**Eugenics Background**

**Eugenics**, according to *Eugenics Watch*, is "[*false science*](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=False_science&action=edit&redlink=1). It is about the selective prevention or encouragement of births for social, racial, or political ends. When promoting anti-natalist measures, such measures are often hidden beneath rhetoric about [freedom of choice](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Freedom_of_choice&action=edit&redlink=1) or [reproductive health](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Reproductive_health). When eugenic goals demand increased fertility, those goals may be advanced in the name of national power, race survival, or even family support programs (including maternity leave, day care, child care allowances, etc. as in much of Europe today) which would be considered progressive if not for the intent behind them."[[1]](http://www.africa2000.com/ENDX/endx.htm)

"Eugenics is not about reproductive freedom. It is, in fact, the antithesis of reproductive freedom because it is essentially concerned with competitive fertility. As such, it is similar to -- but not identical to -- [population control](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Population_control). The distinction here is that eugenics supplies a biological or genetic interpretation to its means and aims. If it is a particular race that is to targeted, for instance, the eugenicist will first offer a *scientific* basis for such a plan -- usually consisting of statistical *evidence* that the disfavoured group is less capable of achievement, more prone to anti-social behaviour, or otherwise disproportionately responsible for a prevalent social problem. Most importantly, the eugenicist will insist that this 'inferiority' is hereditary -- that 'excessively' high birthrates among these people will lead to a general decline in the quality of the society as a whole."[[2]](http://www.africa2000.com/ENDX/endx.htm)

"Thus the eugenicist will argue the legitimacy of a public policy that minimizes procreation among certain groups, while often simultaneously promoting greater fertility among other segments of the population."[[3]](http://www.africa2000.com/ENDX/endx.htm)

"It should be added that an activity designed to influence levels of fertility is not the only tactic available for use under a eugenic programme. High rates of [incarceration](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Incarceration&action=edit&redlink=1) (especially where a large number of young adults are concerned) may be tolerated precisely because imprisonment results in a loss of reproductive opportunity. Eugenic goals also extend to [immigration](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Immigration&action=edit&redlink=1) when an exclusion policy selects by ethnicity or class. As was made abundantly clear under the Nazi programme of [mass genocide](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Mass_genocide&action=edit&redlink=1), a well-functioning eugenics operation is never satisfied for long with modest results. It is almost inevitable that whenever such policies are found 'useful,' increased activity of the same sort will be seen as 'more useful.'"[[4]](http://www.africa2000.com/ENDX/endx.htm)

"The word *eugenics* comes from the Greek for 'good genes.' Therefore, any policy that is thought by advocates to stimulate the prevalence of 'good genes' is considered eugenic in its effect. Another term -- *dysgenic* -- is applied to a situation in which the undesirable elements grow at a greater rate than the rest."[[5]](http://www.africa2000.com/ENDX/endx.htm)

"Finally, it should be pointed out that eugenics can be broken down into several distinct philosophies. [Social Darwinism](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Social_Darwinism) is a term commonly applied to class-based eugenics. The operative theory here is that wealth is spontaneously distributed throughout the society according to the merits of the individuals within the society. In other words, the Social Darwinist believes the wealthy are rich because of inherent traits that make them successful. The poor, on the other hand, are said to be destined to want precisely because they are of 'inferior stock.' Thus, in the mind of the eugenicist, any effort to promote economic justice has a dysgenic effect because it only encourages breeding among inferior types."[[6]](http://www.africa2000.com/ENDX/endx.htm)

"This kind of thinking can be found in advocacy of such contemporary proposals as the 'family cap' for welfare parents, certain efforts to halt [teen pregnancy](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Teen_pregnancy&action=edit&redlink=1), and the flap about ... 'illegitimacy.'"[[7]](http://www.africa2000.com/ENDX/endx.htm)

"Likewise, [racial eugenics](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Racial_eugenics&action=edit&redlink=1) defines people from different regions of the world as having unique 'evolutionary characteristics' which make one group more suited to certain pursuits than another. This is the ideology behind *The Bell Curve* and similar publications that have aroused controversy in the past few years."[[8]](http://www.africa2000.com/ENDX/endx.htm)

"Some proponents of eugenics cite physical or mental disabilities as cause for limits to reproduction. In terms of policy, they are more interested in stigmatizing the alcoholic, the drug abuser, or the mental patient than in seeking authentic forms of treatment and measures that would influence the economic or social environment in which such problems flourish. This form of eugenics has made inroads into many of the more legitimate sciences such as human [genetics](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Genetics) and [bio-ethics](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Bio-ethics). Indeed, eugenics is especially dangerous in this area because of the opportunity to apply obvious truths -- the fact that children inherit physical features from their parents, to name one -- to political issues, such as '[criminal tendencies](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Criminal_tendencies&action=edit&redlink=1)' or an '[underclass](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Underclass&action=edit&redlink=1)' culture, in a way that results in discriminatory policies."[[9]](http://www.africa2000.com/ENDX/endx.htm)

The above is copied from the [Eugenics Watch](http://www.africa2000.com/ENDX/endx.htm) web site.

