

AMERICAN EUGENICS SOCIETY 1922-1994
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(rev. December 8, 1993 ver. 6.8)

CONTENTS OF AMERICAN EUGENICS

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Why this book?

This book documents the means by which eugenic goals have been introduced into the mainstream of American intellectual and political life, and the extent to which this mainstreaming has occurred.

Eugenics is a concept familiar to Americans as an overarching policy consideration of the Third Reich. "Eugenics" subsumes such notions as racial purity, racial superiority, and the heritability of intelligence, virtue, or vice. Although Hitler is its most notorious proponent, eugenic thinking has been a prominent strand in Western intellectual history since the 1860's, when Darwin's disciple, Francis Galton, began to put about the idea that the governing classes of England ought to take it upon themselves to guide the development of the human genetic heritage. A good history of these early days of eugenic thinking can be found in *The Legacy of Malthus* by Allen Chase. A good short discussion of the early days of eugenics can be found in *Aristotle to Zoos* by Peter Medawar, a member of the English Eugenics Society. He quotes Galton, as follows:

"I do not see why any insolence of caste should prevent the gifted class, when they had the power, from treating their compatriots with all kindness, so long as they maintained celibacy. But if these continued to procreate children inferior in moral, intellectual and physical qualities, it is easy to believe the time may come when such persons would be considered as enemies to the State, and to have forfeited all claims to kindness." (Fraser's Magazine 7 [1873] quoted in *Aristotle to Zoos.*, Peter and Jean Medawar, 1983 p. 87)

By the turn of the 20th century, such ideas were commonplace. Margaret Sanger, a member of both the American Eugenics Society and the English Eugenics Society, is a famous proponent of eugenics from that time; we may recall any one of numerous examples from her writings. For example,

"Those least fit to carry on the race are increasing most rapidly ... Funds that should be used to raise the standard of our civilization are diverted to maintenance of those who should never have been born." (from *The Pivot of Civilization* quoted in Margaret Sanger. by Elsie Droghin.)

The eugenic ideas of Margaret Sanger and others have been the philosophy of the major birth control groups from the beginning until now. For example,

"Race Building in a Democracy" was the topic at the 1940 joint meeting of the Birth Control Federation of America and the Citizens Committee for Planned Parenthood. The Federation then said: "We, too, [like Hitler's regime] recognize the problem of race building, but our concern is with the quality of our people, not with their quantity alone ... "It is entirely fitting that 'Race Building in a Democracy' should have been chosen as the theme of the ANNUAL MEETING of the Birth Control Federation of America ..." (Birth Control Review, vol. XXIV, January 1940. See also the entry in this book under Henry P. Fairchild)

One of the most influential opponents of eugenic thinking was G.K. Chesterton, who wrote *Eugenics and Other Evils*. The rise of the eugenicists to power in the mid-20th century in Nazi Germany is an oft-told tale. Unfortunately, the moral generally drawn from this tale is that flaws in the German character explain the Third Reich. It "all" happened because Germans are too much in love with their own national heritage, or too sentimental, or too docile before authority. These traits, combined with antisemitism, "explain" the rise of Hitler. In other words, eugenical thinking is supposedly a menace particular to German culture; the rest of us need not examine our consciences except for German personality traits.

In truth, however, eugenical thinking has been spreading steadily in Western culture throughout this century. Even after the German embarrassment, the eugenicists kept right on pursuing the same goals they had always pursued, the same goals that Hitler pursued. But the spread of eugenicism after World War II in the United States is not well studied or documented; hence this book.

The research presented in this book aims to further the study of post-World War II eugenic influence in America. Earlier eugenicists, and foreign eugenicists, are studied for the sake of the light they shed on the post-War American context.

Eugenics in America

The conclusions drawn by the author from the data she has gathered are as follows:

(1) Eugenic currents in England, America, and Germany were more similar than different in the period 1922-1939. Thinkers in the three countries were allied by friendship, by organizational ties, and by mutual reference to each other's works.

(2) The American Eugenics Society is an important network of American eugenicists connected with the English Eugenics Society (Galton Institute), an important English/Commonwealth/ European eugenic network. The Society survives and flourishes to the present day. Following a name change in 1973, it is now known as the Society for the Study of Social Biology. The name change does not correspond to any alteration in the goals of the Society.

(3) Eugenic thinkers in democracies presently use different tactics for the implementation of eugenic goals than did the dictator Hitler. However, democracy was and is, for eugenicists, merely a political obstacle course. Eugenicists do not subscribe to the political culture of mutual respect which corresponds to faith in democracy. This is shown by the employment of systematic deceit as they pursue their goals in the political arena of democracy.

(4) Eugenicists were embarrassed by Hitler. After the war, they instituted various strategies to cover up the continued joint development of the German, American, and English eugenic agendas. For example, they adopted of the policy of "cryptoeugenics" or secret eugenics; and founded various cover organizations such as the Population Council and the International Planned Parenthood Federation. There is little evidence, however, that American and English eugenicists learned any lesson from the German debacle - except a lesson about public relations.

