

WAR AGAINST THE WEAK

Eugenics and America's Campaign
to Create a Master Race

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Hitler's Eugenic Reich

On the evening of Friday, September 27, 1929, the upper echelon of eugenics met in majestic and Mussolini-ruled Rome, in the high-ceilinged library of the newly created Central Statistical Institute.¹

They came from Sweden, Norway, Holland, Italy, England, Germany and the United States, gathering as the International Federation of Eugenic Organizations. Among this group, two men ruled supreme: Charles Davenport and Eugen Fischer. A large map dominated the room. This was no ordinary map, but an atlas of the defective populations on every inhabited continent.²

The men were flushed with excitement. Just two hours earlier, they had met personally with Mussolini at the Piazza Venezia, with a view of Trajan's Column of antiquity. Indeed, their mission was a return to hereditary antiquity. All were intensely aware that they were assembled for a sacred duty in a city they revered as "the oldest capital of the world." Davenport read the preliminary report of the Committee on Race Crossing. Entire populations of the unfit were designated. The eugenic atlas and other maps were scrutinized for the "regions in which the Committee had ascertained that tolerably pure races were intermarrying ... [creating] first generation hybrids." These would be the first people subjected to eugenical measures.³

Jon Alfred Mjøen of Norway displayed a map of his country, pinpointing regions with high concentrations of tuberculosis; he proclaimed that the tubercular zones constituted "a map of race crosses in Norway." Mjøen wanted to target Lapp, Finn and Norwegian hybrids. Captain George Pitt-Rivers of England called for anthropologists to help catalog ethnographic statistics, asserting that the most dangerous effect of miscegenation was its disruption of "the ethnic equilibrium shown in the differential survival rate." The Dutch representative focused on the mixed breeds of the Java islands. In describing America's problem, Davenport spoke of U.S. Army intelligence testing that documented high levels of mental defectives. He

also discussed tuberculosis rates in Virginia, comparing what he called "the Black Belt" against other areas in the state. Fischer insisted that the "whole weight of the Federation should be engaged in supporting this work." He suggested that "Jew-Gentile crosses providing excellent material were obtainable in most European countries, and that bastard twins would give splendid data."⁴

During the course of their deliberations, the eugenic leaders agreed that paupers, mental defectives, criminals, alcoholics and other inferior strains should be incarcerated *en masse*. They resolved that "all . . . members [should] bring to the notice of their governments the racial dangers involved in allowing defective persons, after training and rehabilitation in institutions, to return to free life in the community." In other words, they were advocating permanent incarceration. Only later did someone think to amend the resolution to read, "whilst retaining their ability to procreate."⁵

The worldwide cataloging of the unfit was to begin at once. It would start on "the American continent and certain small and large islands in the oceans." At this point, America was still the only country with years of experience in state-sanctioned sterilization and other eugenic legislation. Fischer chimed in, however, that changes in the German criminal code were coming, and these would soon enable widespread sterilization and other eugenic measures there.⁶

Hitler's arrival on the eugenic scene changed the entire partnership between German and American eugenicists.

America had shown Germany the way during the first two decades of the twentieth century, treating the struggling German movement with both parental fascination and Nordic admiration. But when Hitler emerged in 1924, the relationship quickly shifted to an equal partnership. National Socialism promised a sweeping hereditary revolution, establishing dictatorial racial procedures American activists could only dream of. During the period between wars, the American movement viewed National Socialism as a rising force that could, if empowered, impose a new biological world order. Nazi eugenicists promised to dispense with the niceties of democratic rule. So even if America's tower of legislation, well-funded research and entrenched bureaucratic programs still monopolized the world of applied eugenics in the 1920s, National Socialism promised to own the next decade. American eugenicists welcomed the idea.

As early as 1923, Davenport and Laughlin decided that *Eugenical News* should add a subtitle to its name. It became *Eugenical News: Current Record of Race Hygiene*.⁷ In doing so, the publication discarded any pretense that it

might be anything other than a race science journal. Adding Germany's unique term for eugenics, *race hygiene*, was also a bow by the American movement to the Germans.

By 1923, articles from *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* (*Archives of Race Science and Social Biology*) were highlighted and summarized almost quarterly in *Eugenical News*. In fact, no longer did such reviews bear specific headlines about interesting articles; rather, the summaries appeared as though they were regular columns, often just headlined "Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie," and proceeded to explore the contents of the journal's latest issue. Articles by Lenz, Fischer and Baur were among those most frequently featured.⁸

In the 1920s, German raceologists became even more sought after as authors and topics for the *Journal of Heredity* and *Eugenical News*, thus increasing their influence in American eugenic circles. For instance, in May of 1924 Fritz Lenz authored a long article for the *Journal of Heredity* simply titled "Eugenics in Germany," with the latest news and historical reminiscences. California eugenicist Paul Popenoe, head of the Human Betterment Foundation, functioned as Lenz's principal translator in the United States. Similar articles were published from time to time as updates, thus keeping the American movement's attention riveted on the vicissitudes of the German school. A typically enthralled review of the latest German booklet on race hygiene ran in the October 1924 *Eugenical News* with the lead sentence: "It was a happy thought that led Dr. Lewellys F. Barker, a leading eugenicist as well as a physician, to translate the little book of Dr. H.W. Siemens, of Munich, into English."⁹ Such fawning editorial treatment appeared in virtually every edition of American eugenic journals.

Nor was coverage of German race hygienists and their work limited to the eugenic press. They were reported as legitimate medical news in almost every issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, chiefly by the journal's German correspondent. For example, in May of 1924, Erwin Baur's latest lecture to Berlin's local eugenics society was covered in great detail in a two-column story. *JAMA* repeated, without comment or qualification, Baur's race politics. "A person of moderate gifts may be educated to be very efficient," the article read, "but he will never transmit other than moderate gifts to his own offspring. The attempts to elevate the negroes of the United States by giving them the same educational advantages the white population receives have necessarily failed." The article also regurgitated Baur's contention that the Jukes family was proof positive of eugenically damaged ancestry. "Race suicide," *JAMA* continued from Baur's

speech, "brought about the downfall of Greece and Rome, and Germany is confronted by the same peril." *JAMA* used no quotation marks and presented the statements as unredacted medical knowledge.¹⁰

Nor did the rise of Hitler in Weimar race politics, after 1924, diminish the frequency or prominence of German raceologists' exposure in the American eugenic press. The January 1926 issue of *Eugenical News* featured a long article, written by Lenz, entitled "Are the Gifted Families in America Maintaining Themselves?" Dense with statistics and formulas, Lenz's article analyzed recent California eugenic research with a German mindset, warning "the dying out of the gifted families... of the North American Union [United States] proceeds not less rapidly; and also among us in Europe... I think one ought not to look at the collapse of the best elements of the race without action."¹¹

When Lehmann's fascist publishing house released a series of race cards, that is, popular trading cards depicting racial profiles—from the Tamils of India to the primitive Baskirs of the Ural Mountains—their availability was fondly reported in *Eugenical News*. Fascinated with the novelty, *Eugenical News* suggested, however, that the cards could be improved if the pictures would reveal more body features. German race cards, just like many baseball cards, came ten to a package.¹²

In May of 1927, *Eugenical News* reported the introduction of a German "race biological index," to eugenically rate different ethnic groups. The article repeated German warnings "of the danger of an eruption of colored races over Europe, through the French colonies and colonial troops." In the article, German researchers urged "further studies in America, both of Indians and American negroes, as compared with those still living in Africa."¹³ German race analyses of American society were always well received.

Unqualified German racial references to Jews gradually became commonplace in American publications as well. For example, in the April 1924 issue of *Eugenical News*, an article reviewing a new German "racial pride" book published by Lehmanns mentioned, "In an appendix the Jews are considered, their history and their role in Germany." A German article on consanguineous marriages summarized in the November 1925 issue of *Eugenical News* stated, "Their evil consequences... are pointed out [and]... are commoner among Jews and royalty than elsewhere in the population." A December 1927 summary of a German article reported, "The social biology and social hygiene of the Jew is treated by the distinguished anthropologist, Wissenberg of Ukrania. This has largely to do with the vital statistics of the Jews in Odessa and Elizabethgrad, with special relation

of the Jews to acute infection." In April of 1929, a *Eugenical News* book review entitled "Noses and Ears" informed readers, "The straight nose of Gentiles seems to dominate over the convex nose of Jews."¹⁴ No explanation was necessary or offered for these out-of-context references to Jews. That Jews were eugenically undesirable was a given in German eugenics, and many American eugenicists adopted that view as well.

By the mid-twenties, Germany had achieved preeminence in both legitimate genetic research and racial biology. Germany's new status arose, in large measure, from its distinguished Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes. An outgrowth of the esteemed Kaiser Wilhelm Society, the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes would over time develop a network of research institutions devoted to the highest pursuits of science. These included the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics, boasting a shelf of Nobel Prizes, a sister institute for chemistry, another for biology, another for pathology, and many more. The twenty-plus Kaiser Wilhelm organizations were easily confused and bore related names. But while they were related, they were independent and often located in different cities. In fact, at one point Davenport confessed to a London colleague, "There are so many Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes, that it is necessary to specify."¹⁵

Also among the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes were several that would soon make their mark in the history of medical murder. The first was the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Psychiatry. The second was the Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics. The third was the Institute for Brain Research. All received funding and administrative support from Americans, especially the Rockefeller Foundation.

James Loeb, an American banker and art lover of German-Jewish descent who lived in Europe, was among the first to subsidize the organizations that evolved into the Kaiser Wilhelm group. In early 1916, Loeb granted 500,000 marks to the German Psychiatric Institute in Munich.¹⁶ Loeb's money, however, was quickly overshadowed by the Rockefeller Foundation's.

