

Chapter Two Eugenics



Discovering the eugenics movement

My first visit to a eugenics era asylum was in 1975 when a psychology class I was in spent a day at Eastern State Hospital, built in 1886 at Medical Lake Washington. The purpose of the eugenics social movement was to purify the human race by institutionalizing and sterilizing the “feebleminded”, legislating laws prohibiting inter-racial marriage, and limiting immigration to the United States.

Eastern State Hospital architecture was symbolic of the eugenics movements goal to stop the “unfit” from reproducing. The administration building is in the center with wards for men on one side, and wards for women on the other side. Our class was divided, with women observing the women’s wards as the men were escorted through the men’s wards. In the hidden reaches of the asylum, we were guided into locked wards - concrete rooms of 20-30 mostly naked people. The locked wards had no windows or furnishings and the only discerning feature was a drain in the middle. Occasionally, a hospital orderly would enter the locked ward to spray the urine and feces off the inmates and into the drain. We stared in disbelief as one man sat slamming his forehead into the concrete wall with the cadence of sickening thuds. Others moaned in pain and trauma.

Thirty years before my visit to Eastern State Hospital, my dad was drafted into the US Army and soon on a troop ship headed for Europe. In May, 1945, a few months before my dad entered Germany, Adolf Hitler realized his army could no longer defend Berlin and

committed suicide. My dad was assigned to a logistics position, and what he thought was going to be a liberation mission became an occupation mission.

Dad wrote a postcard to Mom from New York, and then there was a long break before his next letter came. He described visiting German death camps and enclosed six grim photographs.

I'm enclosing the Nordhausen atrocity pictures in this letter darling and when you come to number 6 honey you'll see the very last thing in inhumanity. This baby and little girl were gassed, beaten and machine gunned to death as were all the rest and hundreds more like them. I passed by the graves of people only last week and believe me darling that the ones you see in the pictures are only a small minority as compared to the graves. When you think of the other murder camps, Dessau, Buchwald, Dachau and the others you wonder how any of the refugees got away with their lives. I saw Dessau honey and it was one of the smaller ones compared to Nordhausen but I'll never forget it.

On the back of each photograph, Dad wrote a caption:

1. Refugees leaving Nordhausen on the long trek home.
2. Some of my buddies view of the gruesomeness of human "cord wood".
3. Nordhausen's victims lay stretched out for blocks.
4. More and more _____.
5. _____ and still more.

6. To the utter extreme of Nazi inhumanity.

Two weeks later, my mom replied.

The ones of Nordhausen were like the movies I saw darling only the movies were worse. There are a few people I would like to see these pictures as they don't believe the Germans did these things.

On July 6, 1945, my dad replied to mom and those who didn't think the Holocaust could happen in Germany.

I have 16 rolls of film left for my camera honey and if the sun ever stays out long enough I will send you some more pictures. You said that George's mother believes the Germans never committed atrocities such as those at Nordhausen, Dachau, Buchwald and Dessau and other places and it's easy to understand why they wouldn't. Its hard to believe honey but I seen it with my own eyes and what I've seen no one can make me deny. Do they think that for one minute the US would stand for pictures and stories as horrible as those to be released to the public if they weren't true? This is the very lowest extreme of inhumanity and I doubt that even the lowest form of animal life ever equaled it in its torture and treachery.

Theory is not always science

My dad and I both observed the eugenics social movement. Charles Darwin's study of evolution (C. Darwin, 1859) inspired the philosopher Herbert Spencer to apply the theory of natural selection to the human race by proposing that the survival of human races

was determined by the strongest race (Spencer, 1864). Francis Galton invented the term eugenics claiming that the human species could survive only if the strongest human race had birth rates greater than the rest of the human races (F. Galton, 1883, 1889, 1892; Francis Galton, 1907). Galton believed his eugenics theory could be proven by applying statistical analysis to human traits, a continuation of the work of mathematician, and cofounder of sociology, Adolphe Quetelet. Quetelet wrote that the features of the *perfect man* fell within the average (Quetelet, 1842). Applying this concept to the measurement of intelligence fifty years later, statistician Karl Pearson created a scale of *mentace* to demonstrate the statistical distribution of intelligence.