(5) The International Planned Parenthood Federation is one of a number of organizations which (a) were wholly sympathetic with eugenic goals at the time of their founding by eugenicists; (b) have carried out effective eugenic programs since their founding; (c) present to the world a nominal purpose which does not acknowledge a eugenic agenda. Shakespeare defined the hypocrite as "the smiler with the knife" and "the smiler with the knife" is wholly appropriate as a description of the hypocritical, eugenical International Planned Parenthood Federation.

(6) The eugenic agenda is wicked and murderous, besides being presumptuous and scientifically flawed. In pursuit of the illusion that they know how to control and elevate human destiny by steering development of the gene pool, eugenicists entertain methods of dealing with their fellows which include murdering the weak, denying marriage to the "imperfect," discouraging the lonely and fragile from clinging to life, denigrating romance and family life, and encouraging the denial of all human bonds of mutual responsibility, care, and unselfish love.

(7) Eugenic leaders wish for secrecy with respect to their real agenda and goals. This desire is probably based on a realistic estimate of their support among their fellow men. It points up a weakness which can be exploited by a eugenic watch. Nearly everyone revolts from eugenic ideas once they hear the ideas clearly and accurately explained, and nearly everyone objects to supporting the eugenic agenda, once they understand it.

The author's goal in writing this book is to lay out the institutions, societies, and intellectual disciplines which have been founded by, governed by or intellectually controlled by, members of the American Eugenics Society. The object of this exercise is to encourage a healthy skepticism about the likely purpose and effect of proposals put forth by these groups. For example, Planned Parenthood is famous for its "efforts" to reduce teen pregnancy, V.D., and the spread of AIDS. It is famous for its success, however, only in reducing the number of live births to black and brown parents. To know that Planned Parenthood was founded by eugenicists, such as Margaret Sanger and Medora Bass of Philadelphia, is to receive some enlightenment as to why PP continues, year after year, to fail so spectacularly at its stated goals, while succeeding equally spectacularly at fostering a supposed side effect.

The author believes it will be helpful to the development of a deeper understanding of the current American context to document in this way, the strands of influence traceable to individuals who belong to the complex network of the American Eugenics Society.

Organization

Chapter Two sets out the pre and post Hitler goals of the Society. Chapter Three presents background information such as Society name changes, Society journals and Society presidents, and an alphabetical list of members. Known members of the American Eugenics Society (past and present)

and their known accomplishments are listed in Chapter Four. The next chapter is an Index. Finally, there is an epilogue.

Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us.

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2. AMERICAN EUGENICS SOCIETY: GOALS

Pre Hitler Goal: Race building by conscious selection backed by force

--1926--

[sterilization could] "be applied to an ever widening circle of social discards, beginning always with the criminal, the diseased and the insane, and extending gradually to types which may be called weaklings rather than defectives, and perhaps ultimately to worthless race types" (from The Passing of the Great Race by Madison Grant, co-founder American Eugenics Society)

Post Hitler Goal: Race building by "voluntary unconscious selection", deception and manipulation

--1956--

"The very word eugenics is in disrepute in some quarters ... We must ask ourselves, what have we done wrong?"

"I think we have failed to take into account a trait which is almost universal and is very deep in human nature. People simply are not willing to accept the idea that the genetic base on which their character was formed is inferior and should not be repeated in the next generation. We have asked whole groups of people to accept this idea and we have asked individuals to accept it. They have constantly refused and we have all but killed the eugenic movement ... they won't accept the idea that they are in general second rate. We must rely on other motivation. ... it is surely possible to build a system of voluntary unconscious selection. But the reasons advanced must be generally acceptable reasons. Let's stop telling anyone that they have a generally inferior genetic quality, for they will never agree. Let's base our proposals on the desirability of having children born in homes where they will get affectionate and responsible care, and perhaps our proposals will be accepted." (from "Galton and Mid Century Eugenics" by Frederick Osborn, Galton Lecture 1956, in Eugenics Review, vol. 48, 1, 1956)

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3. Background Information Tables

Names of the Society 1922-1993:

- Society for the Study of Social Biology 1973-
- American Eugenics Society Inc. 1926-1973
- American Eugenics Society 1925-1926
- Eugenics Society of the United States of America 1922-1925
- *Eugenics Committee of the United States of America 1922-1926
- International Commission on Eugenics Ad Interim Committee of the United States of America or "American Ad Interim Committee" 1921

*Formally, the Eugenics Committee of the United States of America was

distinct from the Eugenics Society of the United States because the Committee was appointed by the Second International Congress. The only action we know the Committee to have taken is the organization of the Eugenics Society of the United States, which became the American Eugenics Society. The Committee was dissolved when the American Eugenics Society was incorporated; and the Committee funds were then transferred to the Society.