Rockefeller's connection to German biomedicine traced back to the early years of the twentieth century, when Germany's scientific preeminence was first challenged by America and its new system of corporate philanthropic funding begun by Carnegie, Rockefeller and Harriman. Medical educator Abraham Flexner was among the first to establish significant corporate philanthropic financial links with Germany. Flexner completed his monumental Carnegie Institution survey, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada*, in 1910. The prodigious report compared North America's medical inadequacy to Germany's excellence. Flexner next

turned to Europe, creating the 1912 report, *Medical Education in Europe*. Soon Flexner was renowned for his pioneering reports and was invited to help lead medical efforts at Rockefeller's powerful new foundation.¹⁷

One of Flexner's first Rockefeller efforts yielded the 1914 study, *Prostitution in Europe*, which featured an introduction by John D. Rockefeller Jr. himself. Prostitution was a topic of recurring interest to both Rockefeller and his foundation. At about this time, 1914, German academicians began to realize that generous American-style philanthropy was a springboard to higher scientific achievement. Several esteemed German academicians and industrialists organized the Kaiser Wilhelm Society in this vein, with Kaiser Wilhelm II as its chief patron. The society sponsored the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes, dedicated to a spectrum of new scientific disciplines. But the First World War, the Treaty of Versailles, and the crippling inflation of the early twenties paralyzed the KWI and German scientific progress.¹⁸

To literally save German science, Rockefeller money—guided by Flexner's recommendations—came to the rescue in November of 1922. Because anti-German feeling engendered by the war still roiled in America, and because Rockefeller, like many, distrusted German universities, viewing them as hotbeds of political agitation and warmongering academics, the Rockefeller Foundation circumvented the universities, the traditional channels of scientific funding. Instead, the foundation inaugurated its own special funding committee. Flexner selected his longtime Berlin friend Heinrich Poll to lead the committee. Poll had assisted Flexner during his earlier survey of German medical schools. Poll, also a leading eugenicist, advised the Prussian Ministry of Health and lectured extensively on hereditary traits and feeble-mindedness. Since relations between Germany and the United States were still uneasy late into 1922, the foundation in large part administered the massive donations through its Paris office.¹⁹

Rockefeller Foundation money began to flow immediately. During the final weeks of 1922, 194 fellowships were awarded, totaling \$65,000. The next year, 262 fellowships were awarded for a total of \$135,000. By 1926, Rockefeller had donated some \$410,000—almost \$4 million in twenty-first-century money—to hundreds of German researchers, either directly or indirectly through international programs that passed funds through to German recipients.²⁰

Quickly, Rockefeller's freely flowing money, distributed by Poll, became a forceful and intrusive factor in German research. Scientists across

Germany eagerly sent in reports of their worthiness, each hoping to be the next recipient. By March of 1923, leading German researchers, such as Fritz Haber, were grumbling to each other about "King Poll," whom they said exercised an intolerable control over Rockefeller grants and therefore German science itself.²¹

Ignoring any criticism, the Rockefeller Foundation only increased its extravagant spending. Loeb was instrumental in convincing Flexner to marshal Rockefeller millions for Loeb's favorite, the German Psychiatry Institute. Rockefeller officials were fascinated with the promise of psychiatry, and they began aligning themselves with German psychiatrists of all stripes. The German Psychiatry Institute was the first to receive big money. In May of 1926, Rockefeller awarded the institute \$250,000 shortly after it amalgamated with the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute to become the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Psychiatry. The following November, Rockefeller trustees allocated the new institute an additional \$75,000.²²

Among the leading psychiatrists at the institute was Ernst Rüdin, who headed the genealogical and demographic department. Rüdin would soon become director of the institute. Later, he would become an architect of Hitler's systematic medical repression.²³

Who was Rüdin? A founding father of German eugenics in the Weimar days, Rüdin was considered by American circles as among the most promising raceologists in Germany. In the 1890s, Rüdin joined Alfred Ploetz in a quest for utopian socialism. The two men became fast friends after Ploetz married Rüdin's sister. From the beginning, Rüdin's impulse was to stop dangerous human breeding. At the 1903 International Congress Against Alcoholism, Rüdin declared that the condition was an inherited trait. Alcoholics, he argued, should be segregated and allowed to marry only if they were first sterilized. In 1905, Rüdin cofounded the Society for Racial Hygiene (*Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene*) with Ploetz. During the next several years, Rüdin pontificated against the unfit in articles and in his travels.²⁴

After World War I, as the chief of the German Psychiatry Institute's genealogical and demographic department, Rüdin began assembling a massive catalog of family profiles from the records of prisons, churches, insane asylums, hospitals, and from family interviews. By 1926, Rüdin was granted special permission by the Reich Ministry of the Interior to consult criminal and institutional records and report back with his own findings. In other words, Rüdin's operation began forming the same types of discreet governmental relationships that the Eugenics Record Office had structured in the United States during the previous fifteen years.²⁵

Rüdin, of course, was quite visible in America. Articles by and about him had run in the national eugenic press for years. In May of 1922, the *Journal of Heredity* published a brief about a discussion by Rüdin on the inheritance of mental defects. In June of 1924, *Eugenical News* informed its readership that Rüdin was building an extensive collection of family histories, and assured "a vast quantity of data has been obtained." Later that year, in the September issue, *Eugenical News* published a follow-up report, asserting that Rüdin's studies of the "inheritance of mental disorders are the most thorough that are being undertaken anywhere. It is hoped that they will be long continued and expanded." A 1925 *Eugenical News* article praising the family tree archives of the German Psychiatric Institute celebrated Rüdin, "whose dynamic personality infuses itself throughout the entire establishment." By this time Rüdin was the star of German eugenics. Later, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* also published a long report about Rüdin's work on heredity and mental disease.²⁶

Davenport's efforts to bring the Germans back into the international movement were more than successful. In 1928, the International Federation of Eugenic Organizations met in Munich. Rüdin functioned as the gracious host when IFEO members, including the impressed American delegation, were treated to a guided tour of Rüdin's department at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Psychiatry. The next year, the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Psychiatry was selected for IFEO membership. In 1932, Davenport consented to relinquish the presidency of the IFEO, and Rüdin was elected to succeed him. Laughlin was proud to offer the nomination. The vote was unanimous.²⁷ German race hygiene was now primed to seize the reins of the international movement and become senior in its partnership with the American branch.

In 1927, the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes added another eugenic establishment, the Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics (*Kaiser Wilhelm Institut für Anthropologie, menschliche Erblehre und Eugenik*), located in Berlin-Dahlem. The name itself symbolized the affinity between the American and German movements. Earlier, *Eugenical News* had adopted a subtitle in homage to the German term *race hygiene*; now the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes reciprocated by including the term *eugenics* in tribute to the American movement.²⁸

The first director of the Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics was Eugen Fischer, a longtime Carnegie Institution associate and Davenport collaborator. This new institute was not funded by American capital, but rather by an assortment of German government

agencies—local, Prussian and federal—to whom eugenics and race science were becoming increasingly important. The Ministry of the Interior provided the largest single donation: 500,000 marks. The Prussian Ministry of Science donated some 400,000 marks, including the land itself. Small amounts were also contributed by the provinces of Upper Silesia, the Rhine, Westphalia and the municipality of Essen. Funds from industrialists, such as the Thyssen brothers, comprised just token monies.²⁹ While the institute's initial funding was German, it enjoyed both the envy and unqualified support of the American eugenics establishment.

The grand opening of the Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics took place in September of 1927 as an official function of the Fifth International Congress on Genetics in Berlin. Davenport was chairman of the human eugenics program and an honorary president of the congress. Baur was chairman of the local German eugenics committee. The congress was the first major international scientific event to be held in Germany since the Great War.³⁰

The congress began on September 11, 1927, with approximately one thousand delegates from all over the world gathered in a gala Berlin setting. Registrants were first greeted with a Sunday dinner at the zoo, then a barrage of sumptuous banquets staged by the Berlin Municipality and formal dinner events enlivened by *divertimenti*, followed by the finest liquors and cigars. Museum tours were scheduled for the ladies, and everyone was invited to a special performance at the Opera House.³¹ Germany was unfurling the red carpet to celebrate its regained scientific leadership.

Welcoming grandiloquence by both government officials and local academics eventually gave way to the real business of the conference: genetics. A procession of several dozen research papers and exhibits reported the latest developments in a spectrum of related disciplines, from genuine scientific revelations about the genetics of plants and animals, to the most recent advances in cytology, to the newest slogans and Mendelian math of traditional racial eugenics. A large Carnegie contingent was on hand to contribute its own research, proffering papers and delivering lectures.³²

On the afternoon of September 27, Davenport and his colleagues traveled to Berlin-Dahlem for the much-anticipated grand opening of the new Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics. Davenport had been eager to congratulate his friend Fischer in person from the moment he had learned about his appointment almost a year earlier. Situated on about an acre of land, with a museum in the basement and a complex of lecture rooms, measurement labs and libraries on most other

floors, the institute was the new centerpiece of eugenic research in Germany. As the leader of American eugenics, Davenport proudly delivered one of the commemorating addresses at the grand opening. The next year, the IFEO added the new institute to its roster. Davenport was so impressed with Fischer's institute that he felt obliged to provide a brief history of eugenic progress in America to the institute's administration.³³

The third Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Germany's eugenic complex was the Institute for Brain Research. Like other Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes, this one grew out of a research operation created years earlier by the family of psychiatrist Oskar Vogt, which merged into the KWI in 1915. In those days the Institute for Brain Research was housed in a modest neurological laboratory also run by Vogt. Everything changed when the Rockefeller money arrived in 1929. A grant of \$317,000 allowed the institute to construct a major building and take center stage in German race biology. Rockefeller funders were especially interested in the Institute's Department of Experimental Genetics, headed by Russian geneticist Nikolai Timoféeff-Ressovsky. The Institute for Brain Research received additional grants from the Rockefeller Foundation during the next several years.³⁴

By the late twenties, Davenport and other Americans had created a whirlwind of joint projects and entanglements with German eugenics. No longer content to direct purely domestic efforts, the two schools now eyed the rest of the world. They graduated from discussion and philosophy to concrete plans and actions. Among the most ambitious of these was a project to identify and subject to eugenic measures every individual of mixed race, everywhere. The approach would be along the lines created in the United States. Identification was the first step. In 1927, Davenport proposed a systematic survey of mixed-race populations in every region of the world. It would cover all Africans, Europeans, Asians, Mexicans, indigenous peoples and others who had mixed during centuries of modern civilization.

The global search for hybrids originated around February of 1926. Davenport had made the acquaintance of wealthy raceologist Wickliffe Draper, who shared Davenport's anxiety about human hybridization. The plan was to conduct field surveys using questionnaires, just as eugenicists had done in various counties and remote areas around the United States. But this time they would cover not just a state, not just a nation, but eventually every populated region on earth.³⁵

They needed a demonstration project. Davenport's first impulse was to survey New York City, but he thought mixed-race individuals would be easier to identify in foreign countries or colonies. "I am suggesting Jamaica,"

Davenport wrote Draper on February 23, 1926, "...because I take it that there is a larger proportion of mulattoes." Within three weeks, Draper wrote a check to the Eugenics Research Association for \$10,000 to defray the costs of a two-year study of "pure-blooded negroes, as found in the western hemisphere ... and of white, as found in the same places with especial reference to inheritance of the differential traits in mulatto offspring."³⁶

Over the next two years, Davenport's investigators deftly researched the family backgrounds of 370 individuals, taken from the local penitentiary and from the city center of Kingston. The American Consul in Jamaica interceded with the British Colonial Office to provide special access to the island's jails, schools and doctors. Some eight thousand sheets of information were generated by field workers and archived in the Eugenics Record Office.³⁷

But the Jamaica project featured something totally new. For the first time, personal information and eugenic traits were punched into IBM's Hollerith data processing machines. International Business Machines would be a perfect match for eugenics. People tracking was the company's business. IBM's technology involved hundreds of thousands of custom-designed punch cards processed through punching, tabulating and sorting machines. Hollerith punch cards could store an almost unlimited amount of information on people, places and processes by virtue of the holes strategically punched into their columns and rows. Hollerith processors then read these holes and tabulated the results. Hollerith cards were originally developed for the U.S. Census, and IBM enjoyed a global monopoly on data processing. More than just counting machines, Hollerith systems could cross-tabulate all information on individuals and then match or cross-reference the data to their plain paper or already-punched street addresses or other geographic identifiers. Hence, people identified with certain traits could be easily located for additional eugenic action.³⁸

For example, these high-speed tabulators could quickly identify a specific class of eugenic subjects, say, all first-generation morons of Mexican extraction with vision problems. All relatives across extended family trees could be connected to the selected individuals. Or the machines could identify all eugenically inferior residents in a single village, plus their descendants living elsewhere. At the rate of 25,000 cards per hour, IBM machines could rapidly search out the holes, stack the cards and provide seemingly miraculous results. Continuous refinements in high-speed Hollerith technology would soon permit alphabetizing and printouts. As massive numbers of individuals passed from identification to segregation to

sterilization and beyond, even the workflow could be managed by IBM technology, using card designs, punching patterns and equipment arrays, each custom configured to a specific use. Mass eugenics required efficient systems.³⁹ IBM was willing.

