

mentally ill
physically disabled
deaf and blind
schizophrenics
foster children
asocials
alcoholics

Life Unworthy of Life

NAZI EUTHANASIA CRIMES AT HADAMAR

A TEACHER'S GUIDE

LIFE UNWORTHY OF LIFE

NAZI EUTHANASIA CRIMES AT HADAMAR

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Life Unworthy of Life: Nazi Euthanasia Crimes at Hadamar
A Teacher's Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Operation T-4 was the code name given to the organization which carried out the plan to kill mentally and physically disabled German citizens, as well as those deemed 'undesirable' to the Reich. These people were deemed to be 'unworthy of life' and their murder was justified on the grounds of racial purity and economic necessity. Thousands of people, including children were transferred to institutions such as Hadamar, where they were sterilized, experimented upon, starved and ultimately murdered by lethal injections or toxic gas. This crime was committed by medical professionals and administrators working in German medical and welfare institutions. Many of these people later continued their careers in the execution of the Final Solution. The T-4 program proved to be a training ground for the Holocaust, with much of T-4 killing process applied to the concentration camps.

Between 1933 and 1945 the Nazis sterilized over 300,000 mentally ill or physically disabled people, with thousands dying as a result of the operation. Victims included those with schizophrenia and manic depression, retardation, physical deformities, epilepsy, blindness, deafness and severe alcoholism.

As part of the euthanasia program, approximately 80,000 German citizens were murdered. Many of the euthanasia victims were German children who were blind, deaf, physically disabled or mentally handicapped, epileptics, orphans, juvenile delinquents and non-conformist youth. Children with cerebral palsy and other neurological conditions or Down's Syndrome were targeted and used as subjects of scientific experiments.

By studying eugenics and the T-4 programs of sterilization and euthanasia, students will have an opportunity to reflect on the responsibility of societies towards the disabled and other vulnerable members of society. Students will examine and understand the implications of the widespread acceptance of eugenic ideas and practices by western countries, including Canada. Students will also consider how the ethical issues raised by eugenics are reflected in the current debate concerning genetic research and policies.

USING THIS GUIDE

The first chapter serves as an introduction to the topics of eugenics, euthanasia and Hadamar. Students should do the readings found in this chapter before going on to any of the other chapters in the guide. These readings are also highly recommended as a pre-visit activity for students attending the exhibit *Life Unworthy of Life: Nazi Euthanasia Crimes at Hadamar* at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

Some of the key issues of Nazi racial ideology including propaganda, the language of dehumanisation and the responsibility of perpetrators and collaborators can be found in chapters 2 – 5. Teachers will find these chapters useful as post-visit activities. Language arts teachers may be particularly interested in the Nazis' manipulative use of language, found in chapter 4.

The guide concludes with an examination of how eugenic theories and practices were expressed in Canada at the time (Chapter 6) and how Nazi medicine has cast a shadow on genetic research and policies today (Chapter 7). These concluding chapters are particularly recommended for teachers of science, ethics and social justice.

All the student readings can be found at the back of the guide, along with a glossary, timeline and a list of books, videos and other resources. Teachers are encouraged to photocopy the materials as needed for their students.

1. FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

The notion of 'improving the race' through the selective breeding of valuable, genetic characteristics began in England and was widespread in many western countries including Canada and the United States. Although, Nazi Germany was not alone in its embrace of eugenic ideas and practices, it was unique in having taken these theories to its extreme extension in the T-4 euthanasia program, in which some 80,000 mentally ill or physically disabled people were murdered.

By studying the eugenics movement and the Nazi T-4 program, students will understand how Germany was able to abandon its previously compassionate policies towards the disabled and move to intolerance and ultimately, state-sanctioned murder.

Readings

- #1. Eugenics
- #2. T-4 / Sterilization and Euthanasia Programs
- #3. Hadamar Case Study

Small Group Presentations

Students form groups of three. Each member of the group is assigned one of the readings to present to their group. Presentations should include an overview of: 1. theories, 2. practices, 3. the people responsible and 4. the victims. Presentations may be in the form of: charts, timelines or web diagrams and should be clear, concise and informative - making use of supporting examples.

Discussion

Which eugenic ideas were common to most countries?

How did eugenic practices vary among countries?

Why do you think so many countries embraced eugenic ideas at the time?

Why do you think the German euthanasia program, as exemplified by Hadamar, was not adopted in other countries?

Extension

Today, Canada is one of the most compassionate countries in its treatment of the disabled. Research the current treatment of the physically disabled and mentally ill in our society. Consider human rights legislation, de-institutionalisation practices, supported living alternatives and drug therapies. If possible, interview a member of a disability group or a medical practitioner with expertise in the field.

2. NAZI PROPAGANDA: RACIAL PURITY

Nazi propaganda was used to try and convince German citizens that mentally ill or physically disabled children and adults were unworthy of life. The propaganda campaign, conducted through speeches, newspapers, films, posters and school textbooks, helped sell the murder of those deemed 'unfit'.

The propaganda campaign was based on both 'positive' and 'negative' eugenics. Positive eugenics promoted the idea of 'healthy Aryanism'. It was every Aryan's duty to be healthy and physically fit. Wedding loans and family allowances were used as positive incentives for the racially desirable. The Lebensborn program was established to breed Aryan children, using women who were considered to be racially and biologically precious and who were expected to give birth to children of the same quality. Selected women were encouraged to become pregnant by SS men in order to improve the race. Propaganda images of virile, athletic young men and idealized Aryan motherhood were used to represent racial purity.