**A disability perspective on Eugenics**

At the time that eugenics which comes from the Greek -well born -was not new and in many societies was practiced to leave children born with an impairment to die.

This desire to get rid of mentally and physically different people runs like a thread through human history. The Alaskan Inuits killed impaired children at birth, as did the Masai of Africa and the Woggeo of New Guinea. Greeks-Sparta in the fourth century BC used to *expose* (leave out in the weather to die) their disabled infants. This is infanticide and there is reason to believe is still practiced towards disabled children in many parts of the world as they have a much higher infant mortality rate than other children.

However , the disruption to stable patterns of population all began to change with the growth of trade and the break down of feudalism. The enclosure of much land forced many to migrate to towns and as the Industrial Revolution got under way towns grew very rapidly with poor sanitation, disease, malnutrition, poor conditions at work and poor wages. The fear of the small but growing number of middle and upper classes was great not least after the French Revolution. Firstly Thomas Malthus put forward a view that the population had to be limited to meet the limited amount of food.

Then Herbert Spencer, a scientist, around 1850 suggested that society was like the animal world and it was a struggle for the ‘survival of the fittest’. In 1859 ‘Darwin published The Origin of Species ‘ which put forward a mechanism for evolution of ‘natural selection’. It was his cousin Francis Galton who picked up on this idea and weaved it into the new pseudo-science of Eugenics.

Darwin's theory of evolution and Galton’s survival of the fittest gave these ancient attitudes a new lease on life. In the capitalist jungle of Victorian England, social Darwinism and eugenics were soon invented to *scientifically* prove that, if the weakest went to the wall, such was the inevitable price of progress. Why bother to change society for the better when you had a scientifically legitimate way of getting rid of those who couldn't keep up, who fell by the wayside?

**"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.“ Sir Francis Galton**

 **(Fraser's Magazine 7 [1873] quoted in *Aristotle to Zoos*, Peter and Jean Medawar, 1983 p. 87)**

The struggle for Empire, and continuing fears about crime, feeble mindedness and the propensity of lower class people to have children made the new Eugenics very popular with middle classes and intellectuals.

They came from philosophy that took over our state education system in the last part of the Nineteenth Century- Eugenics. Here in London there was a debate raging on the School Board throughout the 1890’s( Copeland,C.1997 ) Unfortunately there was also a Royal Commission on the Mentally Defective. Members of that Commission who were also members of the British Eugenics Society got onto the London School Board.

Fear of [racial degeneracy](http://studymore.org.uk/mhhglo.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%221900Dictionary) dominated policy in the early 20th century. It was feared that a ["submerged tenth"](http://studymore.org.uk/mhhtim.htm#SubmergedTenth) of the population would outbreed the rest. The [*Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded*](http://studymore.org.uk/7.htm#Cd.4202) (1904-1908) reported that mental defectives were often prolific breeders and allowing them so much freedom led to delinquency, illegitimacy and alcoholism. They rejected [sterilisation](http://studymore.org.uk/mhhtim.htm#sterilisation) as a solution, and called for separation and control

They determined it was right that disabled children should be sent to separate special schools so they did not ‘infect’ (socialize and breed with) the rest of the population. Teachers were not for this approach. Even with standard tests, a rigid national curriculum of code(Standard Code as it was called), payment by results, a harsh external inspection framework and the larger classes of the last part of the C19th ( sounds familiar), they argued for additional resource bases to be attached to their schools.

Winston Churchill, as Home Secretary, had failed in a bid to bring in compulsory sterilization for Idiots, Imbeciles and Moral Defectives in 1911 but instead had to make do with the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913. This had the effect of placing many thousands of people in long stay hospitals for the whole of their lives. Often the new and flawed Intelligence Quotient test was used to put those with scores below 70 away, and yet we now know this to be a culturally biased test which only measures a small part of brain functioning.

