

newspapers what they could and could not print.

Likewise, radio was taken over in 1933 by another branch of the Propaganda Ministry, the Chamber of Radio.

The Chamber of Films took over the content of the film industry, though it left the production of films up to private firms.

In all areas of arts and culture, uncooperative editors, writers, and performers were ousted, or sent to prison or concentration camps, or sometimes killed. Those editors, writers, and performers who remained knew how they were to behave. German culture thus became an obedient tool of Nazi politics.

16. Eugenics

Nazi education and censorship attempted to control people's *minds*. The Nazis also controlled the *bodies* of their citizens as much as possible. Milder controls involved new public-health measures such as an aggressive campaign against smoking: the Nazis banned smoking in certain public places, ran an anti-smoking propaganda campaign, and placed restrictions on how tobacco could be advertised.

Stronger controls extended to the sex and reproductive lives of the citizens, and this takes us into darker territory—the Nazis' embrace of eugenics.

Eugenics was not unique to the Nazi regime or to Germany. As early as 1895, eugenics researcher Adolf Jost had published a book called *The Right to Death*, which called for state control over human reproduction, and many intellectuals in many countries embraced eugenics. In nature, the argument ran, only the strongest males get to mate with the females; the weaker males get to mate less frequently or not at all; this natural selection of the stronger and de-selection of the weaker serves to keep the species healthy and strengthen it.

The same principle holds for farming. Just as a farmer is concerned to improve the quality of his herd, so the state should be concerned to improved the quality of its citizenry. And just as a farmer will not let any bull mate with any cow, so the state should not let just any male have sex with any female; the farmer will select his strongest and healthiest bulls and have them mate only with his strongest, healthiest cows. Those bulls and cows not up to standard are culled from the herd and not allowed to reproduce at all.

As Rudolph Hess, deputy Führer of the Reich, would say a little later: “National Socialism is nothing but applied biology.”³⁴

Before the Nazis came to power, German intellectuals were among the world leaders in eugenics research. In 1916, Dr. Ernst Rudin, the director of the Genealogical-Demographic Department of the German Institute for Psychiatric Research, established a field of psychiatric hereditary biology based on eugenics theory. Rudin became the president of the International Federation of Eugenic Organizations, the world leader of the eugenics movement. In 1920, psychiatry Professor Alfred Hoche and distinguished jurist Karl Binding wrote *The Permission to Destroy Life Unworthy of Life*. Their book called for the destruction of “worthless” humans for the sake of protecting worthy humans. So-called worthless individuals included the mentally and physically disabled.

Another influential book, *The Principles of Human Heredity and Racial Hygiene*, written by Drs. Eugen Fischer, Lenz, and Bauer, hailed the superiority of the German race and

³⁴ Richard Walther Darré, Reich Minister of Food and Agriculture from 1933 to 1942, had a crucial role intellectually and administratively in determining Nazi policy: “Just as in the animal world, this committed Social Darwinist proposed a system of racial selection in order to ‘breed’ a new rural nobility and to achieve the ‘breeding goal of the German people.’ Darré suggested marriage restrictions for Jews and ‘less valuable’ non-Jews, strict state control of all marriages and fertility, and sterilization of those members of the community who were considered to be a threat to the ‘racial purity’ of the German people. The Nazis used all of these measures in the subsequent years ...” (Gerhard 2005, p. 131-132).

called for the use of concentration camps for non-Germans and mixed races. Fischer already had experience with this—having planned and executed the forced sterilization of South Africans who were the offspring of German military men and women indigenous to South Africa.

By the time the Nazis came to power, eugenics was an established part of German intellectual life. One striking indication of this is that German universities had twenty-three official Professors of Racial Hygiene.

National Socialism held that the state should take over where natural selection left off. In line with their collectivism and anti-individualism, the Nazis held that medicine and reproduction should serve the interests of the state rather than the individual. Like the farmer, the Nazis wanted high quality Aryan children for the state's purposes, so they took charge of the mating process of Germany's citizens. The Reich could not allow individuals to rut with just anyone. Taking away individual choice in reproduction would improve the stock and cleanse the nation of bad genetic elements.

The Nazis also argued that they were thus more strongly socialist than their arch-rivals, the Communists. While the Communists focused almost totally on issues of money, capitalism, and economics, the Nazis argued for a more comprehensive socialism: *Every* aspect of human life, including family and reproduction, was to be socialized.