By contrast, negative eugenics argued for the elimination of the most severely racially or genetically defective. In reality, the victims included those with schizophrenia, manic depression, retardation, physical deformities, epilepsy, blindness, deafness, severe alcoholism and children who were blind, deaf, physically disabled or mentally handicapped, epileptics, orphans, juvenile delinquents and non-conformist youth. The propaganda campaign of negative eugenics was fear-based and exploited grotesque images of the disabled with distorted features and deformities.

Racial Ideals

Distribute the Nazi photos #1 & #4, without their captions. In addition, collect photos of attractive young men and women from magazines or newspapers and distribute them to students. Have students judge each person in the photos according to the rating scale below.

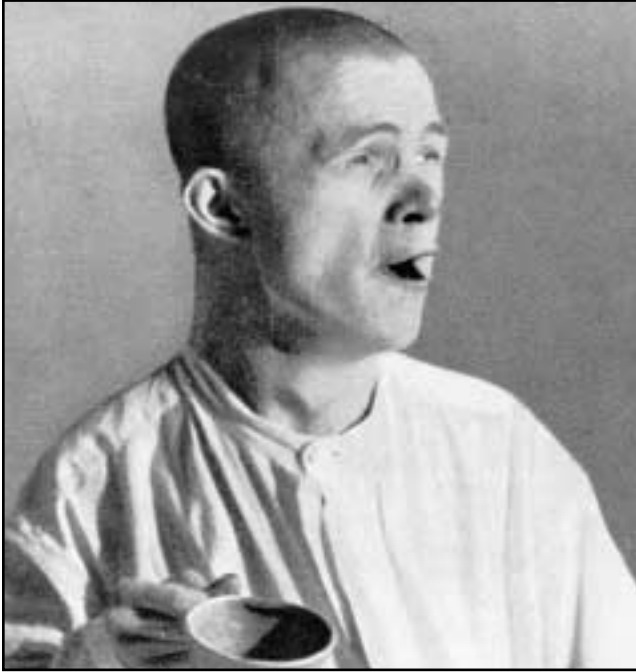
Photos



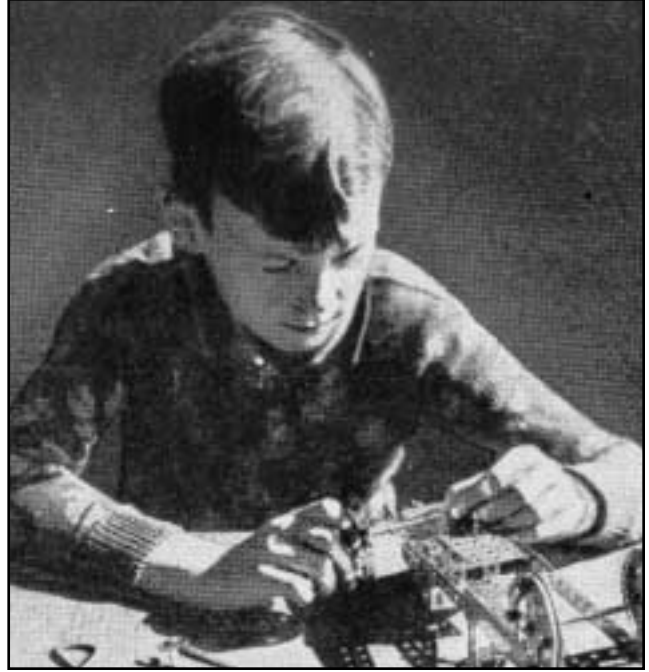
1. Young men with sound limbs spend their free time in play and struggle...



2. ...while stupid men with deformed hands and feet sit idle.



3. The idiot is mindless in appearance and behaviour...



4. ...contrasting with the sensible activities of the inherently healthy German boy.

Discussion

Have you ever wished that you looked like the people in these photos?

Why do you think attractive looking people are used in advertising?

Psychological studies suggest that beautiful people are often thought to be smarter, kinder and better.

Why do you think that might be the case?

How do photos #1 & #4 reflect the Nazi racial ideals?

Compare photos #1 & #2 and photos #3 & #4 as pairs, along with their captions.

Discussion

How do the captions exploit people's fears and prejudices towards the disabled?

People may have personal opinions about the attractiveness and intelligence of others. How are these opinions different from a state promoting certain characteristics as valuable over others that are not?

	1	2	3	4	5	
attractive						unattractive
intelligent						stupid
kind						nasty
healthy						unhealthy
important						useless

3. NAZI PROPAGANDA: ECONOMIC BURDEN

In the wake of the Depression, propaganda was used to convince German citizens that the disabled imposed an unfair economic burden on society. Distorted statistics were used to show that the disabled produced a disproportionate number of disabled offspring, which increased the burden on the state. In addition, it was argued that hospital beds and medical services were needed to care for German soldiers as part of the war effort. War provided both a cover and a pretext for the euthanasia crime.

The Math of Murder

1. Charts and graphs were used to represent how much money could be saved by not providing food, shelter and nursing care for the mentally ill. School mathematics texts posed questions such as: "The construction of a lunatic asylum costs 6 million marks. How many houses at 15,000 marks each could have been built for that amount?" (*Handicapped*, USHMM pamphlet p.5) Have students calculate this problem.



Exhibit panel from "Reichsnaehrstand" (organization for the health of people). Translation: "Qualitative degeneration of the population if the reproduction of superior people is low. That is how it will be if inferior people have four children and superior people have two children."

