

America and the Holocaust: How and Why Corporate America Enabled Genocide

In the 1980's a man using the pseudonym of Buck gave the following interview regarding his forced sterilization, an event that had taken place fifty years earlier, "The call came over the dormitory just like always, and I knew that they were ready for me. There was no use fighting it. They gave me some pills that made me drowsy and then they wheeled me up to the operating room. "The doctor then spoke to Buck. "Buck, I am going to have to tie to your tubes and then maybe you'll be able to go home." Buck was awake during the whole process. He watched as the doctor made a small incision and sliced his sperm ducts.

Mary was eleven years old when she was sterilized. Unlike Buck, she never understood what was being done to her. She was called in to meet the doctors. No adult parent or guardian was present. "Do you know what this meeting is for?" she was asked. "No, sir, I don't." "Well, this is the meeting that you go through when you have to have a serious operation, and it's for your health." That was all that she was told. "Well, if it's for my health then I guess I'll go through with it." Mary didn't learn that she was sterilized that day until five years later.¹

Buck and Mary were sterilized as part of program, a legal program with the highest government endorsements, that was ultimately intended to produce a Germanic, Nordic super-race, a race that would be perfect in every way. Through the use of sterilization and other means, this new race would be without physical defects such as feeble-mindedness, blindness or deafness. Not stopping there, the new race would be without social defects such as shiftlessness (laziness) or pauperism. War had been declared upon the weak.

There is nothing surprising about these stories of modern medicine gone mad, except that these involuntary surgeries did not take place at Auschwitz, with Dr. Mengele wielding the knife. They took place at the Colony for Epileptics and the Feeble-minded, located near Lynchburg, Virginia in the United States. More than 8,000 children and young people were sterilized here in assembly-line manner. Sometimes those placed under the knife were white boys and girls from the mountains or from the slums of the big cities. Sometimes they were American Indians, African-Americans, epileptics or the blind or deaf. All of this was in accordance with the law of our land. In 1927, the Supreme Court of the United States had determined that such procedures were legal. In handing down a decision that would allow the state of Virginia to sterilize a young girl who had borne an out-of-wedlock child, as the state had already sterilized and incarcerated her mother, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote: "It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind... Three generations of imbeciles are enough."

¹ War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race, Edwin Black

Not only were such procedures legal, but those who performed them were convinced that they were acting not only in the best interests of society but with the good of the victims in mind. The former Montgomery County Welfare Director Kate Bolton commented, "The children were legally committed by the court for being feeble-minded and there was a waiting list from here to Lynchburg." (Feeble-mindedness was a poorly defined term for a condition that was thought to cause poverty; pauperism being widely believed to be a genetic malady. After all, poor adults have poor children.) She continued, "If you've seen as much suffering and depravity as I have, you can only hope and pray no one else goes through something like that. We had to stop it at the root."

The events in Virginia were, sadly, not isolated. In California alone, 9,782² state-sanctioned sterilizations were carried out, mostly on young women who were classified as "bad girls" with diagnosis such as "passionate" or "oversexed" or "sexually wayward." It was not even necessary to have behavioral confirmation of such propensities; evaluations could be made based on the most cursory of evaluations.

I usually begin each class by telling you why the topic, the material to be presented, is of importance to you. I usually entitle that portion of our discussion "Why you should care." I departed from that format today beginning with individual stories to underscore the personal nature of what happened in America in the first half of the twentieth century because these stories are not told. They have been intentionally omitted from our history books as though they had not happened. But they did happen. Simon Wiesenthal said at the trial of Adolph Eichmann that Eichmann should have to answer for the murders of his 6 million victims' one at a time, because the mind cannot comprehend such numbers. Each victim is a tragedy unto itself. Buck was a real man. He would go on to marry a woman who already had children and he would adopt these children and raise them as his own. The reporter that interviewed Buck would notice a small greeting card behind Buck with the words "Thinking of you, Daddy" inscribed on it. When Buck noticed the direction of the reporter's gaze he would say "They call me Daddy" and break down in tears. Let us hope that he found some measure of peace in his relationship with his step-children.

Mary would grow up and marry, but her husband would leave her because of her sterilization.

More than 60,000 men and women would be sterilized in what has become a forgotten, or more accurately a repressed, period of American history, the American Eugenics movement, a movement that would be supported by some of America's wealthiest families and corporations. The Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Institution and the estate of railroad tycoon, E.A. Harriman, all contributed to the spread of these ideas of racial purity. Eventually, the ideas that started in America would spread back across the seas to Europe, where they would find acceptance in Germany. In Hitler's 1924 book *Mein Kampf*, he would acknowledge the importance of the American Eugenics movement in forming the ideology that would give rise to the Third Reich, "There is today one state in which at least weak beginnings toward a better conception (of immigration) are noticeable. Of course, it is not our model German Republic, but the United States."³ On another occasion Hitler would comment to a fellow Nazi "I

² <http://hnn.us/articles/1796.html>

³ *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race*, Edwin Black

have studied with great interest the laws of several American states concerning prevention of reproduction by people whose progeny would, in all probability, be of no value or be injurious to the racial stock." Hitler would write a fan letter to American eugenics leader Madison Grant, calling Grant's race-based eugenics book, "The Passing of the Great Race," Hitler's "bible."