For the impact on peoples lives see Out of Sight

**Out of sight: The experience of disability 1900-1950.** Humphries, S., & Gordon, P. (1992). Plymouth: Northcote House. Lots of first hand accounts of the experience of disabled people. In this compelling book, extensively illustrated with rare photographs, the authors tell the story of disabled people in Britain in the days before the Welfare state. Based on many interviews with blind, deaf and physically disabled people. Linked to Channel 4 TV Series

**Out of Sight**

Part 1 9.57mins. The Story of the effects of the Mental Deficiency Act 1913. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pI2UNbd7lxY>

Part 2 9.33 mins.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdvTbav_RVQ&feature=related>

Part 3 6.49 mins.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uZBS284xFc&feature=related>

Part 4 9.59 mins.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SOqe78GW_Q&feature=related>

Part 5 7.58 mins

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rvgg9ZjX9DI&feature=related>

Part 6 5.51 mins

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjSFkd3ddr4&feature=related>

The widespread support for a Eugenicist approach is typified by the following quotes:

**“The unnatural and increasingly rapid growth of the feebleminded classes, coupled with a steady restriction among all the thrifty, energetic and superior stocks constitutes a race danger. I feel that the source from which the stream of madness is fed should be cut off and sealed up before another year has passed.”**

 **Winston Churchill MP**, Home Secretary at the time the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913 became law.

**“History shows me one way and one way only, in which a high state civilisation has been produced, namely the struggle of race with race, and the survival of the physically and mentally fitter race. If men want to know whether lower races of man can evolve a higher type, I fear the only course is to leave them to fight it out amongst themselves”**

1900 Karl Pearson, first professor of Eugenics UCL

**“If I had my way, I would build a lethal chamber as big as the Crystal Palace, with a military band playing softly, and a cinematograph working brightly; then I’d go out in the black streets and the main streets and bring them all in, the sick, the halt and the maimed; I would lead them gently, and they would smile me a weary thanks; and the band would softly bubble out the ‘Hallelujah Chorus’.”**

D.H. Lawrence, 1908, Source “ The letters of D.H. Lawrence, Vol.1, 1901-13, p81. Ed James T.Boulton, Cambridge University Press, 1979.

**Attitude of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, founders of UK Labour Party and London School of Economics to eugenics:**

**"What we as eugenicists have got to do is to 'scrap' the Old Poor Law with its indiscriminate relief of the destitute as such and replace it by an intelligent policy of so altering the social environment as to discourage or prevent the multiplication of those irrevocably below the National Minimum of Fitness"**

"Eugenics and the Poor Law: the Minority Report" 1909 reprinted in the Eugenics Review, Vol. 60 1968, p. 75;

**Mary Dendy,** an active eugenicist campaigner in the 1890’s, **in ‘Feeble Mindedness of Children of School Age’, asserted that children classified as mentally handicapped should be “detained for the whole of their lives” as the only way to “stem the great evil of feeble-mindedness in our country.”**

**“Feeble minded women are almost invariably immoral, and if at large usually become carriers of venereal disease or give birth to children twice as defective as themselves. A feeble-minded woman who marries is twice as prolific as a normal woman... Every feeble-minded person, especially the high-grade imbecile, is a potential criminal needing only the proper environment and opportunity for the development and expression of his criminal tendencies. The unrecognised imbecile is the most dangerous element in society.”** (**Fenald**, 1912)

Margaret Sanger of the American Eugenics Society and the English Eugenics Society, is a particularly well-known proponent of eugenics founder of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

**"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 Elsah Droghin.)

**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)

**Growth of the pseudo-science of Eugenics**

* **In 1904 first Professorship awarded University College, London for Eugenics and Working Society.**
* **Davenport convinces Carnegie Institutes and US Government to back National Eugenics Laboratory at Cold Harbour- focus in US more on racially inferior groups.**
* **1905 Dr Alfred Ploetz and Prof. Ernst Rudin founded Society for Racial Hygiene (Eugenics) in Germany.**
* **1907 Galton Laboratory of National Eugenics established in the UK.**
* **1908 Eugenics Education Society founded in England.**
* **The** [**Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded**](http://studymore.org.uk/7.htm#Cd.4202) **(1904-1908)**
* **1910 the Eugenics Record Office founded in the USA.**
* **1911 failure top get compulsory sterilization of disabled people in UK**
* **1913 Passing Mental Deficiency Act in UK led to over 100,000 being locked away**
* **1930s Cyril Burt at London County Council develops educational testing and when his results don’t fit he alters them. His work leads to the 11 plus examination. Special schools encouraged.**
* **1933 Compulsory Sterilization of disabled people in Germany**
* **1939 Germany starts secret programme of mass extermination of disabled people . Runs through to 1945 claiming up to 1 million lives.**

Soon enough, dozens of organizations such as the National Association for the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded (1896) and the British Social Hygiene Council (1914) were set up in Britain to protect society from being polluted by *undesirable* elements. But it was the Eugenics Society which fought for legislation in Britain to eliminate racial poisons, to increase the *better stocks*, and to promote the purity of the race.