IBM managers desired the lucrative ERO account, but the process of punching in the hundreds of thousands of existing index cards at Cold Spring Harbor was simply too massive and expensive an undertaking. But if brought into a project at the outset, IBM could cost-effectively tabulate all names, racial information, medical characteristics and other eugenic data. This required IBM engineers to confer with Davenport's eugenic investigators to jointly plan the program, ensuring that data was collected in a fashion that could be systematically coded and punched into Hollerith machines for later retrieval and management. To design the system correctly, the IBM engineers needed to know both the eugenic information that Carnegie researchers wanted to input as well as how they wanted the results retrieved. IBM always needed to know the end result in order to design the system. In a report on the Jamaica project, Davenport confirmed, "The test records were scored as received chiefly by Miss Bertha Jacobson. Codes for each of the traits to be tabulated were worked out, adapted to the Hollerith punch cards. Ratios were computed."⁴⁰

IBM custom-designed the layout for at least forty-five variables to be punched in on the Jamaica project for later retrieval by eugenicists. Sex and race were to be punched into column 1. Age in column 2. Height in columns 3 and 4. Cranial capacity in column 18. Foot length in column 24. Army Alpha intelligence testing in column 33, and Beta testing in column 32. Information on fingerprints was punched into columns 44 and 45. At one point, Davenport considered securing data from banks about how much money was in each individual's account and cross-referencing this information against eugenic standards.⁴¹

The 1927–1928 Jamaica race-crossing investigation was the first time IBM devised a system to track and report racial characteristics. Five years later, IBM, under the leadership of its president, Thomas J. Watson, would adapt the same technology to automate the race warfare and Jewish persecution in Hitler's Reich. IBM custom-designed the indispensable systems that located European Jews and other undesirables, and then provided a multiplicity of custom-tailored punch card programs to help the Nazis trace family trees, index bank accounts and other property, organize eugenic campaigns and even manage extermination in death camps. Indeed, a decade later, the SS Race Office employed a punch card with

physical attributes specified column-by-column in a fashion almost identical to those first worked out for the Jamaica study.⁴²

The pilot investigation in Jamaica went well, so well that the Carnegie Institution proudly published a major research volume on the project. Even as the program was underway, in February of 1927, Davenport was confident enough to contact Fischer in Germany and discuss ideas with him. "No one has greater experience in the field than you," wrote Davenport, "and we shall of course want to get the benefit of that experience." A few days later, he notified the IFEO secretary in London that a race-crossing committee would be needed "in view of... the international nature of the problem." In short order, Fischer was invited to join the committee. Davenport would chair the panel.⁴³

The campaign to identify mixed-race people of all varieties across America began on November 14, 1928, with one of the ERO's well-honed, massive letter-writing efforts. Beginning that day, scores of letters were mailed by Davenport to eugenic contacts at universities, prisons, agricultural colleges, as well as to members of the American Breeders Association and other interested parties in every state from California to Florida and even the Alaska territory. It was the first step in searching out the racially unacceptable. Davenport's letters were all variations on a few forms:

The I.F.E.O. is making a survey of the points of contact of dissimilar human races in different parts of the world. In carrying out this program may I call upon you for some assistance? We should be glad if you would inform us if there are areas where widely different races of mankind have recently begun to come into contact in your state. By races we have in mind not only primary races, like white, negro, Indian and Orientals but also very dissimilar European races. Especially important would be localities where the first and second hybrid generations can be secured in considerable numbers.⁴⁴

A letter went to sociologist Raymond Bellamy at the Florida State College for Women; Bellamy replied, "I am glad to do anything I can to help," and specified Negroes and Seminole Indians in South Florida, and Cubans in Tampa. A copy went to W. E. Bryan, a plant breeder at the University of Arizona in Tucson; Bryan reported race-mixing between American Indians and Mexicans, and suggested using a field worker who could speak Spanish. A letter went to J. S. Blicht, superintendent of the Florida State Reformatory; Blicht responded that of his 1,640 prisoners, fewer than a third were white, the rest being "plain negro stock." UCLA

official Bennet Allen replied that Los Angeles was home to many ethnic groups, including Japanese, Mexican, Italian, and Portuguese. He also reported that the Mexicans and the Japanese rarely married outside their respective groups. Henry Bolley of the North Dakota Agricultural College's Botany Department reported "half-breeds among our North Dakota Indians, but I think largely of French origin," as well as farmers of Russian and possibly Polish heritage.⁴⁵

On February 29, 1929, Davenport went global. He mass mailed letters to eugenic contacts and official sources in countries on every continent, signing them as president of the IFEO's Committee on Race Crossing. The letters all declared:

The committee on race crossing of the Federation is seeking to plot the lines, or areas, where race crossing between dissimilar, more or less pure races is now occurring or has been occurring during the last two generations. The committee would appreciate very much your assistance. We should be glad to have a statement from you as to the location in your country or the principal regions of such race crossing, the races involved (e.g. European and negro, European and Amerindian, Chinese, Malay, North European and Mediterranean) together with the number of generations during which hybridization has been going on on a significant scale.⁴⁶

In Norway, Dr. Halfdan Bryn focused on "the northern parts of the country," where, over the centuries, Laplanders and Alpines had mixed with pure Nordics; Bryn added that his forthcoming book, to be published by Lehmann in Munich, would include plenty of pictures of "Norwegian hybrids." In Moscow, Professor Bunak, director of the Institute of Anthropology, explained that the Eastern European plains, the Caucasus, Siberia and Turkistan all featured "numerous tribes, [such] as North European, Baltic, Mediterranean, Armenoid, Uralian (Ougrofinnic), Mongolic, Turck and others" who had intermingled during the past twenty to thirty centuries; more recently, Yakoutian-Russians and other "race-hybrids" had proliferated through the regions. In colonial Rhodesia, a museum zoologist acknowledged some Bantu and Asiatic mixtures, but he assured Davenport that "miscegenation is regarded by decent persons as severely as it probably is in the Southern States of the USA." Reports came from Brazil, China, Holland, France, Fiji, Chile and many more countries.⁴⁷

In locations with no known eugenic contacts, Davenport resorted to Laughlin's network of American consuls. In the Azores, Vice-Consul

Prescott Childs demonstrated an excellent knowledge of eugenic principles and reported that due to the islands' remoteness, very few of Breton or Flemish blood had mixed with pure Portuguese; Childs added that his real "eugenic concern" was too much intermarriage, which he believed led to increased insanity. In Harbin, American Consul C. C. Hansen pointed out that a number of Russians had migrated into North Manchuria resulting in "intermingling of Chinese men with Russian women"; Hansen reported the villages along various rivers where "half-caste children... of the first generation" could be located. In Nairobi, American Consul Charles Albrecht outlined the geographic districts of Kenya and attached a list of photographers "who might be able to furnish you with photographs of race hybrids." In Estonia, Tahiti and other remote locations, American consuls pledged their assistance.⁴⁸

At 6:15 P.M. on Friday, September 27, 1929, the International Federation of Eugenic Organizations met in Rome to consider the preliminary report of the Committee on Race Crossing. From their perspective, identification and eugenic countermeasures of all sorts were more than pressing—the world was in crisis, and they were in a race against time. Mussolini, a dictator, was not hampered by the checks and balances of democracy. The IFEO wanted to enlist him to help impose stern eugenic measures in Italy. Since the summer, Fischer and Davenport had been working on a special appeal to *Il Duce*. Now, in the Piazza Venezia, they and their colleagues would have an audience with Mussolini.⁴⁹

Fischer stepped forward to read the long appeal. It was not lost on the delegation that they were in Rome, seat of the Catholic Church, which strenuously opposed all forms of eugenics. "It seems natural and desirable," Fischer read, "when considering eugenic problems, that some expression of our hopes and wishes should be addressed to the great statesman who... shows more than any other leader today... how much he has the eugenic problems of his people at heart." Fischer went on to label the effects of race mixing "catastrophes," and urged immediate measures to "[set] a model to the world by showing that energetic administration can make good the damage." In an emotional crescendo to his appeal, Fischer declared, "The urgency brooks no delay; the danger is imminent."⁵⁰

Two hours later, the men retreated to the elegant library of the Central Statistical Institute where they huddled over maps, reports, tables and surveys as they plotted the course of their global eugenic action. Virginia, the Java Islands, Norway, Germany, all of Europe, all of the United States, all of the British Empire. The world. With trained field workers and Hollerith

data processing equipment, the unfit could be quickly and methodically identified, quantified, qualified and prioritized for countermeasures—whether they resided in big cities, the hinterlands or island villages. Every delegate was instructed to lobby his government for cooperation.⁵¹

Davenport was encouraged. Fascism was on the rise in Europe, and he realized it was time to relinquish the reins. On December 2, 1929, Davenport wrote to Fischer asking him to assume chairmanship of the Committee on Race Crossing. Rüdin would soon replace Davenport as IFEO president as well. The Germans were the future. Davenport wrote Ploetz in Munich, “Personally, I am very glad that the Federation is now under the *Leitung* [leadership] of a German.”⁵²

Fischer was willing to assume leadership of the Committee on Race Crossing, but who would pay the postage and printing costs? Davenport replied that the IFEO treasury would, since “it is more important to spend our money that way than almost any other.” Davenport and Fischer coauthored a questionnaire to be sent worldwide “to the persons living and working in foreign regions, physicians, missionaries, merchants, farmers and travelers,” asking them to “send as detailed and significant data as possible.” The questionnaires would be produced in English, Spanish and German. Davenport and Fischer reported in a joint memo that the data would eventually identify not only race-crossed individuals, “but entirely foreign people, that is the so-called colored ones.”⁵³

As the thirties opened, many key players in the American eugenics movement continued to support German raceology. In December of 1929, the Rockefeller Foundation began a five-year subsidy of Fischer’s German national “anthropological survey” with a donation totaling \$125,000. Although the study was labeled “anthropological,” it was in fact racial, eugenic and, in part, directed at German Jewry. German officials who supported the proposal for the study made this clear in a letter to the foundation. They would not survey a single large sample of people “of an ancient type”; instead, they would select multiple smaller cross-sections of the general population, which would “be examined in its genealogical and historical relationships with the help of church records, place and family histories.” The Germans specified, “In this way it is hoped to find new solutions about the appearance of certain signs of degeneration, especially the distribution of hereditary pathological attributes.”⁵⁴

The letter continued, “From the eugenic standpoint, questions will be submitted on the biological conditions of families, the number of births and abortions, succession and rate of births, and finally questions on the

decline of births and birth registration in the region being investigated. . . . A determination of blood groups will also be undertaken. . . . There is also planned an investigation of the Westphalian aristocracy, of the old-established Jewish population of Frankfurt, and the so-called old lineage of some other towns. . . . For certain eugenic discussions it seemed of the greatest importance to obtain useful support for the question of . . . pathological lines of heredity among the population.”⁵⁵

Rockefeller executives quickly approved the idea, channeling the money through the Emergency Fund for German Science. Rockefeller trustees authorized the grant in the midst of the devastating worldwide depression ignited by the stock market crash of 1929. As breadlines stretched across American cities, the economic crisis also crippled the German economy.⁵⁶ German eugenicists needed all the financial assistance they could get.