The influence of the American Eugenics movement in sowing the seeds of the Holocaust was not just literary. Prior to coming to Auschwitz, Joseph Mengele's early work was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.

In his book "Passport to Life" Dr. Emanuel Tanay wrote, "The technology of killing the Jews evolved from that of killing disabled Germans. The Nazis' first victims were handicapped German children. They were designated as "unworthy of life" and physicians administered lethal doses of sedatives to kill them. Disabled German adults were next. They were killed in carbon monoxide gas chambers. Yet the international community did not declare Hitler an outlaw; instead they chose not to believe his behavior."⁴ With all due respect, I wish to offer a mild disagreement. Some Americans, members of the American Eugenics movement provided the theoretical basis for the "scientific" aspects of Nazism, the Nuremberg Laws drew from American anti-miscegenation laws and by the time that Hitler came to power, forced sterilization and life-long incarceration of the "unworthy" had already been legal in America for decades. Americans were not only aware of the events leading up to the Holocaust; in some cases they funded the research. Supporters of eugenics might have disagreed with Hitler's methods as too extreme; but they certainly agreed with the ideology behind them.

So, the reasons that this topic should be of interest to you are:

- 1) Crimes against humanity were committed in the United States with the full support of our government and legal system. Those who committed these crimes were never punished and the records of these have largely been forgotten. There is no Yad Vashem to remember the victims.
- 2) The corporations that supported the Eugenics movement in the United States remain largely intact. The Carnegie Institution, the Rockefeller Foundation, the estates of Harriman, Kellogg, Ford, Gamble and others have never been brought to account for their actions.
- 3) Jews in general and Eastern European Jews in particular were considered among the "undesirables" (meaning sub-human) and the Eugenics movement was directly responsible for implementing the immigration quotas that hindered the escape of Jews trying to flee the Holocaust.
- 4) The American Eugenics movement was a direct influence on the Nazis, providing a pseudo-scientific justification for genocide, providing funding for the Nazis scientific research and, although this is disputed, providing direct support for the extermination camps.
- 5) Echoes of the American Eugenics movement can be found in modern American political influences today.

⁴ *Passport to Life*, Emanuel Tanay, M.D.

The Deep Background

Throughout all of recorded history, there have been poor people and rich people. And, as the Bible tells us, there have been always attempts to “redistribute” the wealth. Dating back to the time of Moses, Jews have been commanded to perform acts of Tzedakah, Maimonides would create a hierarchy of charitable acts⁵:

- Giving begrudgingly
- Giving less than you should, but giving it cheerfully.
- Giving only after being asked
- Giving before being asked
- Giving when you do not know the recipient's identity, but the recipient knows your identity
- Giving when you know the recipient's identity, but the recipient doesn't know your identity
- Giving when neither party knows the other's identity
- Enabling the recipient to become self-reliant

What we can deduce from the portion of the Rambam’s work is that there was a certain resentment to giving to the poor.

Judaism is not the only religion to mandate acts of charity; the requirement for the more affluent to help the needy is part of Christianity and Islam as well. In fact, all three religions even specify the minimum percentage of income that is to be donated. Until the modern age, religious institutions were the primary source of aid to the poor.

Religious institutions have unique advantages in both collecting wealth from the rich and redistributing that wealth to the poor. To the rich, they offer assurance of a place in Heaven for giving and the threat of endless suffering in the next life for reluctance. To the poor, they offer the assurance that suffering in this world is part of “God’s plan.”

This is a very broad generalization, but by the time of the Middle Ages in Europe, the Christian church was the primary means of collecting money from the rich (the nobility) and dispensing it to the poor. This gave the Church significant power. There came a time when this was no longer true in England.

In the 1530s, Pope Clement VII refused to annul Henry the VII’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon⁶; Henry responded by seizing church properties and forming his own church. With this came a shift in how the poor were to be taken care of, with the state assuming the responsibility for the welfare of the poor. This resulted in a series of so-called “Poor Laws.” It should be noted that these laws were intended to manage the poor, not necessarily to benefit them. For example, in 1530, a law was passed proclaiming that idleness was the “mother and root of all vices” and allowing that vagabonds were to be whipped. Let us think for a moment what a vagabond might be. If you left the area where you were born to seek your fortunes elsewhere, you could be whipped. This kept the peasants tied to the estates. In 1547, a bill was

⁵ http://judaism.about.com/od/beliefs/a/charity_nine.htm

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Poor_Laws

passed that subjected vagrants to even more extreme provisions of the criminal law, namely two years servitude and branding with a "V" as the penalty for the first offence and death for the second.

The Poor Laws were not all draconian, some created work projects and most attempted to provide some form of relief for the poor. But all contained some form of punishment for those considered lazy, for those who stole or begged.