2. Posters like *A Drunkard's Terrible Legacy* were also used to demonstrate the economic costs to society of alcoholics, asocials, juvenile delinquents and non-conformist youth. Calculate how many children the drunkard at the top of the photo must have had to produce 894 descendants over three generations.

Discussion

What effect do you think math lessons like this would have had on young German students?

How accurate or distorted, do you think the statistics used on the poster were?

What happens when the needs of a disadvantaged or minority group are pitted against the needs of the majority?



A Drunkard's Terrible Legacy: In 83 years, 894 descendants: 40 inmates of poorhouses, 67 felons, 7 murderers, 181 prostitutes and 142 beggars.

In Canada there is often a debate about the best use of education or health care dollars.

How is this different from the Nazi argument that the elimination of the disabled was an economic necessity?

ESL students, gifted students or students with learning disabilities often require extra funding in the form of special programs or learning assistance in the classroom. Do you think that these resources would be better used to reduce class size and provide more textbooks, computers and newer facilities for the majority of students? How are competing needs of different groups met in our society today?

Extension

Screen one of the following films, *Selling Murder* or *Shadow of the Reich: Nazi Medicine*. Both films demonstrate the unsympathetic light in which the mentally ill and the physically handicapped were portrayed by the Nazis. The films may be borrowed from the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre resource library. For a description of the films, see the video list at the back of the guide.

Give students the following focus questions before the screening and use them afterwards as the basis for a class discussion.

1. How are the mentally ill, physically handicapped and socially undesirable portrayed in the film?
2. What are the arguments used against the disabled in the film?
3. How are the 'racially desirable' people portrayed by way of contrast?

4. LANGUAGE OF DEHUMANISATION

As part of the T-4 sterilization and euthanasia programs, the Nazis developed a specialized language, to dehumanise their intended victims, to make them seem less human. Other words were used to maintain the secrecy of the euthanasia program, to mask what was happening and to help deflect public criticism. These cover-up words were often found in official reports and propaganda. Euphemisms, or softening words, were also used to help sanitize the reality of what was happening, to make the murders of the physically disabled and mentally ill more acceptable to family members, the German public and the perpetrators themselves.

Reading

#4. Special Language of the T-4 Program

Categorize and Rework

Students do the reading above and determine whether the words listed were used by the Nazis to 1. dehumanise, 2. act as a euphemism or 3. maintain secrecy. Students sort the words and place them in the appropriate columns on the worksheet below.

Students then, propose an alternative word for each of the specialized words, which is either 1. more respectful of the victim and their rights (for example – “piece” can be replaced with the word ‘patient’) or 2. more accurately reflects the true reality of what was going on. Students share their words with a partner and agree on the best alternative word for each specialized word.

Discussion

Compare the literal meaning of the word euthanasia (a good death) with the Nazi usage and the way it is used today as a consensual, mercy killing.

How can words be used to change how people and events are represented?

In what way do you think the specialized language used by the Nazis contributed to the success of the euthanasia program?

How might alternative words, such as those proposed by the students in the activity above, have been used to oppose the euthanasia program?

Extension

Research the specialized language used during the Holocaust to dehumanise Jews and other victims in the concentration camps and to mask the reality of the situation. Read Art Spiegelman's *Maus Vol. I & II* for examples of the specialized language used in Auschwitz.

LANGUAGE OF THE T-4 PROGRAM

See Reading #4

ALTERNATIVE											
SECRECY											
EUPHEMISM											
DEHUMANIZE											
SPECIAL WORDS											

5. PERPETRATORS, COLLABORATORS & RESISTANCE

From 1933 until 1945 physicians, nurses, medical staff and others carried out the murder of thousands of patients entrusted to them. Few doctors questioned these policies or resisted. In fact many were at the forefront of the racial hygiene movement. The new 'treatments' of forced sterilization and the murder of the disabled violated all established codes of medical ethics.

The issue of responsibility is a complex one. Adolf Hitler and others in the forefront of the movement, were clearly responsible. Hitler made eugenics a key part of his master race theory in *Mein Kampf* and his decree of October 1939, set the T-4 Euthanasia Program in motion. However, the program could never have been undertaken without the active participation of countless others, from doctors to bus drivers, each of whom had a hand in the process. For many professionals and ordinary workers, the criminal policies of the Third Reich became a routine part of their everyday work lives. This chapter addresses the responsibility of these ordinary citizens who collaborated in the process.

Readings

#5. Collaborators at Hadamar

#6. Resistance

Write a Letter of Protest

Imagine what some of those listed in the reading could have done to oppose the crimes. How might resistance or opposition on their part, have altered the outcome for the victims? Bishop Galen was amongst the few who spoke out publicly. What was the effect of his actions?

Students examine the readings above and write a letter of protest or a sermon, written from Bishop Galen's point of view. The letter or sermon should 1. protest the crimes committed, 2. refuse to participate further and 3. encourage others to resist. The letter/sermon should be 1. historically accurate in terms of events and statistics, 2. ethically or morally convincingly, 3. thoughtful and well reasoned, explaining how resistance might alter the fate of the victims.

Discussion

How did the collaborators benefit from their participation in the program?

What could they have done, either as an individual or in a group, to have protested or resisted?

Historians often use the words; victim, perpetrator, bystander and rescuer to describe the actions of those involved in the Holocaust. Which of these words would you use to describe those listed in the reading and why?

Why do you think historians focus on the responsibility of ordinary people as well as that of the leaders?