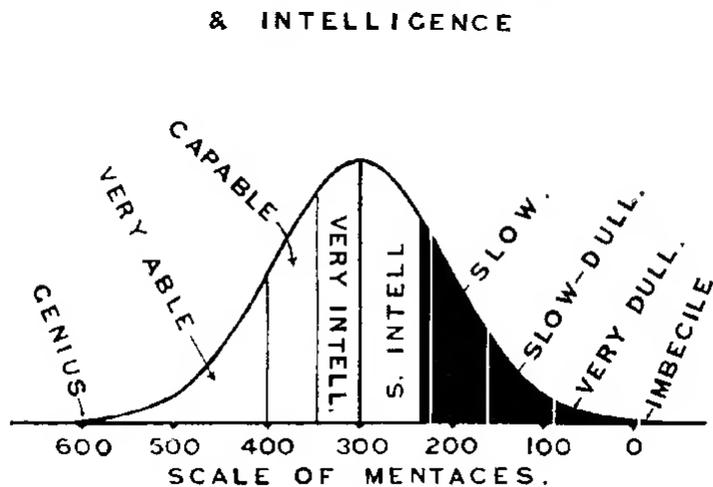
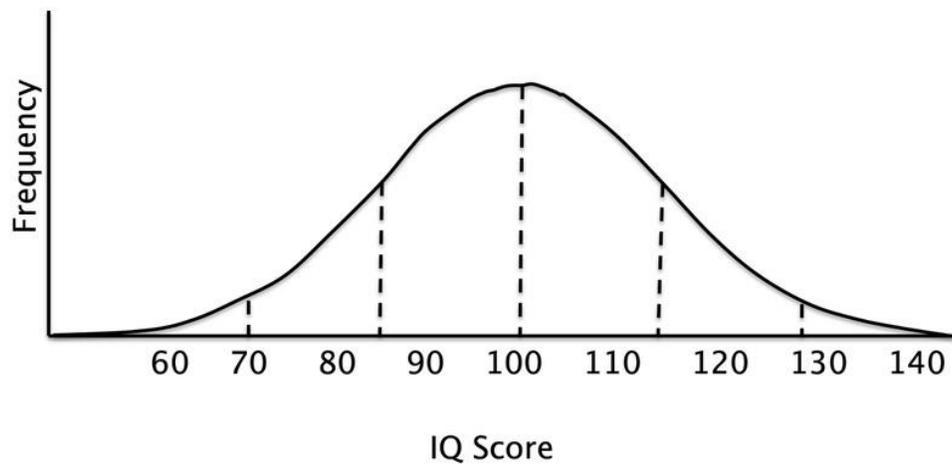


Fig. 7



French psychologist Alfred Binet and Stanford psychologist Lewis Terman applied the same statistical analysis to the development of child intelligence in their Binet-Simon scale (Binet Sc.D & Simon M.D., 1916), creating the notion of the intelligence quotient, or IQ,

still used today in introductory psychology classes.



Those with IQs in the range 90–110 were normal, those with IQs above 110 had superior intelligence, and those with IQs under 90 were thought to be feebleminded. They invented a classification based on IQ: *morons* were those with IQs in the range 55–70, *imbeciles* ranged from 40–55, and *idiots* had IQs measuring less than 40. In 1908, human intelligence was also measured by observation. The difference between imbeciles and idiots was the capacity to use and comprehend the spoken language, something the imbeciles were capable of but not the idiots. What differentiated morons from imbeciles was their capacity to use written language (Brigham, 1917). According to this theory, the idiots were beyond remediation because they were unable to learn. Eugenics theory

claimed that due to their hereditary weakness, they represented a threat to the human race and had to be prevented from reproducing so they were incarcerated, involuntarily sterilized, and subjected to abuses too extreme to mention here.

The Inventor of Eugenics Predicts Jihad

Eugenics was a racist theory never meeting the scientific criteria of empirical validation. Francis Galton, the inventor of eugenics, realized this but remained confident that some future information would validate his theory.

When the desired fullness of information shall have been acquired, then, and not before then, will it be the fit moment to proclaim a “Jihad” [sic] or Holy War against customs and prejudices that impair the physical and moral qualities of our race. (Francis Galton, 1907)

Publishing in the American Sociological Journal, Galton laid out his plans for eugenics to become a national priority by publishing in the.