English Poor Laws distinguished between those capable of work, who might be deemed unwilling to work, and those incapable of working. The aged and the infirm might be given food, what was sometimes called the "parish loaf," or clothing called "outdoor relief." But if you were judged to be unwilling to work, you could be imprisoned or beaten. Later, England would implement a system of workhouses, which combined providing food and shelter for the poor with incarceration of petty criminals. These Poor Laws were not intended to deal with the root causes of poverty. It isn't until the later part of the 18th century, for example, that we see the beginnings of free, mandatory public education in England. Poverty was considered necessary to ensure a supply of workers.

To understand why caring for the poor was a major issue for so many years in England, you have to put it into a historical context. The Age of Exploration, the period of colonization, the Industrial Revolution, all created enormous amounts of wealth, but that wealth tended to accumulate in the hands of the few. Because of economic factors and of course because of the high birth rate among the poor, the percentage of the population that might be considered as poor continued to increase. This increases the "burden" of taxes being paid by the wealthy to sustain the poor. And that increases the resentment of the taxed toward the poor.

This can be termed the problem of the poor.

The Ideology

Moving from the problem of the poor to a Final Solution required an ideological framework. This framework came by combining the works of four scientist-philosophers.

In 1798, the first edition of Thomas Malthus "An Essay on the Principle of Population" was published in England. Until that time the dominant theory of where was society was heading was that Mankind was moving toward a Utopia. Philosophers like Godwin and Rousseau envisioned an ever-improving world. Along comes Malthus with the idea that there are limits on the sustainable level of population based on available food supply. The more food that there is, the more the population will grow, until the available resources are exhausted. Malthus further states that, if population growth is not checked, corrections will come via famine, disease and widespread death. I refer to Malthus as a scientist-philosopher, as he believed that this was part of a Divine plan to enforce moral behavior.

"Must it not then be acknowledged by an attentive examiner of the histories of mankind, that in every age and in every State in which man has existed, or does now exist

That the increase of population is necessarily limited by the means of subsistence,

That population does invariably increase when the means of subsistence increase, and,

That the superior power of population it repressed, and the actual population kept equal to the means of subsistence, by misery and vice."⁷

Malthus believed that the solution was to teach morality. Moral behavior, such as monogamy and faithfulness, was to serve as a means of checking population growth. Malthus believed that positive checks (celibacy until marriage, social improvement) could prevent negative checks (famine, pestilence, war.) Malthus was a clergyman. But one statement of his in particular would form the basis of the eugenics movement: "It does not... by any means seem impossible that by an attention to breed, a certain degree of improvement, similar to that among animals, might take place among men. Whether intellect could be communicated may be a matter of doubt; but size, strength, beauty, complexion, and perhaps longevity are in a degree transmissible... As the human race, however, could not be improved in this way without condemning all the bad specimens to celibacy, it is not probable that an attention to breed should ever become general". He was not advocating forced sterilization as a solution, but future generations would.

In 1859, Charles Darwin would publish "On the Origin of Species." He proposed that all species of life descend from common ancestors and that the divergence is a result of natural selection⁸. As a geologist, he embarked on a five year journey aboard the H.M.S. Beagle. His core idea was that life forms changed as a result of their interaction with natural forces, a process he referred to as evolution. Not only was evolution a revolutionary idea, but perhaps an even more fundamental concept was that these changes were the result of forces in nature, not Divine Will. It should also be noted that Darwin was influenced by the work of Malthus, although he had a much less religious interpretation. A friend and contemporary of Darwin's was Charles Babbage, a mathematician widely regarded as the father of modern computers. Babbage attempted to reconcile religion and science, calling God the "programmer of laws." We would call this attempt at reconciling science and religion today "intelligent design."

By the 1870s, the most influential philosopher of his time was Herbert Spencer. Building on Darwin's work, it was Spencer that would coin the term "survival of the fittest."⁹ While that term seems to suggest only natural selection, Spencer extended the concept to the areas of sociology and ethics. He was a believer in Lamarckism, which is the concept that acquired characteristics can be passed down from generation to generation. An example would be that giraffes, stretching their necks to reach ever higher leaves, eventually produce a long-necked species.

The exact means by which traits were passed down was something of a mystery, until the "lost" works of Gregor Mendel were discovered. Mendel's work analyzing traits among smooth-skinned and wrinkled pea pods had originally been published in 1868, but the importance of his work, identifying recessive and dominant traits, would not be recognized until 1900.¹⁰ In terms of Mendel's impact on eugenics, it is this

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Robert_Malthus

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_darwin

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Spencer

¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregor_Mendel

concept of recessive versus dominant genes, specifically that in his experiments with peapods only one gene out of four was the “purebred” recessive gene, while two out of four were hybrid, that would lead to the racial purity or anti-mongrelization laws, first in the United States and later in Nazi Germany. (The remaining gene was purebred dominant.) As an aside, Mendel experimented with applying his principles to animal breeding, and was able to create a species of bees so vicious that they had to be destroyed. Perhaps there is a lesson there.