You get an idea of the pollution in the heads of these non-disabled ghouls when you look at the kinds of things they used to say. In 1931 the Eugenics Society Secretary, C.P. Blacker (cited in Jones, 1986, p.95) wrote to the Medical Research Council about the challenge to research presented by "four million persons (the 10% sub-cultural group in England and Wales) who are the purveyors of inefficiency, prostitution, feeble-mindedness and petty crime, the chief architects of slumdom, the most fertile strain in the community. Four million persons forming the dregs of the community and thriving upon it as the mycelium of some fungus thrives upon a healthy vigorous plant."

Cyril Burt as Chief Educational Psychologist in the London County Council for forty years, whose work has been discredited by his peers, believed he had established beyond any doubt with IQ testing, ‘that there were general factors underlying all forms of mental efficiency, that these factors can be assessed with reasonable accuracy and that intelligence is thus defined’.(Burt,C 1946.) The LCC and then the ILEA was structured on these principles. Nothing much changed in the post-war period in this respect. At the abolition in 1990 there were 105 special schools with 3% of the school population in Inner London segregated. We had some of the best comprehensive schools in the country in London, but they weren’t comprehensive because this silent group who were being pushed to one side were forgotten.

Of course by "purveyors of social inefficiency," they didn't mean nice, upright people like themselves who propped up an unequal, discriminatory society hell-bent on the pursuit of profit and the exploitation of natural and human resources. No, they meant people like us disabled who were made dependent and unproductive by people who had created the kind of society which served and perpetuated their own non-disabled and class interests .

In England, the Eugenics Society failed to get enough members of Parliament to support their 1911 Voluntary Sterilisation Bill, but were able to introduce the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913 with the help of Winston Churchill as Home Secretary. But elsewhere in the world the message was getting through. In 1907 Indiana was the first of 30 American states to legalize the sterilization of a variety of disabled people and other "undesirables," and similar laws were passed in Germany (1933-4), Canada (1928), Denmark and Sweden (1929), Finland (1930) and Iceland (1930).

Nazi Germany was not the first or only country to sterilize people considered "abnormal."

Before [Hitler](http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/Holocaust/hitlertoc.html), the United States led the world in forced sterilizations. Between 1907 and 1939, more than 60,000 people in 33 states were sterilized, many of them unknowingly or against their will, while they were incarcerated in prisons or institutions for the mentally ill. The Supreme Court ruling An important test case was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court.

**Buck v. Bell.** *Supreme Court Reporter* 47: 584-585, 1927.

Carrie Buck was an eighteen year old and resident of a Virginia state home for "mental defectives" at the time her case was heard by the Supreme Court. The daughter of a "feeble-minded" mother, she was the mother of an illigitimate "feeble-minded" child herself (who was conceived when she was raped). The Supreme Court concluded that "It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let the starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind.... Three generations of imbeciles are enough..."

This encouraged continuing sterilization and is still not repealed though seldom used today. The facts did not support the case Carrie had average grades at school and had been raped. This was the effect of years of trying to impose Mendel’s thinking about peas onto human beings by gathering genealogies of families and discounting the impact of deprived environments.Nearly half the operations were carried out in California. Advocates of sterilization policies in both Germany and the United States were influenced by eugenics.

This socio-biological theory took Charles Darwin's principle of natural selection and applied it to society. Eugenicists believed the human race could be improved by controlled breeding.

The *Encyclopedia of Bioethics* **Eugenics** entry notes that the term has had different meanings in different eras: "a science that investigates methods to ameliorate the genetic composition of the human race, a program to foster such betterment; a social movement; and in its perverted form, a pseudo-scientific retreat for bigots and racists" (V, Ludmerer 1978, p. 457). Kevles, with a stronger emphasis on its degeneration, says that by 1935 "eugenics had become 'hopelessly perverted' into a [pseudoscientific](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Pseudoscientific&action=edit&redlink=1) facade for `advocates of race and class prejudice, defenders of vested interests of church and state, [Fascists](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Fascist), [Hitlerites](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Hitlerite&action=edit&redlink=1), and reactionaries generally'"(I, Kevles 1985, p. 164).