It must be made familiar as an academic question until its exact importance has been understood and accepted as fact...It must be recognized as a subject whose practical development deserves serious consideration...It must be introduced into the national conscience, like a new religion. (F. Galton, 1904)

In an article on how to “grow a better crop of boys and girls,” the author wrote that those with human differences such as mental illness, disabilities, tuberculosis, physical abnormalities, alcoholism, drug addictions, criminal histories, and histories of infidelity should

be denied “the one privilege of becoming progenitors of the race” (McKeever, 1904). The control of human was the aim of the social policies of eugenics, policies lacking any scientific evidence to validate them.

Eugenics comes to the United States

A Harvard biologist, Charles Davenport was inspired by Galton’s work and the nascent practice of biostatistics. Through his tireless efforts, he received funding for the eugenics movement from the Carnegie Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, J. H. Kellogg, and the widow of the railroad baron E. H. Harriman. This network of business leaders was not funding science; instead, it was funding the social actions of a racist movement. The social actions followed a common process. The first task was to identify the unfit, the second was to isolate them in institutions, and the third was to involuntarily sterilize them. Finally, the unfit would be abandoned in large institutions like Eastern State Hospitals and subjected to horrible atrocities.

At the first International Congress on Eugenics, Davenport presented a paper on marriage laws, arguing his case for the racist theory Galton had deduced.

“[the] biological basis is doubtless an appreciation of the fact that Negroes and other races carry traits that do not go well with our social organization” (Davenport, 1907).

Funding Eugenics

In 1904, Davenport became the director of the Station for Experimental Study of Evolution located at Cold Harbor Spring, New York. The station was funded by the Carnegie

Foundation (Haller, 1963) and its purpose was to collect large amounts of data on human body parts and to store them in a central location (Hubbard, 2006). Two years later, Davenport co-founded the Race Betterment Foundation in Battle Creek, Michigan, with the cereal inventor J. H. Kellogg, who invested a portion of his common stock in the foundation. The first conference of the Race Betterment Foundation was held in 1914 with a purpose to assemble evidence of the extent to which degenerative tendencies were actively at work in America and to promote agencies for race betterment. Kellogg gave the opening remarks at the conference.

If race is degenerating, it is highly important that the world should know it and that such agencies should be set in operation as will save the race of man from the common fate of all other living forms as told and foretold by the geologic records of the earth's crust.
(Kellogg MD, 1914)

Davenport became the leader of the eugenics movement. In addition to obtaining funding from the Carnegie Foundation for the Station for Experimental Study of Evolution and from Kellogg for the Race Betterment Foundation, he secured the support of the widow of E. H. Harriman (founder of the Union Pacific Railroad) to open the Eugenics Record Office on October 1, 1910. After its opening, Davenport also convinced J. D. Rockefeller to provide additional funding to the Eugenics Record Office where Charles Davenport served as its director and hired educator and sociologist Harry Laughlin as its superintendent. Laughlin was successful in calling for reductions in immigration and a proponent of selective immigration winning praise from the Chicago's Chief Justice Harry Olson who reinforced the importance of Laughlin's work at the Eugenics Record Office.

America, in particular, needs to protect herself against indiscriminate immigration, criminal degenerates and race suicide. (Laughlin, 1922)

The Eugenics Record Office had nine functions (Carlson, 2001). Those related to the social movement are in bold print:

1. To serve eugenical interests in the capacity of repository and clearing house.
2. To build up an analytical index of the inborn traits of American families.
3. **To train field workers to gather data of eugenic importance.**
4. **To maintain a field force actually engaged in gathering such data.**
5. **To cooperate with other institutions and with persons concerned with eugenical study.**
6. To investigate the manner of the inheritance of specific human traits.
7. To investigate other eugenical factors such as (a) mate selection, (b) differential fecundity, (c) differential survival, and (d) differential migration.
8. **To advise concerning the eugenical fitness of proposed marriages.**
9. To publish the results of the research.