Francis Galton, a half-cousin of Charles Darwin, would devote his life to the implications of Darwinian science to human populations. He is the father of the science or pseudo-science of eugenics. “Eugenics is the study and practice of selective breeding applied to humans, with the aim of improving the species. In a historical and broader sense, eugenics can also be a study of “improving human genetic qualities.”¹¹

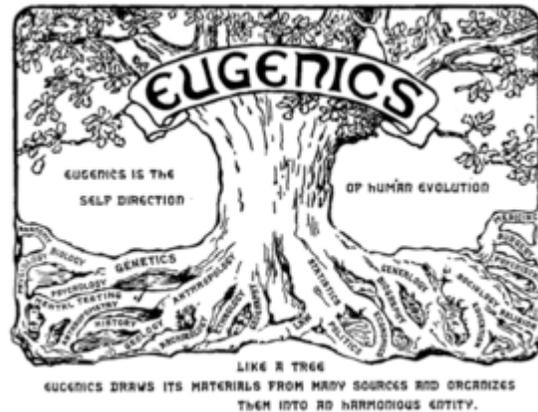


Figure 1 "Eugenics is the self-direction of human evolution"

Galton was a compulsive counter. He once counted the fidgeting of people in a theatre and tried to calculate the levels of interest. He tried to make sense of the behavior of waves in a bathtub. Galton undertook a study of lovely women (no doubt according to his tastes) and noted where they lived to determine the concentration of beauty by region in England.

But that is not to underestimate his accomplishments. In 1861, he distributed a questionnaire to all the weather stations in Europe and by 1863 he published *Meteorographica or Methods of Mapping the Weather*, an important meteorological work. He developed a system for analyzing and categorizing fingerprints.

In 1865, he published a study mapping the genealogies of eminent scholars, poets, artists, military men, etc. He discovered that many of them were descendants of the same families with a statistical frequency too strong to ignore. His findings would later be expanded into a book entitled *Hereditary Genius*.

¹¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugenics>

Galton believed that talent and intelligence could be maximized by selective breeding. He believed that it would be possible to produce “a highly gifted race of men by judicious marriages during several consecutive generations.” By combining the Greek words for *well* and *born* he coined the word eugenics.

Galton’s concept was relatively harmless. There is probably some truth to the concept that talent and genius run in families, but to degree this is nature and how much is similar nurture is uncertain. Marriage within families was not uncommon in Europe at this time. The royal families of Europe all married within a fairly tight circle. The same was true among the affluent. Charles Darwin married his own cousin. Galton discounted the idea of genetic consequences.

Galton’s ideas can be called Positive Eugenics. The marriage of two geniuses will produce a super-genius. Marriage between a genius and a non-genius is likely to produce a non-genius. (This is a bit of an oversimplification; Galton recognized that it would take generations.) But he didn’t take his work as being ready for practical application. He felt that it was merely a topic of academic interest.

He also underestimated the effect of the corollary, Negative Eugenics. He had written “I do not, of course, propose to neglect the sick, the feeble or the unfortunate. I would do all for their comfort and happiness, but I would exact an equivalent for the charitable assistance they receive, namely, that by means of isolation, or some other drastic yet adequate measure, a stop should be put to the production of families likely to include degenerates.” Again, this was written by way of academic speculation; Galton did not expect anyone to put his ideas into practice.

That wouldn’t happen until Galton’s work was read in America.

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..."

Before we talk about the American Eugenics movement, let us recap the ideas so far. Here is how the pieces fit together:

- Poverty is a growing problem, caused by the existence of poor people. Left unchecked, poor people will continue to breed until they exhaust all available resources, resulting in famine, disease or war. (Malthus.)
- The poor can be divided into two groups: those unable to work due to age or infirmity and those unwilling to work, who must be forced to work by threats of violence, prison or starvation. (English Poor Laws.)
- Animals change according to their environment. In an environment that encourages laziness, lazy animals will become the norm. (Drawn from Darwin.)
- Infirmity is largely the result of poor genes. (Spencer.)
- Unwillingness to work is also genetic. Acquired behaviors that lead to poverty, such as laziness, can be passed down from generation to generation. (Spencer, Lamarck.)

- When a “good” person and a “bad” person have children, the odds are 50/50 about the child being good or bad. But half the children will also carry the gene for being “bad” which can surface later. So the odds are 3 out of 4 that the child will be bad or carry the bad gene. (Mendel.)

One component that should be added is the religious component. Most of these scientist-philosophers, even Darwin, never broke from their religious upbringings. Malthus offered that all the suffering was God’s way of teaching us to be moral. Poverty provides an example of what not to do and is a consequence of immoral behavior. Wealth is evidence of being in God’s good graces.

It isn’t a difficult logical leap to see how it would occur to some people that the way to eliminate poverty was to prevent poor people from being born. And America was fertile soil for this concept.

Bear in mind that at the beginning of the twentieth century America was only two generations removed from breeding African slaves for strength and endurance. Lynchings were still common in the South, with 2,522 African Americans lynched during the period between 1889 and 1922. Laws against interracial marriage were still on the books of many states. Native Americans were still confined to reservations. Remember also that America at this time was “suffering” from waves of European immigrants, including large numbers of Eastern European Jews. Fear and hatred of these new arrivals was reaching fever pitch. Letting these unfit foreigners land on American soil was termed “race suicide.”

