Racism refuted

Sir.—Many readers of Nature will have seen some of the extensive press coverage given to the campaign launched in the UK by the avowedly racist National Front earlier this year to recruit members from schoolchildren and the young unemployed. This has included, according to the NF leadership, the distribution of up to 350,000 leaflets headed ‘How to Spot a Red Teacher’. A central theme of this leaflet, and of a large supporting pamphlet on ‘How to Combat Red Teachers’ is the allegation that there are scientifically proven biological and psychological differences between races. As the leaflet puts it, under the heading ‘The Racial Equality Lie’; ‘Tell the Red Teacher that top scientists like Jensen in intelligence. This is because we believe that the large overlap in measures of ability always found between different races destroys, rather than supports, the basis of racism. It is source of considerable distress to me that the National Front has attempted to use my name and Professor Jensen’s in their propaganda, and I am happy to take up Professor Rose’s invitation to dissociate myself from the National Front and any other explicitly racist organisations. No-one familiar with Professor Jensen’s or my own writings could find any endorsement in them about the mean differences between various racial groups. There is a scientific understanding of human variation. Unfortunately, serious students of the subject are forced to duck from the ideological cross fire.

Extremists of the left and right are alike in regard to the heredity—environment controversy. They are both anxious to promote and to use public acceptance of a particular dogmatic belief about the nature of racial differences, even when the scientific evidence is inadequate or contradictory. They both officially abhor a publicly agnostic stance regarding the scientifically established fact of statistical differences between different races destroy, one and all, only by reason of their racial differences. Those who would accept any treatment of individuals solely by virtue of their race will find no rational support from any of the scientific findings or theories of modern biological science. Man’s genetic nature insures individuality, and any doctrine that is built on a denial of this fact is simply at odds with reality. My concept of justice requires that the fact of statistical differences between racial populations should not be permitted to influence the treatment accorded to individuals of any race—in education, employment, legal justice, and political and civil rights. Righting the wrongs of racial discrimination can be accomplished best... by prohibiting racial discrimination in any form, and by seeking equal educational opportunities for members of minority groups who have been denied them in the past, so they can compete fairly for employment, higher technical training, or higher education, without condescending dispensations.

Since we are still far from a scientific consensus as to the causes of [racial] differences in educability, the only intellectually warranted official position of educators and governmental policymakers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual policy makers must be one of open agnosticism as to the causes, rather than the dogmatist naive environmentalism that has so long prevailed as individual