Eugenics in Oregon

Care for the mentally ill in Oregon began in 1843, sixteen years before Oregon's statehood. The new provisional government required courts to conduct investigations into credible reports of insanity. Using juries of men considered to be both intelligent and disinterested, probate courts assigned guardians to protect those thought to be insane and

their property. The courts authorized the sale of the insane person's property to finance their care, the support of their dependents, and the payment of any debts they had incurred. In 1844, a legislative committee appropriated \$500 to care for lunatic or insane persons. Justices of the Peace confirming an individual's insanity were directed to "cause him to be let out publicly to the lowest bidder to be boarded and clothed for one year" (Brown, 2009).

Dr. James Hawthorne created the first care facility for the insane two years after Oregon became a state in 1859 and advocated for the creation of insane asylums in Oregon. In 1907, Oregon's legislative assembly created the State Institution for the Feeble Minded (later renamed Fairview Training Center) to train and care for feeble-minded, idiotic, and epileptic persons. In 1913, three hundred twenty-five inmates were transferred from the Institution for the Feeble Minded to the new Eastern Oregon State Hospital in Pendleton, Oregon (Brown, 2009).

Sterilizing the Feeble-minded

It took ten years after the opening of the Eugenics Record Office in 1910 for states like Oregon to pass marriage and sterilization legislation. These social procedures needed sponsorship and legislation to become policy and Oregon's state government became the poster child for eugenics.

Almost one hundred years before my tour of Eastern State Hospital, Oregon pioneer Bethenia Owens-Adair toured an asylum in 1880. To Owens-Adair it was a "pitiful and loathsome ward," leading her to proclaim that the "poor and miserable creatures" residing there should be sterilized for their "only chance of safety." The superintendent responded with

“perfect amazement” and told her not to make her viewpoints public. Owens-Adair remained strident, saying “I hope that the time will come when I will be permitted to use my pen and my voice in this direction for the purification and the preservation of our nation” (Curry, 1977).

Bethenia believed that “the trail of the feebleminded is inevitably transmissible” and could “in any generation, turn into insanity or criminality.” Bethenia’s determination helped Oregon pass Chapter 279 of the 1917 General Laws of Oregon. The purpose of the act was

to prevent the procreation of feebleminded, insane, epileptic, habitual criminals, moral degenerates and sexual perverts, who may be inmates of institutions maintained by public expense, by authorizing and providing for the sterilization of persons with inferior hereditary potentialities. (Brown, 2009)

The act established the Oregon State Board of Eugenics (later renamed the Board of Social Protection) to oversee the involuntary sterilizations

for the betterment of the physical, mental, neural, or psychic condition of the inmate, or to protect society from the menace of manner as a punitive measure; and no person shall be emasculated under the authority of this Act except that such operation shall be found to be necessary to improve the physical, mental, neural or psychic condition of the inmate. (Brown, 2009)

Oregon as a eugenics example

Davenport’s industry was paying off. He had created a network of social change for implementing eugenics. The Research Committees of the Eugenics Section of the American

Breeders Association commissioned a project to “study and report on the best practical means for cutting off the defective germ-plasm in the American population.” The work was done by the committee’s secretary, Harry Laughlin, and published by the Eugenics Record Office.

Laughlin’s report recommended the social policies adopted by Oregon (Laughlin, 1914):

1. Life segregation (or segregation during the reproductive period).
2. Sterilization.
3. Restrictive marriage laws and customs.
4. Eugenic education of the public and of prospective marriage mates.

Three layers of the movement emerged. Davenport drove the call for action just as Galton had planned. Laughlin wrote eugenics policies, and workers put the policies to practice.

Elizabeth Kite, a field worker with the Eugenics Record Office, was finding the feebleminded subjects on which to practice the policies. Kite was well prepared. She had learned about intelligence testing from Binet (Binet & Simon, 1916), but with the influx of investments into eugenics came expectations for new social practices and there was no time to administer Binet’s IQ test. A timelier approach for identifying the feeble minded was needed. Kite wrote, “the doctors and alienists [those psychiatrists who assess the competence of defendants in a court of law] have no time...it therefore became necessary to send workers into the field to collect the necessary data” (Kite, 1912). In the absence of a statistical analysis of intelligence, how could the field workers proceed?