The ideas of eugenics found acceptance in America, and often among the progressive thinkers of the day. In 1891, feminist author Victoria Woodhull wrote a pamphlet *The Rapid Multiplication of the Unfit*, stating “The best minds of today have accepted the fact that if superior people are desired, they must be bred; and if imbeciles, criminal and pauper and the otherwise unfit are undesirable citizens they must not be bred.” Education reformer John Franklin Bobbit wrote “In primal days was the blood of the race kept high and pure, like mountain streams” but now those pure racial waters were facing “a rising flood in the muddy, undesirable streams.” The undesirables were not just the diseased and the criminal but anyone whose bloodline was other than the Germanic, the Nordic and the Anglo-Saxon.

All that was needed was a spark and that spark came from Charles Davenport and a grant from the Carnegie Institution. In 1902, Andrew Carnegie had endowed the charity to the tune of \$10 million. Soon other contributions came in, raising the available amount of money to \$12 million. In May of 1902, the institution had received a request for funding for a project from young Charles Davenport. The use for which the money was needed was made clear in a letter from Davenport, “The aims of this establishment would be the analytic and experimental study of race change. “ He would conclude by saying that “The Carnegie fund offers the opportunity for which the world has so long been waiting. He would get his funding, once again proving that you can’t go wrong appealing to the vanity of the wealthy.

Beginning from a humble research facility located at Cold Spring Harbor on Long Island, Charles Davenport set out to assure the ascent of a Nordic super-race in the United States. If that sounds far-fetched, it is amazing how much he accomplished and how quickly he did it. He could not have done so

much, created so much misery, if he did not have the support of some of the wealthiest and most powerful individuals and corporations in America. In addition to the Carnegie Institution, Davenport would soon receive funds from the widow of railroad magnate E.A. Harriman and then from the Rockefeller Foundation. The American Breeders Association, a quasi-governmental agency created by the US Department of Agriculture, would be an enthusiastic supporter, as would the prestigious American Museum of Natural History. Scientists, doctors, judges and politicians would all lend their support. Michigan's own Kellogg family would be enthusiastic supporters.

Beginning by gathering data that supported his idea of criminal and undesirable behavior being passed down in families, using highly biased techniques, he soon expanded to political lobbying to make forced sterilization a common practice in prisons and mental institutions. Race laws were enacted or expanded in many states, most especially Virginia. In 1907, eugenic sterilization became legal in Indiana. In 1909, three other states (Connecticut, Washington and California) would ratify similar laws. Under these laws, you didn't even have to be convicted of a crime. You could simply be deemed likely to become a burden to the state and that was enough.

Here is a timeline of the expansion of eugenics in America¹²:

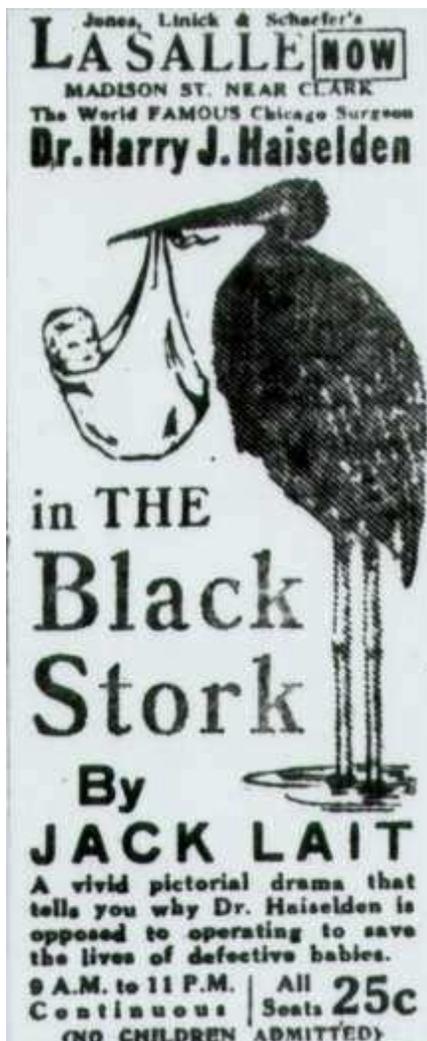
- 1907 Indiana passes first eugenic sterilization law

- 1912 First mass use of standardized IQ Test created by Henry Goddard in USA, administered on Ellis Island, provides "proof" of the unfitness of immigrants.
- 1914 First National Conference on Race Betterment held at Battle Creek, MI.
Race Betterment Foundation begun, largest eugenic center in the Midwest.
- 1915 Second National Race Betterment Foundation held.
- 1917 IQ Beta Test, US Army administered 8 Alpha and Beta Tests to 1.7 million recruits. Created by Henry Goddard, Lewis Terman, and Robert Yerkes. Two thirds of recruits are deemed imbeciles. Eugenics movie "The Black Stork" is released. Advocates letting the babies of the unfit die.
- 1918 The Galton Society established in NYC. Prestigious group of academics and funders endorse racist policies in American society
- 1920-1924 Harry Laughlin is appointed Expert Eugenics Agent for the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization. (See below.)
- 1921 Second International Congress of Eugenics, New York.
- 1924 Immigration Restriction Act. Virginia Act to Preserve Racial Integrity.
1925 The American Eugenics Society is founded with a focus on influencing American education and popular culture.
- 1927 Supreme Court Decision of Buck v Bell. Allows second generation of forced sterilization. Emma Buck had been sterilized and incarcerated in a mental institution even though she had committed no crime, because her lifestyle was considered immoral. Her husband protested that