Phrases such as "[survival of the fittest](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Survival_of_the_fittest&action=edit&redlink=1)" and "[struggle for existence](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Struggle_for_existence&action=edit&redlink=1)" came into use at the end of the 19th century when eugenics societies were created throughout the world to popularize genetic science. `[Negative eugenics](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Negative_eugenics&action=edit&redlink=1)' utilized marriage restriction, [sterilization](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Sterilization&action=edit&redlink=1), or custodial commitment of those thought to have unwanted characteristics. `[Positive eugenics](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Positive_eugenics&action=edit&redlink=1)' tried to encourage the population perceived as the "[best and brightest](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Best_and_brightest&action=edit&redlink=1)" to have more offspring (V, Ludmerer, 1978, p. 459).

In the United States, after [World War I](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=World_War_I&action=edit&redlink=1), new ideas like the importance of environmental influences and the more complex concept of multi-gene effects in inheritance had slowed scientific justification for eugenics, but this knowledge did not slow pressure for legislation, judicial action, or immigration controls. The [U.S. Immigration Restriction Act of 1924](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=U.S._Immigration_Restriction_Act_of_1924&action=edit&redlink=1) favored immigration from northern Europe and greatly restricted the entry of persons from other areas referred to as "[biologically inferior](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Biologically_inferior)." Between 1907 and 1937 thirty-two states required sterilization of various citizens viewed as undesirable: the mentally ill or handicapped, those convicted of sexual, drug, or alcohol crimes and others viewed as "degenerate" (V, Larson 1991). Ellis Island was one of the institutions established to check the physical and mental health of immigrants from Europe.

Over 100,000 were found to be deficient and sent back. Many of rich industrialists followed Carnegies, lead and Rockerfeller, Ford and Kellog and many others were popularizing eugenicist myths and putting their money into research to secure legislation such as the Nationality and Immigration Act 1924 which was only repealed in 1965. This restricted to quotas inferior racial groups from Italy and Eastern Europe (particularly Jewish People) and a whole list of disabled people. The Surgeon General and the General Public health Service by 1914 fell into line and using public fears of contagious disease built Ellis Island to vet immigrants for conditions such as Tuberculosis, trachoma and of course physical and mental impairment.

By1917 Congress codified this to prohibit entry to the United State on any person likely to become a charge on the public.. this included

“all idiots, imbeciles, feeble minded persons, epileptics, insane persons

“persons of constitutional and psychopathic inferiority” and…”mentally and physically defective.”

Culturally and linguistically biased IQ test were administered to demonstrate mental deficiency.

In Germany interest in eugenics flourished after the turn of the century when Dr. [Alfred Ploetz](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Alfred_Ploetz&action=edit&redlink=1) founded the [Archives of Race-Theory and Social Biology](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Archives_of_Race-Theory_and_Social_Biology&action=edit&redlink=1) in 1904 and the [German Society of Racial Hygiene](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=German_Society_of_Racial_Hygiene&action=edit&redlink=1) in 1905. The German term *Rassenhygiene* or [race hygiene](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Race_hygiene&action=edit&redlink=1) was broader than the word eugenics; it included all attempts at improving hereditary qualities as well as measures directed at population increase (III, Weiss 1987). By the 1920s various German textbooks incorporated ideas of heredity and racial hygiene, and German professors were participating in the international eugenics movement. The [Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Kaiser_Wilhelm_Institute_of_Anthropology,_Human_Heredity,_and_Eugenics&action=edit&redlink=1) was founded in 1927; by 1933 a sterilization law which had been entitled "Eugenics in the service of public welfare" indicated compulsory sterilization "for the prevention of progeny with hereditary defects" in cases of "congenital mental defects, schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis, hereditary epilepsy... and severe alcoholism." (III, Müller-Hill 1988, p. 10).