Kite wrote that *sub-normals* were like children and that they responded to feelings rather than reason, tending to make them suspicious of the field worker. However, she added that once the field workers had gained the trust of those they were studying, “they [gave] themselves without reserve, blossoming like flowers in the warm Sun.” The field workers were trained to make their visits a pleasant experience toward achieving their goals of identifying the unfit.

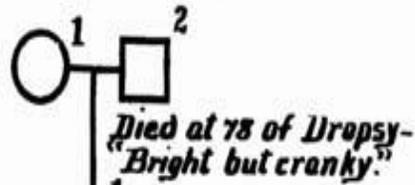
“If you can make a subject happy you have gone a long way towards the understanding of his particular case. Nothing could be truer, and in the power to do this lies the whole secret of success in our line of work. (Kite, 1912)

While at the Vineland Training School, established by the psychologist Henry Goddard, Kite discovered an alternative to intelligence testing. Goddard’s method consisted of field workers going into communities and finding people who appeared “different”. The workers constructed a pedigree tree of the person’s lineage revealing alcoholism, degeneracy, or social deviance thus establishing feeble-mindedness and identifying morons.

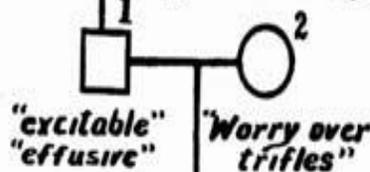
Goddard made up the pedigree tree without empirical validation and used here by Laughlin to describe a person with manic depressive tendencies.

FAMILY SHOWING A VERY SLIGHT TENDENCY TO MANIC DEPRESSIVE INSANITY.

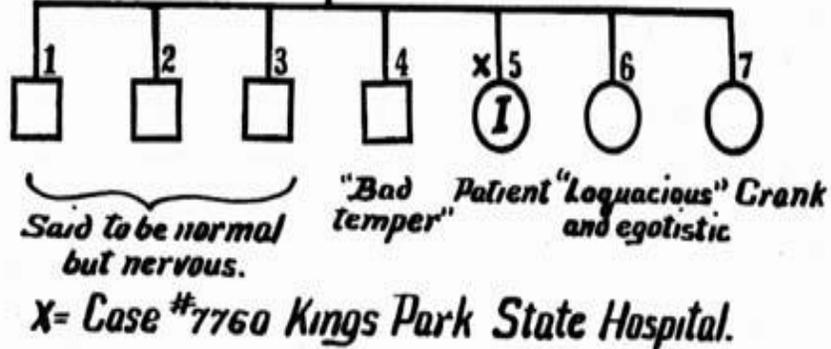
I.



II.



III.



Elizabeth Kite described this “application of Mendelian law of heredity to human beings” as one of the reasons for sending workers into the field to collect data. The other reason for doing so was due to new methods in applied psychology. She admitted errors were made using Goddard’s pedigree chart, but that they were caused by “the highest borderline states of feeble-mindedness.”

Dr. Goddard has given the collective term of Moron. It is in determining these states that our greatest difficulty lies. It must not be forgotten that the great work of Dr Goddard and Professor Johnstone, of the Training School, is to have described and

emphasized these high-grade defective states, attributing to them a large percentage of our incurable social evils.

It scarcely needs to be stated that no great skill is required to detect pronounced subnormal mentality. No one is long deceived by an idiot or imbecile or even by a low-grade feeble-minded person...they do not present the most profound of our social problems. It is the high-grade Moron type that is the chief business of our field workers to discover. (Kite, 1912)

The US Supreme Court rules in favor of involuntary sterilization with no scientific support

In 1927, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of involuntary sterilization of people who appeared to others as being different (Holmes, 1927). Goddard was a key expert in the case and used field workers' data to prove feeble-mindedness. Ironically, the year before Chief Justice Holmes wrote the majority opinion justifying involuntary sterilization using Goddard's expert testimony, Goddard rejected his own methods presented as science by Kite.

And now must our nakedness be exposed! In this year of grace, nineteen hundred and twenty six, after three quarters of a century of intensive study of it. We are still limited to a definition of feeble-mindedness that is unscientific and unsatisfactory. Such a definition is not scientific because it is not defined. (Goddard, 1927)

According to the court's own expert witness the Supreme Court's decision legalizing involuntary sterilization was made without scientific evidence.