Extension – a mock trial

Medical professionals are generally thought to be committed to 'doing no harm'. However, in the T-4 operation, they became part of the selection and killing process. After the war, several doctors were tried and convicted at the Nuremberg Medical Trials for the roles they played.

Conduct a mock trial of a medical practitioner. Assign students the roles of prosecutors, defence lawyers, defendants, judges and jury members. The defendant and the defence lawyers should develop their case as a team. Judges and jury members should make their ruling based on the 1. historical accuracy of the arguments, 2. pertinence of the examples used to support the arguments and 3. persuasiveness of the arguments and their delivery.

Suggested Defence Arguments

1. Medical professionals were legitimately concerned with the greater needs of German society at a time of crisis.
2. It was a slippery slope. Medical professionals did not plan on participating to the extent that they did. At first they participated in small ways until unintentionally, they became more involved in the euthanasia program.
3. Doctors had little choice but to obey. Nazi policy decreed that an Aryan state was to be created through selective breeding, sterilization and euthanasia. Doctors were the victims of circumstances beyond their control.

Suggested Prosecution Arguments

1. Doctors were not the victims of circumstances. Instead, they were often leaders in the euthanasia process.
2. There is evidence to suggest that many doctors eagerly pursued forced sterilizations, sometimes ahead of the government policy.
3. Many medical practitioners supported eugenic ideals. Others were interested in furthering their careers through medical research that was made possible under the T-4 program.
4. Others used the euthanasia program as training ground. Later they furthered their careers in the concentration camps by carrying out the murder of Jews and other victims.

6. EUGENICS IN CANADA

Eugenic ideas found expression uncomfortably close to home in the sterilization programs of British Columbia (1933-1973) and Alberta (1928-1972). In this chapter, students will consider the implication of Canada's involvement with eugenics during the early part of the twentieth century.

Readings

#7. Eugenics in Canada

U-Shaped Discussion

Students examine the suggested reading above and form personal opinions about how justified Canadian eugenic practices were. Students express their opinion about the following statement: "The sterilization laws and practices carried about by the provincial governments of Alberta and British Columbia during the first half of the 20th century were justified, within the context of the times."

Students form a u-shaped line. Those who agree with the statement stand at one end of the line, while those who disagree with it, stand at the opposite end. Those who believe that Canada's position was somewhat justified, but flawed, stand at the bottom of the u-shape. Other students distribute themselves along the u-shaped continuum to indicate their relative agreement or disagreement with the statement. Students discuss the statement and move along the continuum as their opinion changes.

Completely Justified



Completely Unjustified

Somewhat Justified, but Flawed

Opinion Scale

Completely Justified – Eugenics was a respected science that offered the best understanding of hereditarily, transmitted diseases, possible at the time. These theories offered governments solutions to their pressing social and economic problems. Governments had a responsibility to help improve their societies, even at the expense of individual rights.

Somewhat Justified, but Flawed– The science of eugenics offered a new understanding of hereditarily, transmitted diseases that had the potential to benefit society. The governments' enthusiasm for the theories was understandable, but the laws that were enacted were misguided and unnecessarily harsh and invasive. Other more compassionate solutions could have been found; supported living at home, supervised group homes and sheltered workshops with specialized training.

Completely Unjustified – Eugenics was an unproven 'pseudo-science' based on a distorted understanding of Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest. The government capitalized on eugenic ideas as a simplistic solution to complex social problems. The sterilization practices were completely unjustified. The policies were immoral and racist. The government was unduly influenced by those citizens who feared immigrants and believed that socially undesirable people like alcoholics, epileptics, unwed mothers, native people and the poor were 'unfit' to have children.

Video Extension

Screen the video *The Sterilization of Leilani Muir* about the Alberta Government's 1928-1972 Sterilization Act and the government's subsequent apology to the victims of the program.

Focus Questions

What were some parallels between the Nazis' racial hygiene programs and Alberta's eugenic practices?

Was Leilani Muir justified in having taken the Alberta Government to court in pursuit of an apology? Should governments be held responsible for past injustices?

Extension Topics

Research one of the following topics and present your opinion on the following question. Do you think governments should be held accountable for past injustices?

1. The Japanese Canadian Redress acknowledgement came from Prime Minister Mulroney on September 22, 1988. This offered symbolic redress for the injustices incurred by Japanese Canadians interned during World War II. Financial restitution was provided to both individual Japanese Canadians and to the Japanese community through the National Association of Japanese Canadians. This led to the creation of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, with the mandate of fostering racial harmony, cross-cultural understanding and the elimination of racism.
2. In June 2001, Jews and other victims who performed slave labour or forced labour during World War II, began to receive compensation as part of the Material Claims Conference, from a German compensation fund called Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future. Half of the money in the fund came from the German government and half from German industries, which profited from slave labour during the war.

7. GENETIC POLITICS TODAY / GENETIC SELECTION TODAY – CHOICE OR EUGENICS?

Most of the eugenic ideas, that were prevalent in England, the United States, Canada and Nazi Germany in the first half of the 20th century, are unacceptable in our society today. It is inconceivable for a current democratic society to kill imperfect people or to sterilize schizophrenics and alcoholics.

What our society can do, is screen embryos before birth for genetic abnormalities. This is called genetic selection. In Canada there is a bill before the Standing Committee on Health that is scheduled to be introduced in the year 2002 which will likely ban sex selection, cloning, commercial surrogate motherhood, buying and selling of eggs and sperm and the removal of genetic material from a dead body. However, the bill will probably not ban disability selection. This means that parents will continue to have the right to screen for genetic disabilities such as Down's Syndrome.