The Nazi eugenics program had two faces: positive and negative.³⁵ The positive face aimed at increasing the number of pure Aryan births; the negative face aimed at eliminating inferior genetic influences in Germany. In order to implement both sides of the program, the Nazis first needed to define racial purity. They decided that there were three racial categories: *Full Jew*, having three or more Jewish grandparents; two degrees of *Mischlinge*, or mixed types, having either one or two Jewish grandparents; and *Full Aryan*, having no Jewish grand-

³⁵Using “positive” and “negative” here descriptively, not normatively.

parents. The pure Aryan would be the tall, slender yet strong, blond human being.

This led to some serious parody, given that not many of the Nazi leadership met those criteria. Neither Goebbels nor Göring nor Hitler himself obviously met them.

All humor aside, the Nazis set to achieving the positive face of their program in several ways. They provided incentives to encourage racially pure marriages. Incentives included loans to help married couples get established, subsidies for each child produced and official awards and medals for “hero” mothers of four or more children. Childless couples were vilified. The Nazi government also lowered the age of marriage to sixteen, encouraged the birth of illegitimate Aryan children, outlawed abortion for Aryans, outlawed marriage for sterile women, strictly regulated birth control, and initially forbade mothers from working outside of the home.

Heinrich Himmler was in charge of this area of Nazi policy. Himmler was also the Chief of the SS and the Gestapo, and so was one of the top two or three most powerful Nazis in the regime. Under Himmler’s direction, the Nazis also created the *Lebensborn*, or “Fount of Life,” program in 1935. This project developed group homes for young, unmarried Aryan women impregnated by Aryan men. Once the racial purity of the parents had been established, the young women stayed in the homes and were given free food and medical care. In return, the women signed over all rights to their fetuses, who, upon birth, would be raised by select Nazi families. Between 12,000 and 16,000 infants were born in *Lebensborn* homes in Germany and Nazi-occupied territories. A few years



Heinrich Himmler

later, in order to speed up the development of a pure Aryan race, the Nazis began to kidnap Aryan children from occupied territories. An estimated 250,000 children six years of age and younger were taken back to Germany and assimilated into Nazi homes.

The negative face of the Nazi's eugenics program required the extermination of non-Aryans. In 1935, the Nazis implemented the Nuremberg Laws for the Protection of Hereditary Health. These laws included forcible sterilization of individuals with mental and hereditary physical defects. During the 1930s, the Nazis sterilized approximately 400,000 people. Certification of Aryan descent became a requirement for marriage; interracial marriages were prohibited; and the remaining rights of Jews were revoked.

The Nazis then introduced extermination. In May of 1935, the regime euthanized twelve patients in a mental hospital in Hadamar, Germany. The Nazi Interior Ministry required that all children under three years of age with congenital malformations and mental deficiencies be registered with the state. Those deemed unfit were taken away from their homes for "special treatment." "Special treatment" meant either being injected with a lethal dose of medicine or simply starved to death. The Nazis were still somewhat cautious about public scrutiny, so part of their strategy was slowly to get the nation accustomed to human extermination before they turned their full attention to the Jews.

The public justification for these deaths was not only the biological health of the state. The Nazis also gave a collectivist economic justification. If the health of the citizenry is the State's responsibility, then the State must allocate its economic resources responsibly. If money and resources are used to care for the weak, then the stronger humans are forced to sacrifice. But the stronger human beings are the State's best assets; it is they who are the realization and the future of the *Volk*. The

State accordingly has a moral obligation not to waste economic resources on the weak; and when the weak are destroyed as nature intended, the strong will be enhanced and the species advanced.

This brings us to Nazi economic policy.

17. *Economic controls*

Through education and censorship, the Nazis attempted to socialize the German *mind*. Through public health measures and eugenics, they attempted to socialize the German *body*. A natural extension of both policies was to socialize German economic production.

As would be expected by the socialist part of National Socialism, the guiding principle of Nazi economics was that all property belongs to the people, the *Volk*, and was to be used only for the good of the people. Just as one's body is no longer one's private possession but rather belongs to the whole community, economic property was no longer anyone's private possession but to be used by State permission and only for the good of the people.

Upon coming to power, the Nazi government nationalized Jewish property and in 1934 passed a law allowing the expropriation of property owned by communists.

Another early policy given high priority by the Nazi government was the organizing of all German businesses into cartels. The argument was that—in contrast to the disorderliness and egoism of free market capitalism—centralization and state control would increase efficiency and a sense of German unity. In July of 1933, membership in a cartel became compulsory for businesses, and by early 1934 the cartel structure was re-organized and placed firmly under the direction of the German government.