Feeble-mindedness

Oregon's Bethenia Owens-Adair and Harry Laughlin of the Eugenics Record Office, obliged Davenport in his decision to abandon intelligence testing in favor of observational fieldwork. The remotest notion of a scientific approach to eugenics was tossed aside in favor of actions to control marriage, reproduction, and institutionalization of the feeble-minded. Bethenia wrote of this development in reference to Goddard's method used by Laughlin and his fieldworkers.

I shall not attempt a discussion of the laws of heredity but shall assume an acceptance of them. That mental defects and criminal tendencies are transmissible has been forcibly established by scientific investigators. There is a great quantity of statistical evidence proving this fact. Studies have been made of the genealogies of many different families, good and bad, and the results given the world. (Owens-Adair, 1922)

As we will see, Bethenia indeed left her mark not only on those in Oregon but on eugenic leaders around the world. Without any supporting evidence, Bethenia created social policies in Oregon that would enable the new social practices of eugenics.

Prior to Bethenia's legislation, professor Glenn Johnson was teaching at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. He described feeble-mindedness as a "term that has been used to designate

all degrees of mental defectiveness, from one who is merely dull and unable to learn fast to the one who is a gelatinous mass that simply lives and eats.” Johnson referenced 1913 World Almanac data claiming that over 20,755 feeble-minded people were institutionalized in the United States. He estimated that only 1,820 “defectives” lived in Oregon because of the young state’s sparse population. Although he thought the population was small, Johnson felt that the feeble-minded needed to be combated in Oregon through “proper marriage laws, segregation of defects, and sterilization.” He requested that anyone who knew a “feeble-minded person or defective living in the state of Oregon who is not in some institution used purposively for the feeble-minded, to communicate the facts to me” (Owens-Adair, 1922).

Five years later, a survey conducted for the Oregon State Legislature by the United States Public Health Service reported over sixty thousand feeble-minded lived in Oregon. In 1920, Oregon taxpayers spent \$1 million for the maintenance of six state institutions. Bethenia wrote that the “number to be cared for grows faster than the accommodations” and asked, “Shall we ask the normal people of our state, in addition to supporting themselves, to carry the burden of maintaining a disproportionate and ever increasing number of defectives and degenerates?”(Curry, 1977).

The atrocities occurring in Oregon’s institutions never slowed the eugenics movement. In 1942, a mass killing at Fairview Training Center (built in 1907 as the State Institution for the Feeble-minded) occurred when a patient working in the kitchen mistakenly replaced powdered milk with poison. The poison was used to feed patients and staff. With forty-seven deaths and over four hundred sickened, Fairview received nationwide attention, causing Governor Sprague to convince the legislature to invest large sums of money in the institution (Brown, 2009).

Eugenics inspires the Holocaust

The First International Congress on Eugenics was held at the University of London in 1912. Leonard Darwin, Charles Darwin's son, presided over the Congress, entitled "Problems in Eugenics." Alexander Graham Bell, the chairman of the Eugenics Record Office, and Charles Davenport, its director, both traveled to London for the congress. In his presidential address, Darwin called the congress to action.

Ultimately, it may be possible to induce Society to adopt a well considered eugenics policy and to carry out reforms on eugenic lines. To attain these ends, however, it is necessary that those who are alive to the dangers of the present social situation should come together for the purpose of exchanging views, and of discussing concerted social schemes of actions. This is the basis on which this meeting is about to assemble. (L. Darwin, 1912)

Davenport presented his paper "Marriage Laws and Customs" at the Congress. He spoke about his Eugenics Record Office field workers, who observed that the offspring of one criminal man included an epileptic, two imbeciles, and an "encephalic monster." He applauded Oregon's recent marriage laws, passed in part due to Bethenia's efforts to prohibit marriage between "negroes, Chinese, Kanakas, Indians, and white settlers." At the same congress where Darwin was issuing his call for action, Davenport concluded his paper with his own eugenic call to action: "then, by sterilization, prevent the reproduction of the socially inadequate" (C. B. Davenport, 1912).

