialistic physics, but the idealistic distortions of the physical theory, which discover teleological and mnemonic principles in inorganic life, which should become the site where physical and psychological phenomena can come together in human beings. As we can see, Jaensch remains entirely faithful to his real-idealism. It is necessary to teleologize and mnemonize the physical in order to justify and legalize the point of view of blood and race in psychological anthropology.

Further, he accuses Gestalt psychology of not differentiating between the various forms of the whole and that, in the realm of biology, it does not base itself on Driesch's and Becher's psychovitalism.¹² Jaensch is in need of vitalistic biology as well as idealistic physics. Therefore, this theory allows for a levelling out of the levels and, in principle, it brings together psychological and physical structures. He is juggling the facts somewhat when he says that Koffka reduces the problem of development and Lewin the problem of will (like all other higher levels) to the level of electrical processes.

However, Jaensch does not view the basic principle of Gestalt psychology – the principle of wholeness – with disdain. He only assumes that this principle should be made to serve the fascist cause. He feels that it is his mission to become the founder and proponent of the theory of blood and race. The highest form of wholeness is the personality, where everything is indissoluble and combined into one integral whole in such a way that if the inherited traits of race and blood are given, then the ideological world of the personality is given along with it.

To achieve a complete picture, all that remains for us to do is determine the blood and race of this new psychological system which Jaensch is advocating. He himself names his ancestors. As could have been expected, right from the very beginning, it turns out that no more and no less than 99 per cent of them were German psychologists. The principal line of German idealism, says Jaensch, leads from the mystic Eckhardt and the German mystics, through Leibnitz, Kant, Fechner, Helmholtz, Wundt, Külpe and Brentano, in an unwavering straight line to fascist psychology and to Jaensch himself. Here we have a spiritual passport which he has issued to himself.

We have summarized briefly the situation in which psychology finds itself and the scope of its most important goals, and how these tasks are outlined in Jaensch's militant fascist manifesto. We have left aside the philosophical aspect of his system, presented in the book in a summary and abbreviated manner, but which was treated in a more detailed manner in his earlier works written before the coup. In the near future we intend to examine the foundations of his philosophical anthropology more closely, because we have assumed that it is not really one of the objectives of the present article to include any serious scientific criticism and analysis of this manifesto because of the nature of the ideas it contains. Not only do they not require any scientific criticism, but they exclude the possibility of any such thing. To try and counter Jaensch's views in any meaningful way would amount to the same thing as trying to disprove mad ravings by using logical arguments.

But at the present time we cannot help but be interested in the following two questions; firstly, the question of the internal link between these ludicrous scientific structures and the general crisis which is taking place in bourgeois psychological thinking¹³ and, secondly, a clarification of what original contributions fascist psychology has made to the further development of bourgeois psychology. In conclusion, these are just the two questions which we would now like to examine.

It would be naive to think that these absurd structures are in no way connected with the general crisis occurring in bourgeois psychology and that bourgeois psychology is in no way responsible for these constructions. After all, even the ravings of a mental patient tend to have some links with his premorbid personality. In actual fact, it is precisely in this manifestation of the acute and putrid decomposition of scientific thinking where these processes of decay, which during the critical decades have been driving psychological thinking into a hopeless dead end, manifest themselves in a hyperbolic form. Essentially, Jaensch's system is built on the same methodological foundations as all the rest of bourgeois psychology. It represents an integration of idealism and mechanicism, similar to that typological integration which Jaensch would like to see in the unification of the German philosopher with the peasant. One would only need to remove one of the supporting props, and Jaensch's whole structure would immediately come crashing to the ground. The unification of mechanism ['mechanicism'] with idealism into a single fascist entity constitutes the alpha and omega of the whole methodology of Jaensch's system. The entire original contribution of his construction is limited to his combining these two elements in a new way. Whilst in the majority of other psychological schools these elements, unknown to the authors themselves, are intertwined with one another, Jaensch accomplishes a full and complete unification, both within the scope and the meaning which is inherent in each of these principles.

Without this monstrous mechanicism he would be unable to build up the idealism from below and to stretch a single thread from blood and race to the world of ideas. However, without the equally monstrous idealism he would end up just as helpless in the face of his task, which is to conceal the brutish face of fascist anthropology behind the typological mask of the most perfect German personality the world has ever seen.