In this chapter, students will consider some of the issues facing scientists, ethicists, legislators and ordinary citizens, including parents, who are trying to establish protocols, ethical guidelines and legislation for genetic research and therapies.

Personal Opinion Poll

Students complete the following opinion poll using a five-point scale.

i. agree strongly ii. agree iii. undecided iv. disagree v. disagree strongly

1. Parents should have the right to genetically screen their foetus for the purposes of choosing the sex of their child.
2. Parents should be permitted to genetically screen a foetus for genetic disabilities such as Down's Syndrome.
3. People should be permitted to buy and sell human eggs and sperm for purposes of artificial insemination.
4. Infertile couples should be permitted to pay a surrogate mother to become pregnant and give birth to a baby for them.
5. Genetic research for the purpose of human cloning should be permitted.

Readings

- #8. The Genetic Debate
- #9. Canadian Genetic Legislation

Write an Amendment to the Bill

Students do the readings above and then retake the opinion poll and make note of any changes in their opinions.

Students propose an amendment or change to the Canadian legislation that they feel would be important and that is consistent with their own opinion. Alternatively, students who agree with the bill,

write a statement in support of one aspect of the bill, that they strongly support. The amendment or statement should include; 1. scientific, 2. ethical and 3. personal rationales. Students may wish to argue their positions as though they were appearing before Canada's Standing Committee on Health.

Extension Discussion Topics

1. Disability Selection

Gregor Wolbring is a biochemist and bio-ethicist at the University of Calgary. Wolbring who was born without legs has said, "With genetic selection, the mother becomes the quality control gatekeeper of the gene pool. This is not really choice, it's eugenics. The elimination of disabled people by the Nazis was not just about creating a better race but was also based on the idea that some lives are not worth living. - We can't kill imperfect people, as the Nazis did, so we do it more subtly by preventing their birth." (*Playing God by Judy Rebick in Elm Street Magazine, September 2001, p.86*)

Wolbring, is one of many people with disabilities who have made extraordinary contributions to their fields. Consider Stephen Hawkings, Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder, to name a few. In your opinion, should the Canadian legislation permit disability selection?

2. Sex Selection

A boy or girl? Should parents have a choice? Reproductive technology is able to sort sperm according to sex so that parents can choose the sex of their child. Sex selection makes it possible for parents who carry genetic diseases to avoid having a child with that disease. For example, a couple at risk of having a boy with haemophilia could choose to have only girls. Some couples want sex selection for social reasons, either to balance their families with both girls and boys or because one sex is more valued by the society. For example, in China boys are more valued than girls and millions of female foetuses have been aborted or newborn girls abandoned to orphanages. Should the Canadian legislation permit sex selection?

READING #1 (CHAPTER 1)

Eugenics

Although the first reference to eugenics dates back to Plato, the modern attempt to control human heredity comes from the work and ideas of the British scientist Francis Galton, who coined the term in 1883. Galton was fascinated by the frequency by which genius seemed to be passed down through generations. He investigated the possibility that talents and virtues were inherited just like the physical traits of height and eye colour. Galton believed that society would be improved if hereditarily favourable families had more children, while genetically inferior families were discouraged from reproducing.

The impact of Galton's theory was immediate. The Racial Hygiene Society was formed in Germany in 1905, the English Eugenics Education Association was founded in 1907 and the American Eugenics Office opened in 1910. In Canada, Alberta and British Columbia were the first provinces to introduce legislation for the sterilization of the 'feeble-minded' in 1928 and 1933 respectively. Between 1890 and 1920, eugenic ideas were advanced in nations as diverse as Norway, Brazil and the Soviet Union.

A popular eugenics movement captured the public's imagination. Eugenic organizations organized public exhibits that drew thousands of visitors and 'fitter families' competitions were mounted at American state fairs. Many professionals, academics, members of the upper and middle classes and political parties of both the left and right, embraced the new 'science'. Eugenicians believed that behavioural traits and talents were inherited, that the quality of the gene pool could be improved and that social problems had a biological basis and therefore a biological remedy. Many believed that social decay was caused by the lower classes or immigrants.

Forced sterilizations were carried out in Canada, the United States and Nazi Germany, although such practices were rare in Britain. However, no other nation's eugenic program matched the murder of thousands in the Nazi euthanasia program. After the Holocaust and the defeat of Germany, eugenicians in other countries were quick to distance themselves from German eugenicians and the movement fell into general disrepute.

READING #2 (CHAPTER 1)

T-4 / Sterilization and Euthanasia Programs

Adolf Hitler exploited the eugenic ideas prevalent in Germany and other nations at the turn of the 20th century. In his book *Mein Kampf*, Hitler argued that only people with 'hereditary valuable traits' should reproduce and that there should be no racial interbreeding. Between 1933 and 1945 the Nazis sterilized over 300,000 mentally ill or physically disabled people, most of them German citizens and murdered approximately 80,000 as part of the euthanasia program. These people were deemed to be 'life unworthy of life' and their murder was justified on the grounds of racial purity and economic necessity. Thousands of people were transferred to institutions where they were sterilized, experimented upon, starved and ultimately murdered by lethal medications or toxic gas.

The "Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases," decreed on July 14, 1933, forced the sterilization of those with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and manic depression, retardation, physical deformities, epilepsy, blindness, deafness and severe alcoholism. Thousands died as a result of the sterilization operation.