¹² http://www.facinghistorycampus.org/campus/rm.nsf/timeline_american_html.htm?OpenPage

the allegation were untrue, but to no avail. Her daughter Carrie was taken away and given to a wealthy family as basically an indentured servant. When she became pregnant (she claimed it was as the result of a rape by the family that was supposedly her guardian) she too was sterilized and incarcerated in the same facility. Carrie's child was then given to the same family. The Supreme Court of the US affirmed the legality of the process.

- 1929 Human Betterment Foundation established in Pasadena, Ca. Large focus on sterilization and it will become most eugenics institution once the ERO closes in 1939.
- 1932 Third International Congress on Eugenics, New York.
- 1935 South Carolina 31st and last state to pass a eugenic sterilization law.
Nazi Nuremberg Laws passed; modeled in part on American anti-miscegenation laws.
- 1939 Edinburgh: 7th International Congress of Geneticists, first signed statement by a group of scientists condemning eugenics on scientific and ethical grounds. ERO closes, Carnegie Foundation pulls funding.
- 1967 Loving v. Virginia: Warren court strikes down the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 in Va., along with 15 other state anti-miscegenation laws.



From 1907 until 1967, eugenics was the law of the land. The first real opposition to eugenics (1939) came in part to the excesses of the Nazis. But the eugenicists were able to implement immigration quotas that lasted until after World War II, effectively closing our borders to those trying to flee the Holocaust.

The goal of the American Eugenics Society was the forced sterilization and segregation of 90% of the US population. The blind, the deaf, the infirm, the poor, African Americans, Native Americans, immigrants of other than Nordic stock, all were intended to face the knife. It was not until more than 20 years after the movement started that they would face serious opposition, and that started with the Hearst chain of newspapers. Gradually, the American scientific community would join the opposition. By that time, the American Eugenics movement would find allies abroad.

Eugenics and the Nazis

I said at the beginning that many Americans knew what the Nazis intended, knew at least of their early actions, the medical sterilizations and killings that Dr. Tanay refers to in his book, and supported these actions. At least in the early days of the Third Reich, what was being done in Germany was published, the statistics were not concealed, and these efforts were publicly applauded in the United States. They were greeted with approval

in published newsletters of the American Eugenics movement, a movement that bragged about the influence they had had on the Nazis.

In 1934, as Germany's sterilizations were accelerating beyond 5,000 per month, the California eugenics leader C. M. Goethe upon returning from Germany ebulliently bragged to a key colleague, "You will be interested to know, that your work has played a powerful part in shaping the opinions of the group of intellectuals who are behind Hitler in this epoch-making program. Everywhere I sensed that their opinions have been tremendously stimulated by American thought. I want you, my dear friend, to carry this thought with you for the rest of your life, that you have really jolted into action a great government of 60 million people."

That same year, ten years, after Virginia passed its sterilization act, Joseph DeJarnette, superintendent of Virginia's Western State Hospital, observed in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, "The Germans are beating us at our own game." This was a call to accelerate the pace of forced sterilizations in America.

The concept of using a gas chamber as a means of euthanasia had been discussed in America as far back as 1918. Paul B. Popenoe, an Army specialist in the treatment of venereal disease during World War I, recommended the use. He also co-wrote the widely used textbook, *Applied Eugenics*, which argued, "From an historical point of view, the first method which presents itself is execution... Its value in keeping up the standard of the race should not be underestimated." *Applied Eugenics* also devoted a chapter to "Lethal Selection," which operated "through the destruction of the individual by some adverse feature of the environment, such as excessive cold, or bacteria, or by bodily deficiency."

German physician Gustav Bloeters had worked in the United States and it was here that he learned about sterilizations and forced castrations. When he returned to Germany, he began advocating that Germany adopt the same kinds of laws. "In a cultured nation of the first order, the United States of America, that which we strive toward was introduced and tested long ago. It is all so clear and simple." Bloeters would develop an obsession with eugenics to the point that he would be removed from his position as medical officer supervising an entire region in Germany and be placed in a psychiatric asylum. But he would influence those to come.

By 1926, Rockefeller had donated some \$410,000 -- almost \$4 million in today's money -- to hundreds of German researchers. In May 1926, Rockefeller awarded \$250,000 toward creation of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Psychiatry. Among the leading psychiatrists at the German Psychiatric Institute was Ernst Rüdin, who became director and eventually an architect of Hitler's systematic medical repression¹³. A student and protégé of Rüdin's was Josef Mengele, the Angel of Death at Auschwitz.