In August of 1930, Germany’s *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* ran a tribute to Ploetz on his seventieth birthday. Among those extending kudos were Davenport and Popenoe on behalf of the United States. In October of 1930, *Eugenical News* called the edition “a worthy tribute of esteem and affection for the genial and high-minded scholar whom it honors.” In the same issue of *Eugenical News*, an article entitled “Jews in West Africa” reviewed a book claiming “evidence of Jewish infiltration” among the Masai tribes of Africa as a result of a “trek of Jews from Jerusalem to the Niger.” The book was deemed “a good example of the deductive method . . . so great as to make the book a very valuable contribution.” The next news item congratulated J. F. Lehmann, now openly Nazi, for being Germany’s leading eugenic publisher. At about that time, the IFEO created a Committee on Racial Psychiatry under Rüdin’s chairmanship.⁵⁷

In December of 1930, *Eugenical News* reprinted Rüdin’s long paper, “Hereditary Transmission of Mental Diseases.” In it Rüdin declared, “Humanity demands that we take care of all that are diseased—of the hereditarily diseased too—according to our best knowledge and power; it demands that we try to cure them from their personal illnesses. But there is no cure for the hereditary dispositions themselves. In its own interest, consequently, and with due respect to the laws of nature, humanity must not go so far as to permit a human being to transmit his diseased hereditary dispositions to his offspring. In other words: Humanity itself calls out an energetic halt to the propagation of the bearer of diseased hereditary dispositions.”⁵⁸

Rüdin advocated sterilization of all members of an unfit individual’s extended family. “It becomes clear,” he argued, “that, in these cases, propa-

gation ought to be renounced... for other degrees of relationship, e.g., for the nephews and nieces, grandchildren... We must make the eugenic ideal a sacred tradition. It must be rooted so deeply in man, and at the right time, that the respect he owes it becomes a matter of course with him, and that he will find love without trespassing on the laws of eugenics."⁵⁹

In 1931, Rockefeller approved an additional ten-year grant totaling \$89,000 to Rüdin's Institute for Psychiatry. This grant funded research by two doctors into the links between blood, neurology and mental illness. It reflected a growing trend among some philanthropic foundations to avoid funding scientific organizations focused on eugenics, which in recent years had come under fire for being too political and too scientifically shoddy.⁶⁰ Genetics, psychiatry, brain research, anthropology and sociology were all preferable destinations for American biologic research dollars. One Rockefeller memo observed, "Race biology today suffers immensely from its mixture with political dogmas and drives"; in that instance, the foundation had granted \$90,000 to a eugenic geneticist who had studied at Cold Spring Harbor, because they felt the recipient was worthy. Moreover, eugenicists were constantly seeking the "carriers"—the normal people who transmitted defective genes that might crop up once in several generations. Because of the bad publicity surrounding this idea, and the growing belief that eugenics was more racism than science, the new breed of eugenicists began looking for blood identifiers that seemed ethnically neutral. Even still, the searches remained race-specific.⁶¹

Whether under the banner of psychiatry, anthropology, genetics or race hygiene, American funding was still consciously promoting eugenic research. For example, in 1931, the Carnegie Institution contributed \$5,000 for an international genetics congress and the separate Carnegie Endowment added \$3,500. Davenport also contacted the Rockefeller Foundation to enlist their support for this event.⁶²

Also in 1931, the famous Baur-Fischer-Lenz volume, *Foundation of Human Heredity and Race Hygiene* (*Grundriss der menschlichen Erblichkeitslehre und Rassenhygiene*), was translated into English. One chapter was entitled "Racial Psychology" and cited a study demonstrating that "the racial endowment of the Jews finds expression in the nature of the offences they commit." Another passage asserted that "fraud and the use of insulting language really are commoner among Jews," adding, "It is said that Jews are especially responsible for the circulation of obscene books and pictures, and for carrying on the White Slave Trade. Most of the White Slave traders are said to be Ashkenazic Jews." Another passage insisted, "The Jews could not

get along without the Teutons." The term *Jewish Question* (*Judenfrage*), which was used throughout the book, required no explanation.⁶³

A 1931 review of the newly translated book in *Eugenical News* lauded the work and declared, "the section on methodology is especially valuable," adding that it was now the "standard treatise" on the topic. The review concluded, "We welcome the English translation, which seems to have been well done... We bespeak for it a wide circulation."⁶⁴

During 1931 and 1932, Hitler became an increasingly loud and pernicious voice for persecution, fascist repression and warlike territorial occupation. In America he was heard on radios, seen in newsreels and read in newspapers. Virulent and very public anti-Semitism was sweeping across Germany.⁶⁵ None of this caused American eugenic circles to pause in their support of German eugenics.

In the March–April edition of *Eugenical News*, the long essay "Hitler and Racial Pride" heaped praise on the up-and-coming leader. One passage proclaimed, "The Aryans are the great founders of civilizations... The mixing of blood, the pollution of race... has been the sole reason why old civilizations have died out." The Hitlerite term *Aryan* was now becoming synonymous with the traditional *Nordic*. In another passage, the article cited an earlier *New York Times* report declaring, "The Hitlerites hold the Nordic race to be 'the finest flower on the tree of humanity'... It must be bred... according to the 'criteria of race hygiene and eugenics.'"⁶⁶

On May 13, 1932, the Rockefeller Foundation in New York dispatched a radiogram to its Paris office:

JUNE MEETING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NINE THOUSAND DOLLARS OVER THREE YEAR PERIOD TO KWG INSTITUTE ANTHROPOLOGY FOR RESEARCH ON TWINS AND EFFECTS ON LATER GENERATIONS OF SUBSTANCES TOXIC FOR GERM PLASM. NATURE OF STUDIES REQUIRES ASSURANCE OF AT [Rockefeller's director of science in Europe, Augustus Trowbridge].⁶⁷

At about that time, Fischer and other eugenicists were busy presenting drafts of compulsory sterilization laws to the Weimar authorities. During a committee meeting on the subject in the summer of 1932, Fischer shouted at the Nazi representative, "Your party has not been in existence nearly as long as our eugenic movement!" One leading eugenicist at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Biology later bristled, "The Nazis took over the

whole draft and they used the most inhumane and execrable methods to put the humane measures, which we had conscientiously and responsibly drafted, into everyday practice."⁶⁸

The Third International Congress of Eugenics was held in New York City in August of 1932, once again at the American Museum of Natural History. Although organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation were donating vast sums to German eugenics for research and travel, the grants were frequently limited to specific activities within Germany or neighboring countries. Hence there was no money for the German delegation to travel to Manhattan. Nor did Carnegie make up the shortfall. Davenport apologized in a letter to Fischer. "Of course, the depression at this time has interfered with our efforts to secure funds to help defray the expense of our foreign colleagues. . . . We are very much disappointed that you and other friends from Europe may not be able to . . . come to the United States and see the work going on there. We had hoped you would come and find your expenses paid by giving some lectures." But the German delegation did not come, and instead sent a few poster exhibits from the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics. At the opening ceremonies Davenport lamented the absence of the German delegation and lauded their leadership.⁶⁹

The September–October *Eugenical News* carried another long article praising Hitler and his eugenic ideas. It also explained how his ideology had been guided by such American authors as Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant. German elections were looming, and the article prophesied the results. "The Hitler movement sooner or later promises to give him full power, [and] will bring to the Nordic movement general recognition and promotion by the state." The article added, "When they [the Nazis] take over the government in Germany, in a short time there may be expected new race hygienic laws and a conscious Nordic culture and 'foreign policy.'"⁷⁰

The next month, November of 1932, Germany held a fractious election. Hitler received twelve million votes, approximately a third, but no majority. A coalition government was out of the question because other parties refused to share power with Hitler and vice versa.⁷¹

January 30, 1933, as America awoke, swastikas flew above Berlin, Munich, Leipzig and the other strongholds of Nazi agitation. Brown-shirted mobs marched through the streets in celebration, swaggered in beer halls, rode their bicycles in tandem and joyously sang the "Horst Wessel Song." For years the Nazis had promised that upon assuming

power they would rebuild Germany's economy, dismantle its democracy, destroy the German Jewish community and establish Aryans as the master race. On January 30, 1933, President Paul von Hindenburg, exasperated with fruitless all-night attempts to create a governing coalition, finally exercised his emergency powers. Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler interim chancellor. The Third Reich was born.⁷²

* * *

Years later, many would deny knowledge of what Germany was doing, would claim they only discovered Hitler's merciless anti-Semitic and political repression, as well as the Reich's fascist medical programs, after the Allies triumphed in 1945. But in truth, Hitler's atrocities against Jews and others were chronicled daily on the pages of America's newspapers, by wire services, radio broadcasts, weekly newsreels, and national magazines.⁷³ Germany bragged about its anti-Jewish measures and eugenic accomplishments. An entire propaganda operation was established under Joseph Goebbels to publicize the information.⁷⁴ Simultaneously, American eugenicists kept day-to-day tabs on the Nazi eugenic program. As of January 30, 1933, however, the American–German eugenic partnership was obsolete. Germany was now completely leading the way, despite a hurricane of anti-Nazi denunciations and retaliatory economic boycotts.⁷⁵

Once in power, Hitler's government immediately began issuing legal decrees to exclude Jews from professional and governmental life, and used other brutal methods—including condoned street violence—to eliminate political opponents. Dachau concentration camp opened on March 20, 1933, amid international news coverage of the event. Refugees, including many Jewish scientists, poured out of Germany. Their plight was visible in the cities of the world.⁷⁶

It did not take Germany long to implement its eugenic vision. The first law was decreed July 14, 1933: Reich Statute Part I, No. 86, the Law for the Prevention of Defective Progeny. It was a mass compulsory sterilization law. Rüdin was coeditor of the official rules and commentary on the law.⁷⁷