In 1935, the Lebensborn program was established to breed Aryan children using women who were considered to be racially and biologically precious and who were expected to give birth to children of the same quality. These selected women were encouraged to become pregnant by SS men in order to improve the race. Over 7,000 children were born in Lebensborn homes. Those who were born sick or disabled were immediately 'selected' and killed.

In October 1939, Adolf Hitler issued a decree, which established the euthanasia program by empowering physicians to grant a 'mercy death' to patients considered incurable. The intent of the euthanasia program was to exterminate the mentally ill and physically disabled and to cleanse the Aryan race of those considered genetically defective and a financial burden to society. The program codenamed 'Aktion T-4' was headed by Reich leader Philip Bouler and Hitler's private physician Karl Brandt.

The euthanasia program enlisted the cooperation of many doctors to select patients and supervise their murder. Victims included those with mental illnesses, physical handicaps and other neurological conditions. Many were German children who were blind, deaf, physically disabled or mentally handicapped, epileptics, orphans, juvenile delinquents and non-conformist youth. Children with cerebral palsy and other neurological conditions or Down's Syndrome were targeted and used as subjects of scientific experiments. Those that did not possess German citizenship or were not of German or related blood, including Jews, Gypsies and Africans, were also targets of the euthanasia program.

Due to an increase in public awareness and pressure, Hitler 'officially' suspended the T-4 operation on December 10, 1941. In reality, the operation continued on under the code name 14 f 13 from 1941 to 1945. At the Nuremberg Medical Trials from 1946 to 1947, fifteen defendants, among them Karl Brandt, were sentenced to death by hanging and five were sentenced to life imprisonment for their involvement in the euthanasia program.

READING #3 (CHAPTER 1)

Hadamar Case Study

Six killing centres were established in Germany as part of the euthanasia program, including the well-known clinic at Hadamar, which was rented to the T-4 Operation as a euthanasia killing centre between 1941 and 1945. Deception and the destruction of many records makes it impossible to verify the exact number of victims but an estimated 11,000 people, including children were murdered by gas at Hadamar. The institution held a special celebration after the deaths of 10,000 patients.

The first transport of mentally ill and disabled persons arrived at Hadamar in January 1941. Patients were transported from other institutions on grey "Gekrat" buses, whose windows were painted black to prevent neighbouring townspeople from seeing those trapped inside. Upon arrival, victims were undressed, photographed and quickly checked by doctors who issued death certificates with false causes of death. Patients were gassed within a few hours of their arrival and their remains burned in the crematorium. The gas chamber was disguised as a shower room and fatal carbon monoxide entered the room through a pipe. Up to 60 people were crowded into the room, locked by steel doors. Through a control window in the wall, the doctors watched for several minutes as people died. Doctors removed gold-teeth and brains from selected corpses. The brains were sent to the medical centres of various universities for research purposes.

"I ... looked through the control window in the wall. I saw approximately 40 to 45 men crowded in the room next door who were slowly dying. This method of putting people to death was so distressing that one couldn't call it a humane killing, I watched the scene for approximately 2-3 minutes and then went away, because I couldn't stand watching it any longer and felt sick."

The Administrator of Hadamar, 1946

Murder by gas was discontinued in August 1941, but the euthanasia program continued by means of medical poisoning and malnutrition. The number of killing institutions increased and the categories of victims broadened to include the elderly, injured and traumatized soldiers, children cared for by the German social welfare system, forced labourers with tuberculosis and Jews.

After the war in October 1945, the prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trial described the program at Hadamar as disgusting, shameless, inhuman and cowardly. All defendants were found guilty. The head of administration, the senior male nurse and one male nurse were sentenced to death by hanging. The medical director was sentenced to life imprisonment. Others were sentenced for up to thirty years. Although some of the death sentences were carried out, many of the convictions were reprieved.

READING #4 (CHAPTER 4)

Special language of the T-4 program

Asocials

Individuals deemed socially unfit or unable to abide by the social norms of the 'national community' including; criminals, juvenile delinquents, homosexuals, prostitutes, vagrants, 'work shy people', drug addicts, swing and jazz enthusiasts and Roma (Gypsies).

Ballast Existences / Biologically Negative

Terms applied to the physically and mentally disabled patients in institutions, as well as to those who did not conform to Nazi racial and social ideals. They were considered to be economic and social burdens and therefore threats to the health of the Aryan race.

Children's Specialty Departments

Name of departments, housing mentally and physically disabled children, designed to give the German public and the families of patients the impression that children were being given excellent care and treatment.

Disinfect / Eliminate

The process of killing inmates of institutions.

Euthanasia

The Nazis called the practices at the T-4 killing centres, euthanasia, or mercy killing. In fact, the victims were subjected to starvation, lethal injections and gassings.

Experts

Medical personnel responsible for determining the fate of institutionalised patients.

Genetic Health Courts

A system of 181 courts established by the Nazis in 1935, to rule on cases related to the Law for Compulsory Sterilization (1933). The courts ruled in favour of sterilization in almost all cases and were responsible for genetic registration and anti-Jewish miscegenation (marriage laws).

Hereditarily Diseased

Those thought to have inherited defective mental capabilities.

Hereditary Healthy or Valuable

According to Nazi policy, only people who were hereditarily healthy or had 'hereditarily valuable traits' should reproduce. Hereditary health and racial purity were deemed essential for national unity.

Incurables

Patients considered beyond physical or mental repair and therefore targets for 'euthanasia'.