Well established in the US, the funding of eugenics continued in Germany. In 1924, the Kaiser Wilhelm Society had taken over the Institute for Psychiatry in Munich. J. D. Rockefeller's foundation gave the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology \$410,000 (Black, 2003; Kuhl, 1994).

Davenport became the president of the International Federation of Eugenic Organizations and celebrated the openings of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology in 1927 and recognized its director, Eugen Fischer. In his celebration of the opening, Davenport forwarded Mussolini a memorandum written by Fischer that surely echoed Davenport's own call to action: "Maximum speed is necessary: the danger is enormous" (Muller-Hill, 1988). Davenport recommended that Fischer succeed him as president of the International Federation of Eugenics Organizations.

Davenport supported the expansion in Germany and collaborated with Fischer who influenced Hitler's thinking and led the masquerade of eugenics as science in the Nazi Third Reich. The Nazi's replicated the social actions of eugenics—identify, isolate, sterilize, and institutionalize people with differences—and added one more social action: removal or killing (Muller-Hill, 1988). The eugenicists—Galton, Spencer, Pearson, Davenport, Laughlin, Goddard, and others—informed and inspired the Nazi regime with support from business leaders including Rockefeller and IBM's CEO Thomas J. Watson (Black, 2001).

In 1933, Hitler became the chancellor of the Third Reich and appointed Eugen Fischer, Davenport's preferred successor to the presidency of the International Federation of Eugenics Organizations, the rector of Frederick William University of Berlin.

In 1937, ten years after the *Buck v. Bell* Supreme Court decision permitting involuntary sterilization, Hitler's chancellery handed down a decision to sterilize "colored children." In 1938, the scope for sterilization expanded to include those with "hereditary defects, asocials, and unsocials." They would be committed to concentration camps upon the recommendations of a tribunal of hereditary health.

Between 1934-1939 estimated three hundred fifty to four hundred thousand people were sterilized by the Third Reich as the ripple of racial rejection continued to expand.

Professor Fischer lectured in 1939:

When a people wants, somehow or other, to preserve its own nature, it must reject alien racial elements, and when these have already insinuated themselves, it must suppress and eliminate them. The Jew is such an alien and therefore, when he wants to insinuate himself, he must be warded off. This is self-defence [sic]. In saying this, I do not characterize every Jew as inferior, as Negroes are, and I do not underestimate the greatest enemy with whom we have to fight. But I reject Jewry with every means in my power, and without reserve, in order to preserve the hereditary endowment of my people. (Muller-Hill, 1988)

The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology trained government medical doctors and Hitler's paramilitary Schutzstaffel (SS) in anthropology and genetics. Dr. Fritz Lenz—co-author with Fischer and Erwin Baur on *Grundriss der Menschlichen Erblchkeitslehre und Rassenhygiene (The Principles of Hereditary and Race Hygiene)* (Baur, 1921)—was

responsible for the training. He collaborated with psychiatrists, mental hospital directors, medical civil servants, and SS doctors in creating a draft law for euthanasia, permitting the killing of psychiatric patients. The draft law was aimed at efficiency. It was used to empty the majority of mental homes and hospitals. This dealt with the “problem” of current hospital residents, but not the flow of future residents being referred to them.

The Reich Commission for the Registration of Severe Disorders in Childhood was formed in order to establish the criteria for killing children with mental retardation and disease. Between 1939–1940, the commission focused its efforts on killing children under the age of four but later included adolescents as well. “Patients” were taken to an intermediary “observational institution” and then transferred to an extermination center where they were stripped naked and murdered with carbon monoxide gas (Muller-Hill, 1988).

The year 1934 marked the beginning of the eugenics movement in Nazi Germany, and by 1939, fifty thousand people identified as “feeble-minded, deformed, or insane” were put to death in gas chambers (Haller, 1963) along with almost 290,000 psychiatric patients. By the time the war ended in 1945, four to six million Jews were put to death in one of six euthanasia centers.

The circle of the eugenic social actions was complete when the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Brain Research proceeded to harvest the brains of “feeble-minded children and idiots.” At the mental hospital in Gorden, Germany, Professor Julius Hallervorden gave the grim instructions, “Look here now, boys, if you are to kill all of these people at least take the brains out so that the material can be utilized” (Muller-Hill, 1988).

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