Bringing mechanicism and idealism under one common denominator, lining up the most elementary physical and chemical processes of the human organism alongside the higher functions of consciousness, inevitably presupposes another mistake, which has reached a monstrous extreme, but which is, essentially, inherent in a greater or lesser degree in all flaws of bourgeois psychology, namely the rejection of the social nature of man. Sociology is completely left out of Jaensch's system. It is only race and blood which immediately determine the structure of personality and through it politics as well. Here, too, all that Jaensch has done is to push to the extreme and treat with cynical bluntness that which is already part of the very foundations of bourgeois scientific research. He has spoken out openly in the language of pogrom politics. He has set out in a cynical and unambiguous way to found a union

between scientists and storm troopers, a union of the bayonet and the idea. Jaensch has proclaimed openly and cynically what other people try to conceal or are merely subjectively aware of. He has only said what other people are thinking, or at least what they are doing. He has said that to be a bourgeois scientist means to serve the needs of the bourgeoisie, needs which make their appearance during a given historical period, and to fight, by using the weapons of science, for those political goals which emanate from today's problems. He has said that there is no such thing as science which is apolitical and which exists outside of politics.

After all this, is it surprising that this first attempt has turned out to be so unsuccessful and so crude? Jaensch's task was not an easy one, i.e. to turn science around and send it backwards into the Middle Ages, to erase all the scientific truths which have been accumulated throughout the ages and which had been achieved by the efforts of the human mind. Jaensch carried out his task in the manner of a sergeant major and he does not seem to be at all worried by the fact that, whilst striving to present us with an ideal German type in the attractive guise of a superman, all he has actually managed to do is present what Nietzsche has called *die blonde Bestie*, the savage face of zoological nationalism.

The positive aspect of Jaensch's book is that he has decided to give up all pretence. Diplomatic hypocrisy could only do harm at a time of this final and decisive battle, the greatest and the most just which humanity has ever known throughout its history. Two worlds and two ideological systems now stand pitched against one another. Jaensch's book, along with the rest of fascist psychology, cannot fail but to lead to a terrible intensification of the class struggle in science in general and in the field of psychology in particular. This puts an especially heavy burden of responsibility on the shoulders of Soviet psychology. It now has to focus its mind on its international foreign front, to which it has hitherto not paid sufficient attention. In this struggle its allies will include not only German proletarians, but all the proletarians of the world. Times are approaching when it will become clear even to a blind man that, whilst the people on one sixth of the earth's surface are fighting for the liberation of all humanity and for the achievement of everything which is truly higher, new and unprecedented in the history of the human personality, when one after another the oppressed and backward nations are joining the vanguard of humanity, in the bourgeois camp people's consciousness continues to be moulded among the debris of a resuscitated Middle Ages.

Notes

First published as Vygotsky, L. S. 1934: [Chapter IV – without title]. In L. S. Vygotsky, V. A. Gilyarovskiy, M. O. Gurevich, M. B. Krol', A. S. Shmar'jan et al. (eds) *Fasbism v psikhonevrologii* [*Fascism in Psychoneurology*] (pp. 18–28). Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Biologicheskoy i Medicinskoy Literatury. This was a brochure written after the Nazis came to

power in 1933 by Jewish scientists working at or somehow connected with the All-Union Institute for Experimental Medicine in Moscow. Vygotsky's contribution occupied 11 of the 28 pages. Reading the brochure one realizes that – despite enormous differences – there was a tremendous similarity between the Nazi fascist state and the communist totalitarian system of 1934 (which may not have escaped Vygotsky's attention). The role of state propaganda, the heavy ideological pressure, the attempts to distinguish between useful and useless science, and the general terror were very similar, but the common moral bankruptcy of both systems was most vividly and unwittingly brought out by one of the other authors of the brochure, who suggested that the Nazi emphasis on race and heredity was falsified by the successful Soviet attempts at re-educating people in the Belomor canal project (where thousands of political prisoners died of hunger and cold).