Inferior or Minor Value

Those thought to be mentally or physically imperfect.

Interim or Transit Institutions

These facilities served as collection and holding points for patients scheduled to be killed. The patients stayed in these institutions for only a few days and received very little food, before being taken to one of the killing centres like Hadamar.

Life Unworthy of Life

Inferior people to be killed.

People with Deficits

Those thought to have inherited defective mental capabilities.

Pieces / Portions

Term used by doctors to describe the patients to be 'euthanised' or killed.

Racial Hygiene

The theory that the state should control human breeding to improve the Aryan master race. The term is often used interchangeably with eugenics. Term coined by Dr. Alfred Ploetz, the father of the German eugenic movement, near the end of the 19th century .

Rhineland Bastards

Interracial German children, born to German women and black men, from the French African colonies during the Allied Rhineland occupation (1920-1930). These people were targeted for the T-4 program and sterilized in 1937.

Selection

The process of determining which patients were to live and which were to die.

Special Cases

Refers to mentally ill patients who were gassed after the euthanasia program was 'officially' suspended, but in reality the killings continued.

Sexual Negligence

Term applied predominantly to young girls and women who did not comply with the Nazi sexual mores of chastity and domesticity.

Special Treatment

Term used for killing Jews and other enemies of the Nazis. First used by doctors in the T-4 operation and later with the Einsatzgruppen (mobile death squads) during the Holocaust.

Statistic Measures

Term used to replace the word 'euthanasia' when the euthanasia program was 'officially' suspended in 1941, but in reality the killings continued.

T-4 Operation

Code name for the plan to kill mentally and physically disabled German citizens, as well as those deemed 'undesirable' to the Reich.

Transfer

The process of moving patients in large transports, from local institutions to killing centres, labour or concentration camps.

Useless Eaters

Term for people who ate but did not work, including the mentally and terminally ill. These Germans were targeted for the T-4 program and later the 14 f 13 program.

Work Shy

Designation for those who could not perform labour due to physical or mental disabilities.

4 f 13

Due to increased public awareness and pressure, Hitler 'officially' suspended the T-4 operation on December 10, 1941. In reality, the operation continued on under the code name 14 f 13 from 1941 to 1945. Victims were placed at the killing centres of Bernburg, Hadamar, Hartheim Castle and Sonnenstein. Dr. Frederick Mennecke was the chief SS doctor and coordinator of the program.

READING #5 (CHAPTER 5)

Collaborators at Hadamar

Administrators & Civil Servants

Maintained records, including lists of people in the killing institutions. Sent falsified death certificates to family members of the victims. The directors of mental hospitals and other social welfare-institutions denounced patients, foster-children and pupils of special schools to the courts, as 'hereditarily diseased'.

Ambulance Workers

Drove the ambulances that transported those selected for 'euthanasia' from their home institutions to killing centres like Hadamar.

Bus Drivers

Drove the grey buses with blackened windows, transporting the victims from hospitals and other institutions to killing centres like Hadamar.

Doctors & Psychiatrists

Issued death certificates with falsified causes of death. Conducted dissections and experiments on the corpses. Advanced their careers through research such as the effects of starvation. Many continued their careers afterwards in the concentration camps.

Legal Professionals

In 1934, Courts for Hereditary Health were established in each district. Physicians, psychiatrists, anthropologists and legal experts exercised 'jurisdiction' in these courts. They approved almost every application for sterilization. Although the killing operation was illegal according to Nazi law, the courts, with the exception of a few courageous, but unsuccessful judges - did not intervene.

Medical Experts

Sixty, so-called 'medical experts' marked the victims' registration forms with a - or + mark, without meeting or examining the patients. A red + mark indicated the decision to end the patient's life. The experts were paid according to the number of forms they examined. Between April and December 1940, one doctor gave his opinion on 15,000 registration forms.

Medical Staff / Orderlies

Forced the victims to undress and enter the gas chamber. Collected the clothes and belongings of victims. Removed the corpses.

Medical Researchers

Removed the brains and gold teeth of selected victims. Examined the brains of murdered disabled people for research purposes and used their findings to further their careers.

Members of the Public

Many institutions were opened to public tours in the 1930s. In 1935 over 2000 people, ranging from teachers to members of the SS, toured the human 'exhibits.'

Nurses

Were in charge of the inmates in the institutions. They assisted in the starvation and sterilization procedures.

Parents

With the 'children's euthanasia' program, many parents were surprisingly willing to rid themselves of their disabled children and the financial burden or the social stigma associated with such children. Some parents protested and managed to save their children.

Teachers

Teachers taught the curriculum, which included racial propaganda and the costs of caring for the disabled. One teacher Jacob Graf wrote many curricula and gave lectures to other teachers about the need to maintain racial purity.

Townpeople

The people of Hadamar saw the grey buses with their blackened windows entering the Hadamar institution. They saw the smoke from the crematoria chimneys. Residents confirm that they knew what was happening at Hadamar.

Workers

Burned the bodies of the victims in the crematoria and maintained the ovens.

READING #6 (CHAPTER 5)

Resistance

The German Bishop of Fulda refused to co-operate in the "extermination of life unworthy of life." He presented a petition to the Reich Minister of the Interior, regarding the transfers of patients to killing centres. On August 11, 1940, the Bishop sent an official note to the Reich Chancellery, protesting the killing of mentally ill individuals and the life-threatening experiments conducted on them.