Hitler would read books on American eugenics while in prison and acknowledge their influence in *Mein Kampf*. The back and forth exchange of ideas, of research and of techniques has been well documented. Since each group, the Nazis in Germany and the members of the American Eugenics movement here, believed that they were on the verge of achieving a Final Solution, why bother to hide it?

¹³ <http://hnn.us/articles/1796.html>

But by the late 1930s, America was facing the specter of war with Germany and many American corporations withdrew their support. But one American corporation continued to help the Nazis.

International Business Machine or IBM was invented by a German, Herman Hollerith. Born in Germany, he would move to the United States in 1879 to become an assistant in the US Census Bureau. When John Billings, Director of Vital Statistics, commented that "There ought to be a machine for doing the purely mechanical work of tabulating population and similar statistics" Hollerith would seize on the image of a train conductor punching tickets and combine that with the concept of the mechanized loom to create the punch card reader. Hollerith would borrow a few thousand dollars from a fellow German and create a prototype. He would then form the Tabulating Machine Company. By 1884, in a contest of tabulating machines, the Hollerith design was clearly the best. By the 1890 Census, Hollerith was paid \$750,000 for the license of his technology.

There was a problem, however. Hollerith had developed the technology while an employee of the US Census bureau and acknowledged the influence of Billings in creating the concept. Moreover, the United States government was not the only client; Hollerith was also licensing the technology to other governments. There would be a series of court cases, some of which Hollerith would lose. Eventually, Hollerith would sell his share of the business to investor Charles Flint, for the then enormous sum of \$1.21 million, and Flint would appoint Thomas J. Watson as the general manager.

IBM, as the reorganized conglomerate became known, was a leading technology provider for Nazi Germany. The company solved two problems that the Nazis encountered in implementing their planned genocide, identification of the victims and the management of their extermination.

Only after Jews were identified -- a massive and complex task that Hitler wanted done immediately -- could they be targeted for efficient asset confiscation, ghettoization, deportation, enslaved labor, and, ultimately, annihilation. It was a cross-tabulation and organizational challenge so monumental, it called for a computer. Of course, in the 1930s no computer existed.

But IBM's Hollerith punch card technology did exist. Aided by the company's custom-designed and constantly updated Hollerith systems, Hitler was able to automate his persecution of the Jews. Historians have always been amazed at the speed and accuracy with which the Nazis were able to identify and locate European Jewry. Until now, the pieces of this puzzle have never been fully assembled. The fact is, IBM technology was used to organize nearly everything in Germany and then Nazi Europe, from the identification of the Jews in censuses, registrations, and ancestral tracing programs to the running of railroads and organizing of concentration camp slave labor.¹

IBM did not kill anyone; they "merely" facilitated the mass murder of millions of innocent people. They did not sell their technology, they leased it and provided hands-on assistance in tabulating the rounding up, transportation and executions. They had to know what they were doing.

IBM and its German subsidiary custom-designed complex solutions, one by one, anticipating the Reich's needs. They did not merely sell the machines and walk away. Instead, IBM leased these machines for high fees and became the sole source of the billions of punch cards Hitler needed.

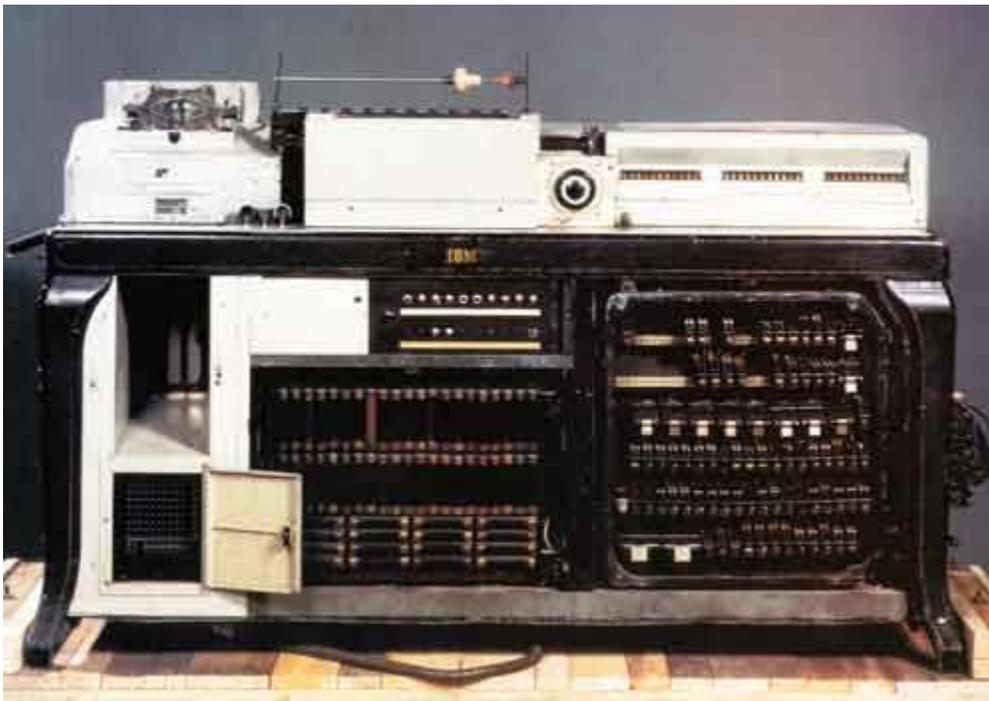
When it became illegal for American corporations to help the Nazis, IBM transferred the operation to its Swiss and German subsidiaries. (Deutsche Hollerith-Maschinen Gesellschaft mbH better known as Dehomag.)