Addresses of the Society 1922-1991:

515 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 1991
Social Sciences Research Council 1989
230 Park Ave., Rm. 1522, New York, NY 1969-73
245 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017 1967-68
230 Park Ave., New York, NY 1951-1967
1790 Broadway, New York 19, NY 1943-50
RKO Building, Rockefeller Center 1940-41
50 West 50th St., New York, NY 1939
4 Hillhouse Ave., New Haven Connecticut 1935-39
185 Church St., New Haven, Connecticut 1922-35
Penn Terminal 1922

Notes on the addresses:

Yale University is in New Haven, Connecticut; 1790 Broadway was also the address of the American Social Hygiene Association and the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (1948); 230 Park Avenue is the Helmsley Hotel; in the 80's and 90's the Society address given in the journal, *Social Biology*, is the workplace address of the secretary. For example, when Lonnie Sherrod was secretary, the address was the Social Sciences Research Council where Sherrod worked.

Presidents:

Irving Fisher 1922-26 (Political Economy, Yale University)
Roswell H. Johnson 1926-27 (Cold Spring Harbor, Univ. of Pittsburgh)
Harry Laughlin 1927-29 (Eugenics Record Office)
C. C. Little 1929 (Pres., Michigan University)
Henry Pratt Fairchild 1929-31 (Sociology, New York University)
Henry F. Perkins 1931-34 (Zoology, University of Vermont)
Ellsworth Huntington 1934-38 (Geography, Yale University)
Samuel Holmes 1938-40 (Zoology, University of California)
Maurice Bigelow 1940-45 (sex education, Columbia University)
Frederick Osborn 1946-52 (Osborn-Dodge-Harriman RR connection)
Harry L. Shapiro 1956-63 (American Museum of Natural History)
Clyde V. Kiser 1964-68 (differential fertility, Milbank Memorial Fund)
Dudley Kirk 1969-72 (Demographer, Stanford University)
Bruce K. Eckland 1972-75 (Sociology, University of North Carolina)
L. Erlenmeyer-Kimling 1976-78 (Genetic Psychiatry)
Lindzey Gardner 1979-81 (Center for Advanced Study, Behavioral Sciences)
John L. Fuller 1982-83 (Behavioral genetics)
Michael S. Teitelbaum 1985-1990 (US Congress staff; US population policy)
Robert Retherford 1991-1994 (East-West Institute, Hawaii; funded by AID)

Journals of the Society 1926-1993:

1969- Social Biology
1953-68 Eugenics Quarterly
1939-53 Eugenic News (published by American Eugenics Society)
1931-38 Eugenic News (published by Eugenic Research Association)
1931 People

1928-31 Eugenics

1922-28 Eugenic News (published by the Eugenic Research Association and the Eugenics Committee/Eugenics Society)

Current Journal Editor:

The 1993 editor of Social Biology, was Richard H. Osborne q.v. of the University of Wisconsin at Madison (Emeritus). He was editor 1960-77, retired, then returned as editor by 1981. The managing editor in 1991 was Barbara Teachman Harvey Osborne, wife of the editor.

Source: Eugenic News (EN), Eugenics Quarterly (EQ) and Social Biology (SB) for years from 1939-1993; Eugenics for the year 1929; "Brief History of the American Eugenics Society" EN December 1946, vol. 31 #4, p. 49 ff for years from 1922-1940; Minutes of the American Eugenics Society 1925-56 on deposit in American Philosophical Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for years from 1925-36; "The Progress of American Eugenics" Eugenics, v. 2, no. 2, 1929 p. 3 ff for years from 1921-29; A History of the American Eugenics Society, 1921-1940, Barry Mehler, PhD Thesis, available from UMI Dissertation Services, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI, 48106

4. MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

A. Key to abbreviations found in list of members:

AESA = American Eugenics Society Accounts, in the American Eugenics Society collection deposited in the American Philosophical Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

AESC = American Eugenics Society Correspondence, in the American Eugenics Society collection deposited in the American Philosophical Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

AESM = American Eugenics Society Minutes, in the American Eugenics Society collection deposited in the American Philosophical Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

AJHG = American Journal of Human Genetics

ARTW = Around the World News of Population and Birth Control (IPPF newsletter)

AMWS = American Men and Women of Science

BCR = Birth Control Review

cttee(s) = committee(s)

Chase = The Legacy of Malthus: The Social Costs of the New Scientific Racism. Allen Chase, New York, 1977

EN = Eugenic News

EQ = Eugenics Quarterly

ES = member, Eugenics Society, Great Britain

FOC = Frederick Osborn collection, deposited in the American Philosophical Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

FO Hist = "History of the American Eugenics Society", Frederick Osborn, Eugenics Quarterly, 1973

JBS = Journal of Biosocial Science

Kevles = In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity, D. Kevles, New York, 1985, Alfred Knopf

Mehler = Barry Alan Mehler, A History of the American Eugenics Society, 1921-1940, 1988, UMI Dissertation Services

Pres. = President

SB = Social Biology

SCI = Science Citation Index

v.p. = Vice President

WSW = Who's Who (Great Britain)

WWW = Who Was Who (Great Britain)

WSWIA = Who's Who in America

WWWIA = Who Was Who in America