

Book review of war against the weak

Volume 4 Issue 3 - 2015

Opinion

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War Against The Week: Eugenics And America's Campaign To Create A Master Race by Edwin Black (2003) Four Walls Eight Windows, New York, USA, pp. 550.

Sixty years after the National Socialist regime in Germany perished amid the flames of world war, the righteous campaign to identify, censure and punish those who committed mass murder in the name of National Socialism goes on. Every year some concentration camp guard or minor party hack receives a belated deportation or jail sentence, even though, nowadays, the culprits are usually past ninety. Rather than concentrating on such relative small fry, it would be more worthwhile to hold the candle of scrutiny and the finger of scorn up to some of the major players who provided the intellectual groundwork for Hitler's homicidal spree; they are named in this book by Edwin Black. *War Against the Weak* is a distillation of the findings of some fifty researchers in dozens of archives in four countries-50,000 documents in all.

The perpetrators are identified and, usually well-known, but somehow they escape general condemnation for their role: the Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Harriman foundations; such universities as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Indiana and Stanford; the American Medical Association; Margaret Sanger and Planned Parenthood; the American Museum of Natural History and the American Genetic Association; and individuals such as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Robert Yerkes, and Woodrow Wilson, just to begin with. If the Holocaust avengers are serious, then why are they so selective in their targets?

In 1902, a prison doctor in Indiana proudly announced in the *New York Medical Journal* that human sterilization should be a tool for human breeding: "We make the choice of the best rams for our sheep...and keep the best dogs...How careful, then, should we be in the begetting of children?" This statement influenced the biologist David Star Jordan who, as President of Indiana University, led that institution to become the first "reputable" entity to embrace forced sterilization. (Poor Indiana! Not only did she give to the world the psychopathe Alfred Kinsey, but she even helped make Hitler possible.) As president of the university, Jordan became America's first eminent eugenic theoretician. He left Indiana to become the first president of Leland Stanford University in California, where he championed eugenic wars against paupers and the weak, and led the like-minded to form national eugenic organizations. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes is exposed in the book as an arrogant utilitarian who created juridical space for evil. For Holmes, truth was merely the majority vote which could "lick all the others?" He thought that "the best of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market" (Black, p. 119). Holmes obviously never realized the suggestibility of masses of people, who can be brought to buy not merely junk food, but every junk idea from nudism to Nazism.

In the 1920s the aim for all the eugenicist groups was to outlaw marriage in order to halt the procreation of those deemed inferior.

On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler seized power following inconclusive elections. During the twelve-year Reich, he never varied

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Received: October 15, 2015 | **Published:** November 24, 2015

from the eugenic doctrines of identification, segregation, sterilization, euthanasia, eugenic courts and eventually mass termination of germ plasm in lethal chambers. During the Reich's first ten years, eugenicists across America welcomed Hitler's plans as the logical fulfillment of their own decades of research and effort. Indeed, they were envious as Hitler rapidly began sterilizing hundreds of thousands, and systematically eliminating non-Aryans from German Society. This included Jews. Ten years after Virginia passed its 1924 sterilization act, Joseph D. Juliette, Superintendent of Virginia's Western State Hospital, complained in the *Richmond Times Dispatch*. "The Germans are heating us at our own game" (Black, p. 277).

In those days, many Americans were intensely proud to have inspired the Nazi eugenicists. Hitler regularly communicated with Americans at prestigious universities across the country. *The Journal of the American Medical Association* provided support for his abominations. Not surprisingly, the new corporate philanthropic organizations, set up by such as the Rockefellers, Carnegie and Harriman, offered funding to eugenicists who admired the Nazi programme. In 1933, the JAMA published as though sterilization were a routine health measure, and included unchallenged data from Nazi eugenicists.

The JAMA repeated NaziJudaecophobia and propaganda as straight medical news International Business Machines (IBM) assisted Hitler's first census in 1933. On January 8, 1934, IBM opened a million-dollar factory in Berlin to manufacture data-processing machines and punch cards to streamline Hitler's operations to work with "Blitzkrieg efficiency," as the company proudly announced (p. 309).

No matter how dismal the plight of the Jews in Germany, no matter how horrifying the headlines, no matter how close Europe came to all-out war, no matter how often German troops poured across another border, American eugenicists stood fast by the eugenic hero, Adolf Hitler (p. 316).

In contrast to the American cheerleaders for Nazi eugenics, there were voices elsewhere who protested against the war on the weak:

On December 31, 1930, Pope Pius XI issued a wide-ranging encyclical on marriage; in it he condemned eugenics and fraudulent science. "That pernicious practice must be condemned," he wrote, "which closely touches upon the natural right of man to enter matrimony but effects also in a real way the welfare of the offspring. For there are some who, oversolicitous for the cause of eugenics...put eugenics before aims of the higher order and by public authority, wish to prevent from marrying all those whom, even though naturally fit for marriage, they consider, according to the norms and conjectures of investigations, would, through hereditary transmission bring forth defective offspring. And more, they wish to legislate, to deprive these of that natural faculty by medical action (sterilization) despite their unwillingness...Public magistrates have no direct power over the bodies of their subjects; therefore, where no crime has taken place and there is no cause present for grave punishment, they can never directly harm or tamper with the integrity of the body, either for the reasons of eugenics or for any other reason!" Making clear that the destruction of a child for any "eugenic indication" is nothing less than murder, the encyclical went on to quote Exodus: "Thou shalt not kill." Two more papal decrees issued in March, 1931, denounced both positive and negative eugenics (pp. 232-33).

Once again, the Catholic Church stood alone, decrying sterilization, euthanasia and all distortions of reproductive control, because the Church saw exactly where those would lead.

Survivors of the Nazi death apparatus have rightly repudiated and disdained those who supported the Holocaust. One Nazi scientist, Hubertus Strughold, performed barbaric experiments -for the Luftwaffe Institute for Aviation Medicine. He was smuggled into America after the war, continued working and was pro-claimed to be "the father of

U.S. Space Medicine." Aeromedical libraries were named for him, and a celebratory mural picturing him was commissioned by Ohio State University. But because of protests, the mural was removed in 1993, and the libraries have changed their names. (Although, as of 2003, the State of New Mexico still listed him in the International Space Hall of Fame.) (pp. 381-82).

So, if those who loudly proclaim "never again" about the Holocaust are really serious, they need to get busy on the work of condemning those American organizations and public figures who cooperated with the Nazi eugenicists. And to know who they were, they might start by reading this valuable and informative book. The Dishonour Roll is long, and the names of those on the list should be stripped of their undeserved respectability: The Rockefeller Foundation, the Population Council, the Draper Fund, the Dodge Foundation, Indiana University, the American Medical Association, the Harriman Fund, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Maggie Sanger—they should all be exposed and- disgraced as the contributors to the Holocaust that they were. "Never again?" C'mon folks! These same types are still calling the shots in America, and a bigger Holocaust goes on right around us, in every sleazy abortion parlour in this country. But the facts are here, for anyone to read who cares about the truth.

Acknowledgments

None.

Conflicts of interest

None.

Funding

None.