In 2001, Edwin Black's book *IBM and the Holocaust* was published. (This book was a primary source and inspiration for today's paper, as was Edwin Black's *War against the Weak Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race*.)

In February 2001, an Alien Tort Claims Act claim was filed in U.S. federal court against IBM for allegedly providing the punched card technology that facilitated the Holocaust, and for covering up Dehomag's activities. In April 2001, the lawsuit was dropped. Lawyers said they feared proceeding with the suit would slow down payments from a special German Holocaust fund created to compensate forced laborers and others who had suffered due to the Nazi persecution. IBM's German division paid \$3 million into the fund, although IBM denied admitting liability with its contribution.

In 2004, GIRCA (Gypsy International Recognition and Compensation Action human rights group) filed suit against IBM in Switzerland. The case was dismissed in 2006.¹⁴

An IBM Hollerith machine is part of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.



¹³ <http://www.ibmandtheholocaust.com/>

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IBM_and_the_Holocaust

Conclusions and Comments

It should be concluded without doubt that racial cleaning policies were implemented in both the United States and Germany during the first half of the Twentieth Century. There are enormous differences of magnitude between what happened here and what happened in Europe: "only" a few thousand killed in the US and "mere" tens of thousands forcibly sterilized versus over 11 million unwanted people murdered in the Nazi death camps. Yet the plan was the same; had the American Eugenics movement succeeded, had these rich and powerful few been able to implement their *War Against the Weak* to the same degree as their Nazi allies, the death toll would have been in the tens of millions.

There were no sensational trials for crimes against humanity in America. The people who committed these acts were, by and large, allowed to live out their lives, most of them convinced to the end that they had done a great service to humanity. Their deeds have largely been forgotten. They should not be, because by forgetting them we make it more likely that they will come again.

The corporations and groups that contributed to these acts are intact and still functioning.

A question that should be asked is how could otherwise sane people commit such acts? What were their motivations and how did they justify what they did to themselves and to their neighbors? The answer is that both the eugenics movement and the Nazi party appealed to three very basic human emotions: vanity, greed and paranoia.

Vanity in that they became convinced that they, people of Germanic, Nordic and Anglo-Saxon stock were better than anyone else; that they were in some way the Chosen people, with a great destiny that could not be denied. Greed comes into play because in the early arguments for eugenics it was constantly pointed out how much caring for the poor, the weak and the infirm was costing the taxpayer. Paranoia in that at the core of each movement was the assertion that this special minority was being assaulted by the very existence and continued procreation of barbarian hordes. In committing these atrocities, they saw themselves as defending their race and their way of life.

As insane as this sounds, there are groups in America today preaching the same ideals. The minister Doug Coe, for example, likens Hitler to Jesus:

Hitler, Goebbels and Himmler were three men. Think of the immense power these three men had...But they bound themselves together in an agreement...Two years before they moved into Poland, these three men had...systematically a plan drawn out...to annihilate the entire Polish population and destroy by numbers every single house...every single building in Warsaw and then to start on the rest of Poland." Coe adds that it worked; they killed six and a half million "Polish people." Though he calls Nazis "these enemies of ours," he compares their commitment to Jesus' demands: "Jesus said, 'You have to put me before other people. And you have to put me before yourself.' Hitler, that was the demand to be in the Nazi party. You have to put the Nazi party and its objectives ahead of your own life and ahead of other people.

He also compares the fanaticism of the Red Guard during China's Cultural Revolution to the zeal of the Christian faithful.

I've seen pictures of young men in the Red Guard of China...they would bring in this young man's mother and father, lay her on the table with a basket on the end, he would take an axe and cut her head off....They have to put the purposes of the Red Guard ahead of the mother-father-brother-sister -- their own life! That was a covenant. A pledge. That was what Jesus said.¹⁵

Coe refers to members of his ministry as the "The Fellowship" or the "The Family." He uses the same techniques as the Nazis and the eugenicists, telling his followers that they have achieved wealth and power because they are the beloved of God. Who would be affiliated with such a group? Every sitting President from Dwight D. Eisenhower to President Obama has attended least one National Prayer Breakfast held by the group. Politicians and millionaires, both foreign and domestic, are members and participants in Coe's congregation.

Remember that the American Eugenics movement had at its core a small group of wealthy, influential and committed individuals.

When you hear people today talking about "taking back America" (a phrase used by Dick Morris in 2010 on the Hannity show among many other places) ask who they are taking it back from and what they intend to do with these people.

¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fellowship_%28Christian_organization%29

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