Nine categories of defectives were identified for sterilization. At the top of the list were the feeble-minded, followed by those afflicted by schizophrenia, manic depression, Huntington's chorea, epilepsy, hereditary body deformities, deafness and, of course, hereditary blindness. Alcoholism, the ninth category, was listed as optional to avoid confusion with ordinary drunkenness. The Reich announced that 400,000 Germans would immediately be subjected to the procedure, beginning January 1, 1934.⁷⁸

A massive sterilization apparatus was created: more than 205 local eugenic or hereditary courts would be ruled by a physician, a eugenicist and a panel chairman. For contested cases, there were at least twenty-six special eugenic appellate courts. Anyone could be reported for investigation. Doctors who failed to report their suspect patients would be fined. In hearings, physicians were obligated to provide confidential patient information. Fischer's institute was asked to quickly train the legion of race experts required for the task.⁷⁹

Germany's program was immediately seized upon by the world's media as the latest example of Hitler's inhumane regime. Many eugenic leaders felt pressured into publicly disassociating themselves from Nazi barbarism, but their denunciations were only lip service. An anxious C. P. Blacker, director of Britain's Eugenics Society, watched as his own sterilization campaign lost public support as the obvious comparisons were made. "This Society deprecates the use of the term Eugenics to justify racial animosities," Blacker announced, adding that he condemned, "its misuse as an instrument of tyranny by racial or social majorities."⁸⁰

While much of the world recoiled in revulsion, American eugenicists covered eugenic developments in Germany with pride and excitement. By the summer of 1933, *Eugenical News* had become bimonthly due to Depression-era finances, and had changed its subtitle again, this time to *Current Record of Genetic News and Race Hygiene*. Cold Spring Harbor quickly obtained a full copy of the eighteen-paragraph Nazi sterilization law from German Consul Otto Kiep, and rushed a verbatim translation into the next issue as its lead item. In accompanying commentary, *Eugenical News* declared: "Germany is the first of the world's major nations to enact a modern eugenical sterilization law for the nation as a unit. . . . The law recently promulgated by the Nazi Government marks several substantial advances. Doubtless the legislative and court history of the experimental sterilization laws in 27 states of the American union provided the experience, which Germany used in writing her new national sterilization statute. To one versed in the history of eugenical sterilization in America, the text of the German statute reads almost like the 'American model sterilization law.'"⁸¹

Proudly pointing out the American origins of the Nazi statute, the article continued, "In the meantime it is announced that the Reich will secure data on prospective sterilization cases, that it will, in fact, in accordance with 'the American model sterilization law,' work out a census of its socially inadequate human stocks."⁸²

Countering criticism that Hitler's program constituted a massive human rights abuse, *Eugenical News* asserted, "To one acquainted with English and American law, it is difficult to see how the new German sterilization law could, as some have suggested, be deflected from its purely eugenical purpose, and be made 'an instrument of tyranny,' for the sterilization of non-Nordic races." The publication argued that in the 16,000 sterilizations performed in America over recent years, not a single "eugenical mistake" had been made. The publication concluded, "One may condemn the Nazi policy generally, but specifically it remained for Germany in 1933 to lead the great nations of the world in the recognition of the biological foundations of national character."⁸³

Throughout 1933, American eugenic groups continued their enthusiastic coverage of and identification with German mass sterilization. *Birth Control Review* ran an extensive article entitled "Eugenic Sterilization, An Urgent Need," authored by Rüdin himself, and also reprinted a pamphlet he had prepared for British eugenicists. "Act without delay," urged Rüdin. By this time Margaret Sanger had left the publication, and *Birth Control Review* had relaxed its previous position that birth control was for everyone, not just the unfit, and that it was wrong to encourage greater birth rates for the eugenically preferred. Indeed, Rüdin's article did just that. "Not only is it our task to prevent the multiplication of bad stocks," he demanded, "it is also to preserve the well-endowed stocks and to increase the birth rate of the sound average population."⁸⁴

Eugenic influence continued in mainstream medical publications. In 1933, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported on the new sterilization statute as if it were an almost routine health measure. *JAMA's* coverage included unchallenged data from Nazi eugenicists such as: "The fact that among the Jews the incidence of blindness is greater than among the remainder of the population of Germany (the ratio is 63 to 53) is doubtless due to the increased danger of hereditary transmission resulting from marriage between blood relatives."⁸⁵

JAMA, in another 1933 issue, continued its tradition of repeating Nazi Judeophobia and National Socialist doctrine as ordinary medical news. For example, in its coverage of the German Congress of Internal Medicine in Wiesbaden, *JAMA* reported that the congress chairman "brought out the following significant ideas: . . . A foreign invasion, more particularly from the East, constitutes a menace to the German race. It is an imperative necessity that this menace be now suppressed and eliminated. . . . Racial problems and questions dealing with hereditary biology must receive spe-

cial consideration." The article continued, "Eugenics and the influences of heredity must be the preferred topics [at future medical meetings]," and then warned of "the severity of the measures to be adopted for the preservation of the German race and German culture."⁸⁶

Eugenical News spoke in similar terms. In a September–October 1933 review of yet another Lehmann-published anti-Semitic epistle, *Race Culture in the Nationalistic State* (*Rassenflege in Volkischenstaat*), *Eugenical News* insisted in italics, "There is no equal right for all. . . . Nature is not democratic, but aristocratic. . . . [German racial] demands appear harsh, but . . . the very existence of the race is at stake."⁸⁷

Rockefeller money continued to stream across the Atlantic. The 1933 financial books of the Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics reflected the foundation's continuing impact. Page four of the balance sheet: Rockefeller paid for a research assistant, a statistician, two secretaries and a gardener. Page six of the balance sheet: Rockefeller paid clerical costs associated with research on twins. Ironically, while Fischer remained in charge at the Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics, he was being replaced at the Society for Racial Hygiene. He had taken over the society for Ploetz, but in 1933 Nazis overran the society and Fischer was considered too moderate. He was replaced by Rüdin, then president of the IFEO.⁸⁸

Unlike eugenic leaders associated with *Eugenical News*, Rockefeller officials did not propagandize for Nazism, nor did they approve of the Reich's virulent repression. The Rockefeller Foundation's agenda was strictly biological to the exclusion of politics. The foundation wanted to discover the carriers of defective blood—even if it meant funding Nazi-controlled institutions. Moreover, Rockefeller executives knew their money carried power, and they used it to ensure that the most talented scientists continued at the various Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes, frequently shielding them from periodic Nazi purges.

For example, in early June of 1933, one of the foundation's favorite researchers, Oskar Vogt, head of the Institute for Brain Research, was threatened with removal because of his perceived socialist leanings. Rockefeller mobilized.⁸⁹ On June 7, 1933, H. J. Muller, a University of Texas geneticist working at the Institute for Brain Research, alerted Robert A. Lambert in Rockefeller's Paris office. Just days before, Lambert had toured various Berlin research facilities. In his letter, Muller warned Lambert, "If this director loses his position it is a foregone conclusion, and common knowledge, that the head of the genetics department and all other

non-Germans, as well as Germans closely associated with the director, will also lose their positions. . . . I realize that the Rockefeller Foundation must preserve its neutrality so far as matters of politics are concerned. On the other hand, it wishes to have its funds used so that they can best serve the furtherance of truly scientific work."⁹⁰

Muller asked Lambert and other Rockefeller executives to consider "the making of a statement, not necessarily a public one, but, it may be, one expressed in a letter to some responsible person, such as for example [physicist] Dr. [Max] Planck, which could then be shown to the authorities concerned, so that they could be informed of your policy, in advance. Some statement similar to that which you made orally to the director of the institute here, would suffice, namely, that the Rockefeller Foundation would not feel justified, from the point of view of the furtherance of scientific work, in sending additional funds to the support of institutions in Germany, (1) if, on grounds other than their scientific work, worthy scientists, not engaged in political activity, are dismissed from institutions which have been founded or supported in part by funds of the Foundation, or (2) if persons who have been assigned stipends from the Foundation are dismissed from such institutions."⁹¹

Oskar Vogt was not removed. He remained at his post until well after his Rockefeller funding had run its course.⁹²

With each passing day, the world was flooded with more Jewish refugees, more noisy anti-Nazi boycotts and protest marches against any scientific or commercial exchanges with Germany, more public demands to isolate the Reich, and more shocking headlines documenting Nazi atrocities and anti-Jewish legislation. Still, none of this gave pause to America's eugenicists. Correspondence on joint research flowed freely across the Atlantic. American eugenicists, and their many organizations and committees, from New York to California and all points in between, maintained and multiplied their contacts with every echelon of official and semiofficial German eugenics. As the Reich descended into greater depths of depraved mistreatment and impoverishment of Jews, as well as territorial threats against its neighbors, these contacts seemed all the more insulated from the human tragedy unfolding within Europe. Eager and cooperative letters, reports, telegrams and memoranda did not number in the hundreds, but in the thousands of pages per month.

While concentration camps, pauperization and repression flourished in Nazi Germany, and while refugees filled ships and trains telling horrifying stories of torture and inhumanity, it was business as usual for eugenics.

Nor were the contacts and scientific support a secret. For example, in March of 1934, eugenicist W. W. Peter published a long article in the *American Journal of Public Health* defending Germany's sterilization program. Peter had traveled some 10,000 kilometers over the course of six months, visiting every region of Germany to study the Reich's plan. He gave it an unqualified endorsement, declaring, "This particular program which Germany has launched merits the attention of all public health workers in other countries."⁹³

Sterilizations had begun January 1 of that year. Within forty-eight hours, the Reich Interior Ministry's eugenics expert announced that the list would include a vast cross-section of the population—from children as young as ten to men over the age of fifty. The ministry added that the first to be sterilized would not be residents of "institutions," but those who were "at large." Quickly, the procedure became known as the *Hitlerschnitte*, or "Hitler's cut." During 1934, the Third Reich sterilized at least 56,000 individuals—approximately one out of every 1,200 Germans.⁹⁴

In mid-July of 1934 the IFEO met in Zurich, and congratulated Germany on a campaign being conducted "with characteristic thoroughness and efficiency... mainly on sound and truly eugenic lines." That conclusion was publicized in *Eugenical News*. The idea was to rebut mounting criticism that the Reich's mass sterilization program was not only a medical sham, but undisguised racial persecution. In Germany, "racial persecution" invariably meant "Jewish persecution." Newspapers around the world were filled with condemnation of Germany and its treatment of the Jews.⁹⁵

Jews were indeed on the minds of the eugenicists at Cold Spring Harbor. For example, the *New York Times* of January 7, 1934, had run an article on Hitler's race policy headlined "NAZIS INSIST REICH BE RACE MINDED," and subheadlined "No One Knows Exactly What That Means There, Except That Jews Are Target." The article went into Laughlin's clipping folder. So did other *New York Times* articles from January and early February about German-Jewish refugees in Europe, as did articles about financial assistance to Jews in the United States.⁹⁶ The folder grew thick.