- 1 Vygotsky was well acquainted with Eduard Spranger's work and frequently referred to his book on adolescence and to his general conception of a hermeneutic ('Verstehende') psychology. Spranger distinguished six basic personality types (the theoretical personality, the economical personality, the aesthetic personality, the social personality, the power personality and the religious personality), each of which embodied a certain way or form of life ('Lebensform'). See Spranger, E. 1930: *Lebensformen* (7th edn). Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag. Although it is quite clear that Vygotsky was critical of many of Spranger's ideas, until the present paper he had never paid any attention to Spranger's so-called bourgeois views.
- 2 See p. 28 of Spranger, E. 1927: *Psychologie des Jugendalters*. Jena: Fischer Verlag.
- 3 The work of Narziss Ach and his followers had played a fundamental role in Vygotsky's and Sakharov's own work on concept formation in childhood, adolescence and in schizophrenia (see chapters 6, 9 and 12 of this reader). The Congress in Leipzig, 1933, was the first meeting of the German Psychological Society after the Nazis come to power. See also the next note.
- 4 The theory that holds that reality is ultimately of the nature of the will or that the will is the primary factor in experience (Webster). In their psychological dictionary Varshava and Vygotsky claimed that in psychology 'Wundt, Dilthey, Lipps, Stumpf, Münsterberg and others' adhered to this theory. See pp. 41–2 of Varshava, B. E. and Vygotsky, L. S. 1931: *Psikhologicheskij slovar'* [*Psychological Dictionary*]. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Uchebno-Pedagogicheskoe Izdatel'stvo.
- 5 For some time Vygotsky – and many of his Soviet contemporaries – had been rather enthusiastic about Erich R. Jaensch's (1883–1940) ideas about eidetic imagery (or 'photographic memory'). Vygotsky presented an elaborate discussion of eidetic imagery and Jaensch's interpretation of it in Vygotsky, L. S. 1930: *Ejdetika* [Eidetics]. In L. Vygotsky, S. Gellershtejn, B. Fingert and M. Shirvindt (eds) *Osnovnye techenija sovremennoj psikhologii* [*Main Currents of Contemporary Psychology*] (pp. 178–205). Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo. In this paper Vygotsky emphasized that he considered the phenomenon of eidetic imagery – seen as a stage in the normal development of memory – of immense importance for our understanding of the development of memory, and stated that the phenomenon was demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt. He fundamentally disagreed, however, with Jaensch's general (idealistic) trend of thinking and his interpretation of the objective data. In the present paper he is mainly discussing Jaensch, E. 1933: *Die Lage und die Aufgaben der Psychologie, ihre Sendung in der deutschen Bewegung und an der Kulturwende* [*The Situation and Tasks of Psychology, its Mission in the German Movement and in the Cultural Reform*]. Leipzig: Barth. In this infamous pamphlet Jaensch described what he saw as

healthy and unhealthy elements in psychological thinking and the role they might play in the Nazi state. Jaensch was indeed the best example of a well known psychologist who embraced the Nazi world view and at the 13th Congress of the German Society for Psychology, held in Leipzig from 16–19 October (after the Nazis came to power), he was one of the major speakers together with Felix Krueger who welcomed the new events. In that speech as well, Jaensch contrasted the Jewish mentality with the genuine German mentality, which he saw rooted in the farmer's mentality. For details, see Graumann, C. F. (ed.) 1985: *Psychologie im Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: Springer.

- 6 Here two pages are missing from (our copy of) the original manuscript.
- 7 Lieutenant Skalozub is a character from the early 19th century play *Woe from Wit* by A. Griboedov. He represents the lowbrow, conservative military element [translator's note].
- 8 Here and in the following Vygotsky is using the very appropriate russified German word 'Feldwebel' for sergeant major. It provides an ironic/sarcastic emphasis upon the German tendency towards totalitarian leadership at all levels of society (army), especially at the lowest (as the Feldwebel's role was the direct drill of soldiers in a highly rigid and disciplined manner).
- 9 This is the only time Vygotsky ever referred to the concept of 'kulak' and their 'kulak ideology'. See chapter 10 of Van der Veer and Valsiner (1991) for the background of the terminology and Vygotsky's and Luria's involvement with the phenomenon of 'kulaks'.
- 10 Of the leaders of the Gestalt movement Kurt Koffka (in 1927), Max Wertheimer (in 1933) and, finally, Wolfgang Köhler (in 1935) all emigrated to the United States to escape the Nazi menace. This means that at the time of writing of Vygotsky's essay Gestalt psychology 'was represented by only one person', that is, Köhler. Others who left Nazi Germany or Austria were the Böhlers, Duncker, Gelb, Goldstein, Lazarsfeld, Lewin, Selz, the Sterns and many, many others. For an account of the role of various prominent psychologists during the Nazi regime see Graumann, C. F. (ed.) *Psychologie im Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: Springer.
- 11 Vygotsky is referring to a book by Wolfgang Köhler in which the idea was developed that physical and psychic phenomena have basically the same structure or Gestalt. See Köhler, W. 1920: *Die physischen Gestalten in Ruhe und im stationären Zustand: Eine naturphilosophische Untersuchung*. Braunschweig: Friedr. Vieweg & Sohn.
- 12 H. Driesch and E. Becher were major representatives of the so-called vitalistic current in biology, which opposed the so-called mechanistic or materialistic current. The debate was, essentially, about the possibility and feasibility of reductionism in biology. See, for example, Driesch, H. 1921: *Philosophie des Organischen*. Leipzig: Engelmann.
- 13 For the occasion Vygotsky is speaking about the crisis in *bourgeois* psychology, but in numerous other publications he made it quite clear that this crisis was international and permeated Russian science as well.