It was of course in Germany that the lust for our blood was taken to its logical conclusion. Under the National Socialist Party, the 1933 Law on the Prevention of Congenitally Impaired Progeny and the 1935 Marriage [Health](http://toolbar2.i-lookup.com/cgi-bin/ezlclk.fcgi?id=113) Law legalized involuntary sterilization and required doctors to report known disabled people to the Sterilization Courts. 9 categories of impairment were covered

But it was Hitler who really set the ball rolling to sweep us off the face of the earth. On September 1, 1939, he issued a directive which gave authority to "certain physicians to be designated by name in such a manner that persons who, according to human judgement, are incurable can, upon a most careful diagnosis of their condition of sickness, be accorded a mercy death."

In effect, this legalized the so-called "euthanasia programme" under which, by 1941, some 250,000 disabled Germans had been systematically exterminated by doctors in six killing centers across the country, by a variety of means including poison gas, starvation and lethal injections of morphine or scopolamine. The bodies were incinerated; some centers installed conveyor belts to permanent on-site coke- or oil-fired furnaces, others used mobile furnaces later mobilized for use in the Holocaust. Disabled people were thus the guinea pigs which enabled eugenic "science" to find its fullest expression in genocide. The killing also went on in hospital throughout the German Empire-in occupied countries. It is now estimated up to a1 million disabled people lost their lives( Edwin Black War Against the Weak 2003)

But it wasn't the killing of disabled people that temporarily energized public morality, it was the larger-scale Holocaust, the murder of Europe's Jews. Eugenicists have ever since had to tread very carefully in pursuing their ambitions. Nowadays, they manipulate language to make their ideas more palatable. Their ***Eugenics Quarterly*** has been renamed ***The Journal of Social Biology***. ***The Annals of Eugenics*** has become ***The Annals of Genetics*** .

For "human stock" we now read "gene pool" and "genetic hygiene" is now known as "genetic counselling."

"In the United States in recent years, interest in eugenics has centered around genetic screening. It is known, for example, that hemophilia, albinism, and certain structural abnormalities are inheritable. [Family gene maps](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Family_gene_map&action=edit&redlink=1), called [pedigrees](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Pedigree&action=edit&redlink=1), can help families with serious diseases avoid having children with the same diseases through genetic counseling, and, increasingly, prospective parents can be tested directly for the presence of undesired genes. If conception has occurred, tests such as amniocentesis and chorionic villus sampling can be used to detect certain genetic defects in the fetus."

"See J. H. Bennett, *Natural Selection, Heredity, and Eugenics* (1983); D. J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics* (1986); M. B. Adams, ed., *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia* (1989).

Doctors today dress up methods of selecting out disabled people, methods like amniocentesis or ultrasound screening, as a form of reproductive choice for parents, even as being for our welfare. So-called [sex](http://toolbar2.i-lookup.com/cgi-bin/ezlclk.fcgi?id=6) selection techniques offer parents the choice of whether to bring males or females into their world.

Eugenicists are becoming more confident; some have suggested that genetic screening should be made compulsory before marriage. This is clearly less to do with reproductive choice, more to do with the eugenic control of certain types of people.

Disabled people are always at risk of fancy scientific ideas which allow old prejudices to strut around in the [clothing](http://toolbar2.i-lookup.com/cgi-bin/ezlclk.fcgi?id=363) of compassion, of new and desirable social advances. China's sterilization laws are just an old way, nicked from the West, to shift attention away from social, economic and political problems. Such problems, coupled with "scientific advances" and the general drift to the right in world politics, create the climate where the morally upright can openly campaign for the morally repellent. Under the One Child per family policy termination of disabled babies is actively encouraged and more that 30 million women have been sterilized mainly those with some form of learning difficulty.

This can be seen as much in the freedom with which pressure groups campaign for the legalization of euthanasia - as recently in the states of Oregon and Washington - or in judicial rulings permitting the switching off of food, water, and air to people in coma, and in the impunity with which Parliament feels that it is able to sacrifice disabled life in the [form](http://toolbar2.i-lookup.com/cgi-bin/ezlclk.fcgi?id=30) of potentially impaired foetuses in the passage of laws governing abortion.

To this end the Disability Coalitions oppose any attempt to legalise the withholding, on the grounds of a person's impairment, of anything necessary to support the continuation of life. We will endeavor to identify the social causes which devalue life, and to find the means to remove these causes."

**Resources**

Edwin Black(2003) War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race Thunder Mouth,New York

Burt,C(1946) “Intelligence and Fertility” London

Copeland, C (1997) “Pseudo-Science and Dividing practice: a genealogy of the first educational provision for pupils with learning difficulties” Disability & Society Vol.12 Nos. 5.

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**Eugenics Organizations**

**Check out the membership of these organizations!**

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