With so much anti-Nazi publicity in the air, putting a positive face on the Reich's conduct was a continuing priority at *Eugenical News*. Even as the *New York Times* was denigrating the Reich's eugenics as pure racial and religious oppression, and using quotes from Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick to illustrate the point, Laughlin was assuring colleagues that the Cold Spring Harbor publication would help counteract that impression among

eugenicists. Laughlin's January 13, 1934, letter to Madison Grant explained, "We propose devoting an early number of the *Eugenical News* entirely to Germany, and to make Dr. Frick's paper the leading article. Dr. Frick's address sounds exactly as though spoken by a perfectly good American eugenicist in reference to what 'ought to be done,' with this difference, that Dr. Frick, instead of being a mere scientist is a powerful Reichsminister in a dictatorial government which is getting things done in a nation of sixty million people. Dr. Frick's speech marks a milepost in statesmanship. The new German attitude and resolution mean that in the future, regardless of nationality, every statesman, who takes the long view of his country's problems, will be compelled to look primarily to eugenics for their solution."⁹⁷

In the very next issue, March–April 1934, the speech in question, delivered by Frick nine months earlier, led off an edition devoted to German eugenics. It included a detailed directory of the Third Reich's leading eugenicists, exuberant praise of the Nazi sterilization campaign, and one article describing the flood of Jewish refugees with the phrase, "it is 'raining' German Jews." Another article examined the destinations of some 60,000 German-Jewish refugees: 25,000 had fled to France, 6,500 to Palestine, 6,000 to Poland and so on.⁹⁸

There was room in the issue to discuss other minorities as well. One article discussed the question of sterilizing some six hundred "negroid children in the Rhine and Ruhr districts—Germany's legacy from the presence of French colonial troops there during the war."⁹⁹ In a salute to the Führer, another article clearly suggested that Hitler's eugenics would soon be applied across all of Europe. "This State Cause does not only concern Germany but all European peoples. But may we be the first to thank this *one* man, Adolf Hitler, and to follow him on the way towards a biological salvation of humanity."¹⁰⁰

Eugenical News was the official voice of the American eugenics movement. Its masthead declared it "the official organ of the Eugenics Research Association, the Galton Society, The International Federation of Eugenic Organizations, [and] the Third International Congress of Eugenics." It was published at the Carnegie offices in Cold Spring Harbor. A three-man editorial committee, listed on every masthead, tightly controlled all text: Harry Laughlin, Charles Davenport and Morris Steggerda (Davenport's assistant on the Jamaica project).¹⁰¹

Eugenical News was read by virtually the entire eugenics community in America and enjoyed an equally attentive overseas readership. In Nazi

Germany, race hygienists followed the publication closely. After the March–April 1934 issue, for example, Ploetz wrote a letter to the editor correcting several typos and adding a clarification. “The 60,000 Jews... were not expelled... Nobody chased them away... They went, frightened by the Jewish reports of horror.” Ironically, in the same issue, *Eugenical News* ran a report headlined “Jewish Physicians in Berlin” that declared, “The city of Berlin quite logically is trying to reduce the number of its Jewish physicians, which is not in keeping with the racial composition of the general population.” The article added that anti-Jewish laws were still not working and the numbers of Jewish doctors “were but slightly reduced.”¹⁰²

Rockefeller funding continued even as anti-Nazi protest groups complained directly to foundation executives. For example, shortly after Hitler attained power, Rüdin and the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes became known as mere scientific fronts for Nazi ideology. The foundation’s own best contact within Rüdin’s institute, Dr. Walther Spielmeier, confirmed in a November 3, 1933, letter, “Prof. Rüdin... also holds the post of Reichskommissar for Race Investigation.” Once word surfaced in late 1933 of the foundation’s ties to Rüdin and his Munich-based Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Psychiatry, the anti-Nazi boycotters and protest movement mobilized. One typical complaint letter from *New Republic* editor Bruce Bliven to the Rockefeller Foundation, sent December 20, 1933, asked whether the reported link could be true. Concerned officials at the foundation jotted notes on Bliven’s letter: “June 3, 1932 \$9,000 3 for 3 yrs.” Under that, someone wrote, “Inst for Anthro.” Under that: “Sexuality & Genetics.”¹⁰³

On January 10, 1934, Rockefeller executive Thomas Appleget replied to Bliven that the foundation had indeed helped erect the building some years before, and had then approved another eight-year grant for two of its doctors. But, Appleget added, “Strictly speaking this [Rüdin’s institute] is not an institute of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft.” A Rockefeller colleague who saw the falsity scribbled in the margin, “TBA—What basis for this?” On January 31, Appleget wrote to Bliven “in correction of my earlier communication” and admitted that the Institute for Psychiatry was indeed “one of the regular institutes.”¹⁰⁴

Protests did not subside. Two days later, Jewish newspapers across the country published notices similar to the one that appeared in the *American Hebrew*: “Recently the American Committee Against Fascist Oppression in Germany declared that the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, a German institute for psychiatric research with headquarters in Munich, and subsidized by the Rockefeller Foundation is carrying on a bitter pro-Nazi agitation....

The Committee accuses the Institute of spreading Nazi propaganda under the cloak of science and paid for by the money of the Rockefeller Foundation.... One of the Institute’s departments, devoted to the study of racial theories, has ‘proved’ through ‘scientific claims’ that Hitler’s theory regarding the superiority of the ‘Nordic race’ and the inferiority of the Semitic and other races is altogether correct.... Dr. Theodore Lang, founder of the National Socialist Doctors’ Association, is also a research worker at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute; his Doctors’ Association is carrying on a bitter campaign against Jewish physicians in Germany.”¹⁰⁵

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America continued the pressure, sending the foundation the *American Hebrew* article and asking for an explanation. Worried Rockefeller officials sent a note to a foundation attorney explaining, “As a matter of fact, it is not research that would lend itself to propaganda purpose. Rüdin was, and continues to be, a member of the staff of the [Kaiser Wilhelm] Institute [for Psychiatry]. No grants have ever been made for his work or for the general budget of the Institute. Rüdin’s present political affiliations are not under the control of the Institute or the Kaiser William Gesellschaft [Society]. Undoubtedly some of the [anti-Semitic] publications, which your correspondent describes, have been written in the building that we donated.... In the circumstances, I think it is quite untrue to say that Foundation funds are being used to subsidize race prejudice.”¹⁰⁶

Yet the protest letters still flowed in. “We are getting a number of inquiries from various liberal groups as to our connection with the Forschungsanstalt für Psychiatrie [Research Institute for Psychiatry] in Munich.... The principal complaint is that Professor Rüdin... [is] apparently very active in the preparation of the anti-Jewish propaganda.” Rockefeller officials tried to provide assurances to protestors that they were not funding Rüdin himself but rather two doctors working under his direction. But this hardly believable story was itself internally contradicted. A March 16, 1934, letter to Appleget by the foundation’s Paris representative reminded, “There is however another grant of funds made through... the Notgemeinschaft der [Deutschen] Wissenschaft [Emergency Fund for German Science] which at least in part is utilized by Professor Rüdin.... \$125,000 over a period of five years.” The sum of \$125,000 equals more than a million dollars in twenty-first-century money.¹⁰⁷

Despite anti-Nazi protests, Rockefeller continued its subventions to Germany. Indeed, the foundation made periodic increases to account for the fluctuating exchange rate. Moreover, it quickly learned that while its

grants specified that money go to one project, Nazi science administrators were quite willing to divert it to another department with a greater ideological priority. For example, in October of 1934, Alan Gregg, director of the foundation's Division of Medical Sciences received a blunt letter from the foundation's most reliable contact in Rüdin's institute, Dr. Spielmeyer. "In the field of medicine," Spielmeyer unhappily conceded, "both practice and scientific research is concerned primarily with genetics and race hygiene, as you know. You convinced yourself of that this summer, during your visit." He went on to explain that the space and resources that the foundation financed for his blood chemistry research had been appropriated by Rüdin's race investigations. Rüdin, reported Spielmeyer, simply required more space, more stenographers and more race investigators. "For this reason, it was unfortunately not possible to maintain the chemical division properly. . . . The Rockefeller Foundation has, for the past four years, provided funds for the maintenance of the chemical division," said Spielmeyer, but those funds were now being used for "racial research."¹⁰⁸

At about the same time, an internal note was circulated to Rockefeller Foundation officials informing them that a Jewish doctor at the Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics had made clear to the foundation that, "In his lifetime, the Jews will not be permitted to return to Germany." Nonetheless, the foundation found additional recipients for its German research funding.¹⁰⁹

The foundation began financing biologist Alfred Kühn's hormone studies on meal moths. German race hygienists had been actively researching moths for years, claiming they exhibited what Lenz in the *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* called "Mendelian segregation in later generations." As such, moths were an ideal species to study for "carriers" of defective genes. Rockefeller official Wilbur Tisdale commented on Kühn's 1934 grant, "However uncertain the political situation might make a large or longtime project, [we are] safe in dealing with sound men as Kühn on a year-to-year basis." Tisdale added, "Nowhere in the continent or England [does one] find chemists, embryologists, and geneticists willing to cooperate among themselves as are these German scientists."¹¹⁰

For Rockefeller, it was just eugenics. But for Hitler, science and technology were magical weapons to wield against the Jews and all other non-Aryan undesirables. Just after Hitler rose to power, IBM initiated an aggressive commercial compact with Nazi Germany, generating windfall profits as it organized and systemized the Reich's anti-Jewish and eugenic

programs. As the Hitler regime took each step in its war against the Jews and all of Europe, IBM custom-designed the punch cards and other data processing solutions to streamline those campaigns into what the company described as "blitzkrieg efficiency."¹¹¹

It began in 1933, when the company designed and executed Hitler's first census. From there, IBM's involvement with the Reich mushroomed. On January 8, 1934, IBM opened a million-dollar factory in Berlin to manufacture Hollerith machines and coordinate data processing functions. At the factory opening, the manager of IBM's German subsidiary, Willi Heidinger, spoke vividly about what IBM technology would do for Germany's biological destiny. Standing next to the personal representative of IBM president Thomas J. Watson, and with numerous Nazi Party officials in attendance at a ceremony bedecked by swastika flags and Storm Trooper honor guards, Heidinger emotionally declared that population statistics were key to eradicating the unhealthy, inferior segments of German society.¹¹²

"The physician examines the human body and determines whether . . . all organs are working to the benefit of the entire organism," asserted Heidinger to the crowd of Nazi officials. "We [IBM] are very much like the physician, in that we dissect, cell by cell, the German cultural body. We report every individual characteristic . . . on a little card. These are not dead cards, quite to the contrary, they prove later on that they come to life when the cards are sorted at a rate of 25,000 per hour according to certain characteristics. These characteristics are grouped like the organs of our cultural body, and they will be calculated and determined with the help of our tabulating machine."¹¹³

"We are proud that we may assist in such task, a task that provides our nation's Physician [Adolf Hitler] with the material he needs for his examinations. Our Physician can then determine whether the calculated values are in harmony with the health of our people. It also means that if such is not the case, our Physician can take corrective procedures to correct the sick circumstances. . . . Our characteristics are deeply rooted in our race. Therefore, we must cherish them like a holy shrine, which we will—and must—keep pure. We have the deepest trust in our Physician and will follow his instructions in blind faith, because we know that he will lead our people to a great future. Hail to our German people and *der Führer*!"¹¹⁴

Most of Heidinger's speech, along with a list of the invited Nazi Party officials, was rushed to Manhattan and immediately translated for Watson. The IBM leader cabled Heidinger a prompt note of congratulations for a job well done and sentiments well expressed.¹¹⁵

Following up, an August 1934 article in IBM's German customer newsletter, *Hollerith Nachrichten*, extolled the benefits of advanced data processing for eugenics. The article, entitled "An Improved Analysis of Statistical Interdependencies via Hollerith Punch Card Process," illustrated how complex data calculations could be better interpreted and predict probabilities. As a prime example, the journal cited "the field of medicine, and the science of genetics and race." Complex tabulations could be rendered, the article suggested, regarding "the size of fathers and their children, number of children and parents. Diphtheria and age, and the different racial characteristics."¹¹⁶

Medical questionnaires to be filled out by hand were jointly designed by IBM engineers and Nazi disability or welfare experts for compatibility with Hollerith cards. For example, diseases were coded: influenza was 3, lupus was 7, syphilis was 9, diabetes was 15; these were entered into field 9. As a notice from IBM's German subsidiary advised, the questionnaires would have to be adapted to the technical demands of IBM's Hollerith system, not the other way around. A vertical notice printed along the bottom left of typical welfare forms often indicated the information was to be processed "by the punch card office," generally an in-house bureau.¹¹⁷

Raceology in Nazi Germany was enabled as never before. Statistical official Friedrich Zahn extolled the fact that "registered persons can be observed continually, [through] the cooperation of statistical central offices . . . [so] other statistical population matters can be settled and regulated." Zahn proposed "a single file for the entire population to make possible an ethnic biological diagnosis [to] turn today's theory into tomorrow's practice. Such a file would serve both practical considerations as well as science." He added, "Clarified pictures of the volume of genetic diseases within the population . . . now gives science a new impetus to conduct research . . . which should promote good instead of bad genetic stock."¹¹⁸

Mathematic formulas and high-speed data processing of population and medical records would indeed become the key to Jewish persecution in Nazi Germany. In November of 1935, Germany took the next step.

Defining just who was a Jew was problematic, since so many of Jewish ancestry were practicing Christians or unaffiliated. Throughout 1935, German race specialists, bolstered by population computations and endless tabular printouts, proffered their favorite definitions of Jewishness. Some proposals were so sweeping as to include even those with the faintest Jewish ancestry—similar to the familiar "one drop" race purity laws in Virginia. But many tried to create complex pseudoscientific castes, com-

prised of "full Jews," who professed the religion or possessed four Jewish grandparents, as well as the so-called "three-quarter," "half," and "one-quarter" Jews with fewer Jewish ancestors.¹¹⁹

Adolf Hitler was personally aware of preliminary findings showing that while only about a half million Germans had registered as Jews in the census, the veins of many more coursed with traces of Jewish blood. About a million more, he thought.¹²⁰ The Jews Hitler feared most were the ones not apparent—what eugenicists called the "carriers."

Suddenly, on September 13, 1935, *der Führer* demanded that a decree defining Jewishness be hammered out in time for his appearance two days later before the *Reichstag* (Parliament) at the culmination of Party Day festivities. Top eugenic experts of the Interior Ministry flew in for the assignment. Working with drafts shuttled between Hitler's abode and police headquarters, they finally patched together twin decrees of disenfranchisement and marriage restriction. The Law for the Protection of German Blood and a companion statute, the Reich Citizenship Law, deprived Jews of their German citizenship. These laws—the Nuremberg Laws—would apply not only to full Jews, but also to half and quarter Jews, all defined according to complex eugenic mathematics. Jewish hybrids were called *Mischling*, or mixed-breeds.¹²¹ High-speed Hollerith systems offered the Reich the speed and scope that only an automated system could deliver to identify not only half and quarter Jews, but even eighth and sixteenth Jews. It was a new, automated system, yet applied to the well-developed, decades-old Cold Spring Harbor procedure of developing family pedigrees.¹²²

The new formulaic approach to Jewish persecution exploded into world headlines. Under a page one banner story, the *New York Times's* lead was typical: "National Socialist Germany definitely flung down the gauntlet before the feet of Western liberal opinion tonight . . . [and] decreed a series of laws that put Jews beyond the legal and social pale of the German nation." The newspaper went on to detail the legal import of the new ancestral fractions.¹²³

The news was everywhere and inescapable. Centuries of religious prejudice had now been quantified into science. Even if Germans of Jewish ancestry had been practicing Christianity for generations—as many had—henceforth, they would all be legally defined as a race, without regard to religion. That was in 1935.

Eleven years earlier, Harry H. Laughlin's memo to Representative Albert Johnson's House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization regarding Jewish racial quotas read: "For this purpose, it would be neces-

sary to define a Jew. Tentatively, such a definition might read, 'A Jew is a person fifty percent or more of whose ancestry are generally recognized as being Jewish in race. The definition applies entirely to race and in no manner to religion.'¹²⁴

Shortly after the Nuremberg Laws were promulgated in 1935, and in view of the negative publicity race laws were receiving, Nazi eugenicist Ernst Rodenwaldt thought it might be helpful to give Laughlin special recognition for his contribution to Reich policy. Rodenwaldt suggested an honorary degree for Laughlin. In a December 1935 letter to Carl Schneider, dean of the University of Heidelberg's medical school, Rodenwaldt wrote, "Every race hygienist knows Laughlin as a champion of the eugenic sterilization. Thanks to his indefatigable studies and his indefatigable propaganda activity in America, there exist, since the end of the twenties, in several states of America, sterilization laws and we can report about 15,000 sterilizations until 1930, mainly in California. Professor Laughlin is one of the most important pioneers on the field of racial hygiene. I got to know him in 1927 in Cold Spring Harbor. . . . Heidelberg University honoring professor Laughlin's pioneer work would, in my opinion, make a very good and compensating impression in America, where racial hygienic questions are propagated in the same way as here, but where many questions of the German racial hygienic laws are mistrusted."¹²⁵

Schneider gladly approved the honor. Laughlin could not travel to Heidelberg to accept, but he expressed his gratitude in a letter to Schneider. "I was greatly honored," Laughlin wrote, "to accept this degree from the University of Heidelberg which stands for the highest ideals of scholarship and research achieved by those racial stocks which have contributed so much to the foundation blood of the American people. . . . I consider the conferring of this high degree upon me not only as a personal honor, but also as evidence of a common understanding of German and American scientists of the nature of eugenics as research in and the practical application of those fundamental biological and social principles."¹²⁶

Some three years after Laughlin's award, shortly after World War II broke out in September of 1939, the same Carl Schneider helped organize the gassing of thousands of adults adjudged mentally handicapped. The project was codenamed T-4 after the address of the staff, located at Tiergartenstrasse 4 in Berlin. Mass gassings with carbon monoxide, which began in January 1940 at locations across Germany, proved most efficient. Victims were told to undress and to enter a room resembling a shower

complete with tiled surfaces, benches and a drain. Crematoria were erected nearby to dispose of the bodies.¹²⁷

From 1936 to early 1939, Nazi Germany was considered a threat to the other countries of Europe, and indeed to all humanity. Refugees flooded the world. The Third Reich continued arming for war and demanded territorial concessions from its neighbors. In 1938 the Nazis annexed Austria, and then in early 1939 the Reich overran Czechoslovakia in prewar aggression and consolidation. Concentration camps of gruesome notoriety, from Dachau to Buchenwald, were established across Germany; the horror stories they inspired became common talk of the day. Nazi subversion was a new fear in American society.¹²⁸

Certainly, there were many vocal Nazi sympathizers in America. But those who supported any aspect of the Hitler regime, from economic contacts to scientific exchanges, did so at a substantial moral risk. Genuine revulsion with Nazified eugenics was beginning to sweep over the ranks of previously staunch hereditarians who could no longer identify with a movement so intertwined with the race policies of the Third Reich. A group of longtime eugenicists and geneticists spoke of a resolution to disassociate eugenics from issues of race. Letters to Davenport calling for his support were unsuccessful. Institutions such as the Eugenics Research Association, the American Eugenics Society, the Eugenics Record Office and a labyrinth of related entities all remained intact in their support of Germany.¹²⁹

Monthly coverage in *JAMA* became more skeptical and detached starting about 1936, with headlines such as "Strangulation of Intellectualism" placing the Nazi takeover of medical science into clearer perspective. One *JAMA* article unambiguously explained, "The president of the new [medical] society is no distinguished clinician; he is the Nazi district governor of Vienna, that is to say a politician who is also an official of the Nazi bureau of national health." *JAMA* also began inserting quotation marks around Nazi medical expressions and statements to differentiate them from ordinary medical discourse.¹³⁰

After Raymond Fosdick assumed the presidency of the Rockefeller Foundation in 1936, the charitable trust became increasingly unwilling to fund any projects associated with the term *eugenics*, even Fischer's genealogical studies. The idea of investigating family trees was just too emblematic of repressive Nazi persecution. Funding was also curtailed for some of the foundation's traditional programs at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes. Money continued to flow for eugenic projects, but only when they were packaged as genetics, brain research, serology or social biology.

For example, Rockefeller fellowships and scholarships from 1936 through 1939 allowed German genetic researchers to travel to Cold Spring Harbor and California for further study. But the fact that Rockefeller executives became exceedingly cautious about their continued sponsorship of Nazi medicine was a testament to the controversial nature of any contact with the Third Reich.¹³¹

Indeed, on June 6, 1939, Fosdick circulated a pointed memo to Rockefeller Foundation executives. "I have read with a good deal of interest your Letter no. 40 of May 25th about our general relation with totalitarian countries, and particularly about the fellowship situation. The rumor which Mr. Kittridge brought back from Geneva to the effect that the Foundation was boycotting all requests from Germany is of course hardly correct. . . . I am frank in saying that at the present moment it would be not only embarrassing, but probably impossible, to make any major grants in Germany. There is a matter of public policy involved here which has to be taken into consideration, and I do not believe that this is the moment to consider any sizable requests for assistance from German sources." Fosdick added that individual fellowships to German scientists would still be possible, but only if "sifted with rigid scrutiny to make sure that we are not being used for ulterior purposes." He added, "I earnestly hope that this evil hour will soon pass."¹³²

Despite Nazi Germany's descent into pariah status, core eugenic leaders were steadfast in their defense of, fascination with, and general admiration for Hitler's program. In late 1935, ERA president Clarence Campbell traveled to Berlin for the World Population Congress, an event staged under the patronage of Nazi Interior Minister Frick. Fischer was president of the congress. Campbell created a scandal back home when he loudly and passionately proclaimed his admiration for Hitler's policy. "The leader of the German nation, Adolf Hitler," declared Campbell, "ably supported by Frick and guided by this nation's anthropologists, eugenists and social philosophers, has been able to construct a comprehensive racial policy of population development and improvement that promises to be epochal in racial history. It sets a pattern which other nations and other racial groups must follow if they do not wish to fall behind in their racial quality, in their racial accomplishments and in their prospects for survival."¹³³

Campbell's speech made headlines in the next morning's *New York Times*: "US EUGENIST HAILS NAZI RACIAL POLICY." When Campbell returned to America, he hit back at his critics in the lead article of the March–April 1936 issue of *Eugenical News*. "It is unfortunate that the

anti-Nazi propaganda with which all countries have been flooded has gone far to obscure the correct understanding and the great importance of the German racial policy."¹³⁴

Throughout 1936, the American eugenic leadership continued its praise for Hitler's anti-Jewish and racial policies. "The last twenty years witnessed two stupendous forward movements, one in our United States, the other in Germany," declared California raceologist C. M. Goethe in his presidential address to the Eugenics Research Association. He added with a degree of satisfaction, "California had led all the world in sterilization operations. Today, even California's quarter century record has, in two years, been outdistanced by Germany."¹³⁵

Eugenicist Marie Kopp toured 15,000 miles across Nazi Germany, and with the assistance of one of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes, was able to undertake extensive research on the Nazi program in cities and towns. Kopp was even permitted access to the secret Nazi Heredity Courts. Throughout 1936, Kopp wrote articles for eugenic publications, participated in promotional roundtables with such luminaries as Margaret Sanger, and presented position papers praising the Nazi program as one of "fairness." Kopp was able to assure all that "religious belief does not enter into the matter," because Jews were defined not by their religious practices, but by their bloodlines.¹³⁶

At one American Eugenics Society luncheon, Kopp emphasized, "Justice Holmes, when handling down the decision in the Buck versus Bell case, expressed the guiding spirit. . . . 'It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime or let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind. Three generations of imbeciles are enough.'"¹³⁷

In 1937, Laughlin and his Cold Spring Harbor office became the U.S. distributor of a two-reel Nazi eugenic propaganda film entitled *Erbkrank* (*The Hereditarily Diseased*). *Erbkrank* began with scenes of squalid German slums where superior Nordic families were forced to live because so much public money was spent on bright, well-constructed institutions to house the feeble-minded. Laughlin loaned the film to high schools in New York and New Jersey, to welfare workers in Connecticut, and to the Society for the Prevention of Blindness. Although he acquired the film from the Race Policy Office of the Nazi Party (*Rassenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP*), he assured, "There is no racial propaganda of any sort in the picture; it is [simply] recognized that every race has its own superior family-stocks and its own degenerate strains."¹³⁸

Yet in fact the film declared, "Jewish liberal thinking forced millions of healthy *volk*-nationals into need and squalor—while the unfit were overly coddled." In another frame the movie explained, "The Jewish people has a particularly high percentage of mentally ill." Indeed, one archetypal defective citizen was a mental patient described as a "fifty-five year old Jew—deceitful-rabble-rouser."¹³⁹

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 their eugenic hero, Adolf Hitler.

In 1938, Germany accelerated the humiliation of the Jews, as well as the Aryanization and confiscation of their property. On November 10, 1938, the world was shocked by the German national anti-Jewish riots and pogroms known as *Kristallnacht*. Over one hundred synagogues were burned across the Reich, and thousands of Jews were marched off to concentration camps. The Gestapo and SS had by now subsumed the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes, the Society for Racial Hygiene and indeed all of German medicine.¹⁴⁰

Fischer, Lenz, Rüdin and the other stalwarts became the medical generals of Hitler's campaign against humanity. In 1936, Rüdin assumed leadership of the Institute for Racial Hygiene in Munich, one of the main centers tasked with deciding which German citizens possessed Jewish blood, and how much. In 1937, Lenz and Rüdin, in a joint operation with the Gestapo, orchestrated the identification and rounding-up of some five hundred to six hundred "Rhineland bastards," the offspring of Black French colonial soldiers; they were all secretly sterilized. Some 200,000 Germans of all backgrounds had been sterilized by 1937. After that the records were not published.¹⁴¹

Fischer was increasingly accompanied by SS officer Wolfgang Abel, who was usually dressed in a typical black Nazi uniform. The two could be seen in each other's company even when visited by American eugenicists at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics. Together, Fischer and Abel manufactured fictitious eugenic profiles of Jews, Gypsies and other non-Aryan undesirables, accusing them of numerous hereditary afflictions. In order to justify their eugenic persecution, the Reich falsely ascribed flat feet, mental illness and an assortment of other maladies to those the Reich wanted to eliminate.¹⁴²

In one lecture, Fischer declared, "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 them 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-defense. 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."¹⁴³

The concept of describing people as leading a "life unworthy of life," sometimes known as "worthless eaters," rose to the fore.¹⁴⁴ Eugenic terminology and conceptualizations such as *subhuman* and *bacterium* were becoming more than jargon. They were becoming policy guidelines. Leon Whitney, executive secretary of the American Eugenics Society, declared, "While we were pussy-footing around . . . the Germans were calling a spade a spade." Goddard expressed his frustration another way: "If Hitler succeeds in his wholesale sterilization, it will be a demonstration that will carry eugenics farther than a hundred Eugenics Societies could. If he makes a fiasco of it, it will set the movement back where a hundred eugenics societies can never resurrect it."¹⁴⁵

On September 1, 1939, Germany launched its *blitzkrieg* against Poland, beginning World War II. The Reich needed hospital beds, and had to ration its wartime resources. Now the medical men of German eugenics would graduate from sterilization to organized euthanasia. Lenz helped draft euthanasia guidelines whereby a patient could be killed "by medical measures of which he remains unaware." The continued existence of those classed defective could no longer be justified in Hitler's war-strapped Reich. Beginning in 1940, thousands of Germans taken from old age homes, mental institutions and other custodial facilities were systematically gassed. Between 50,000 and 100,000 were eventually killed. Psychiatrists, steeped in eugenics, selected the victims after a momentary review of their records, jotted their destinies with a pen stroke, and then personally supervised the exterminations.¹⁴⁶

With the war raging, Lothrop Stoddard, a leader of the Eugenics Research Association, traveled to Nazi Germany. His 1940 book, *Into the Darkness*, celebrated Hitler and Nazi eugenics. "Nothing is so distinctive in Nazi Germany as its ideas about race," wrote Stoddard. "Its concept of racial matters underlies the whole National Socialist philosophy of life and profoundly influences both its policies and practices. We cannot intelligently evaluate the Third Reich unless we understand this basic attitude of mind."¹⁴⁷

"As is well known, the Nazi viewpoint on race and the resultant policies are set forth by Adolf Hitler himself in the pages of *Mein Kampf*, the Bible of National Socialism. The future Fuehrer therein wrote: 'It will be the duty of the People's State to consider the race as the basis of the community's existence. It must make sure that the purity of the racial strain will be preserved. . . . In order to achieve this end the State will have to avail itself of modern advances in medical science. It must proclaim that all those people are unfit for procreation who are afflicted with some visible hereditary disease, or are the carriers of it . . . having such people rendered sterile.'"¹⁴⁸

Focusing on Hitler's Jewish policy, Stoddard observed, "The relative emphasis which Hitler gave racialism and eugenics many years ago foreshadows the respective interest toward the two subjects in Germany today. Outside Germany, the reverse is true, due chiefly to Nazi treatment of its Jewish minority. Inside Germany, the Jewish problem is regarded as a passing phenomenon, already settled in principle and soon to be settled in fact by the physical elimination of the Jews themselves from the Third Reich."¹⁴⁹

Stoddard was so favored by Hitler that *der Führer* granted him a rare, exclusive audience. In a chapter entitled "I See Hitler," Stoddard wrote of the moment of his encounter in these words, "At that moment I was bidden to the Presence."¹⁵⁰

Goebbels's ministry escorted Stoddard around Berlin and arranged access to other senior Reich officials, especially those concerned with race policy. The Eugenics Courts, normally conducted in secret, granted Stoddard extraordinary permission to sit on the bench next to the judges and observe their racial judgments of Jews and non-Jews alike. His courtroom experiences were recounted in a chapter entitled "In a Eugenics Court," in which he bemoaned the race tribunals for being "almost too conservative."¹⁵¹

As Hitler's divisions smashed through Europe, his eugenic ideal would be enforced not only against those in Germany, but also against those in conquered or dominated countries. In country after country, Hitler rounded up the defective Jews and other subhumans, systematically making one region after another *judenrein*—Jew free. As Hess insisted, "National Socialism is nothing but applied biology."¹⁵²

For decades, Hitler's bloody regime, the Holocaust and the Second World War would be perceived as merely the outgrowth of the unfathomable madness and blind hatred of one man and his movement. But in fact Hitler's hatred was not blind; it was sharply focused on an obsessive eugenic vision. The war against the weak had graduated from America's slogans, index cards and surgical blades to Nazi decrees, ghettos and gas chambers.

CHAPTER 16

Buchenwald

Buchenwald concentration camp near Weimar. The "Little Camp"—the isolation and quarantine section of Buchenwald. Block 57. One morning in late May of 1944.¹

Three-tiered geometric boxes lined the barrack. Each housed as many as sixteen emaciated humans per shelf. A thirsty and exhausted Frenchman named Oliv struggled to climb down from the top level for his day's work. But he was too weak to climb out and negotiate the eight feet down. As Oliv lay limp, a fat, well-fed inmate doctor walked in. The other French prisoners pleaded with the doctor that Oliv was too ill and suffered from severe rheumatism, making his every movement painful. The frail man needed medical attention. A small infirmary, stocked with medicines and called "the hospital," had been established in the Little Camp. The doctor controlled access to the facility and the drugs. Those admitted to the hospital could be excused from work until nursed back to working strength—and thereby live another day.²

But the doctor, himself a prisoner yet reviled as a barbaric stooge of the SS, was known for refusing admission to the hospital except to those he favored—or those who could bribe their way in by turning over their relief packets. Most of all, the doctor hated the French communists. They—and their diseases—were everywhere in the Little Camp. The doctor believed that each inferior national group was a carrier of its own specific set of diseases. Frenchmen, he thought, brought in diphtheria and related throat diseases as well as scarlet fever. Simply put, the Little Camp doctor was unwilling to use his limited hospital to lessen the prisoners' loads, extend their lives or relieve their suffering. The prisoners' job was to work. His job was to ensure they kept working—until they could work no more.³

Furious and impatient, the Little Camp doctor pushed the others out of the way, stepped onto the lowest of the three tiers, reached up and grabbed Oliv's emaciated foot as it dangled over the edge. He then yanked Oliv over