On August 3, 1941, Bishop Clemens Graf von Galen (1878-1946) from Münster gave a powerful sermon against 'euthanasia' and authorized it to be printed and widely distributed. Von Galen called the euthanasia program murder and declared that he would bring a charge against those responsible for this crime on the grounds of an offence against section 211 (murder) of the German Penal Code. He ended the sermon with the words: "Do you, do I have the right to live only as long as we are productive, as long as others acknowledge that we are productive?" Because of von Galen's reputation, he was permitted to remain as bishop, but was placed under the constant surveillance of the Gestapo.

The killings in the mental hospitals produced unrest among local populations. A report shows that it took the residents of Hadamar only two months to find out about the gassings at the hospital. In spite of the secretive nature of the T-4 operation, relatives of the inmates became increasingly aware of the situation. Although some parents were surprisingly willing to rid themselves of the burden of a disabled child, perhaps for economic reasons or because of the social stigma, others were alarmed by the sudden deaths of their children in institutions. Relatives were told that their previously healthy family members had died suddenly and suspiciously of chronic diseases. In some cases, patients' deaths were attributed to appendicitis, when the patients had already had appendectomies. Some relatives or staff of the institutions succeeded in rescuing inmates.

Because of increased public awareness and pressure, Hitler was forced to 'officially' suspend the T-4 operation in December 1941. In reality, the operation continued from 1941 to 1945 under the new code name 14 f 13.

READING #7 (CHAPTER 6)

Eugenics in Canada

Eugenics influenced the social and political debate in Canada, during the first half of the 20th century. Like Britain and the United States, Canada saw the social ills of 'feeble-mindedness', venereal diseases, tuberculosis, divorce, alcoholism and labour unrest as evidence of the social and racial 'degeneration' of Canadian society. Many believed that Canada was threatened by the reproduction of the unfit in Canada and the immigration of the unfit to Canada. A wave of immigration at the turn of the century sparked a virulent mix of nativism, racism and anti-Semitism in Canada. The new sciences of psychology, experimental biology and eugenics suggested that scientific solutions existed for social ills. Eugenics offered a 'scientific' justification for racism and class prejudice.

The Alberta Sterilization Act was passed in 1928 - five years before similar legislation in Germany - and not repealed until 1972. Alberta sterilized 2,822 people in the 44 years that the law was in place. In 1930, the Eugenics Society of Canada was established to unify Canadian eugenicists.

In 1933, British Columbia became the second province to pass legislation permitting the sterilization of the mentally ill and retarded. The Act empowered the Eugenics Board consisting of a psychiatrist, a judge and a social worker to order the sterilization of any institutionalised inmate who "would be likely to beget or bear children who by reason of inheritance would have a tendency to serious mental disease or mental deficiency." The number of people sterilized is estimated at a few hundred. The exact numbers are impossible to determine since the files of the Eugenics Board were either lost or destroyed. The legislation was not repealed until 1973.

Eugenics had support across the political spectrum. It was supported by many women's groups, including the Alberta Women Farm Workers who believed that the majority of 'mental deviants' were not of Canadian stock. Amongst the strongest supporters of the movement were medical professionals, who believed that an understanding of heredity could improve public health. In citing the advantages of forced sterilization, the journal *The Canadian Doctor* published an article in January 1936 defending the economic benefits of Nazi Germany's sterilization policy.

There was no serious opposition to eugenics until the end of the 1930s, when sterilization legislation was proposed in Ontario. Even without such legislation, hundreds of sterilizations were carried out in Ontario until 1978. Eugenic support declined with the outbreak of World War II, increased government spending and concern for social welfare. Most countries distanced themselves from eugenics after the Holocaust and the defeat of Nazi Germany. It was only following the defeat of the two western provincial Social Credit governments in 1972, that sterilization legislation was removed from the statute books of Alberta and British Columbia.

READING #8 (CHAPTER 7)

The Genetic Debate

The study of genes and genetic technology is currently a major focus of science and medicine. Genetic technology makes it possible to treat and cure an increasing number of disabilities and disorders, however controversy surrounds its usage. Some see it as a useful technology that can benefit our health and society, while others claim that it is a modern form of eugenics and warn of its misuse. The current use of the word eugenics is based on individual choice rather than the old notions of race. At issue in the debate is gene therapy, genetic testing, cloning and stem cell research.

Support for Genetic Technology

Currently, gene therapy can treat a number of devastating genetic disorders. In the future, stem cell research may lead to advances in our understanding of cancer and birth defects. It could also be a more effective and humane form of drug testing and possibly lead to the development of cell therapies for things such as spinal cord injury, stroke, heart attack, burns and organ failure.

Stem cell research may help people at risk for genetically inherited diseases. Adult genetic testing can help people with genetic predispositions to diseases, such as breast cancer, make decisions about prevention strategies. Similarly, parents can genetically screen the foetus for possible genetic disabilities.

Human cloning could be used to produce offspring for infertile couples or allow for the replication of deceased loved ones. Cloning does not produce a perfect copy. A clone merely has the same genes as the father or mother. Produced in a different womb and growing up at a different time, the clone may be less similar than an identical twin. Animal cloning may lead to reliably produced livestock and to the creation of animals that produce drugs or have organs that are compatible for human use.

Opposition to Genetic Technology

Currently, there is a significant gap between our ability to predict genetic diseases and our ability to treat these diseases. There is also a lack of knowledge about the long-term effects of genetic technology on patients and society. Like nuclear energy or pesticides, there may be negative effects in addition to the benefits.

This technology might eventually be applied to non-disease related genes (like height, intelligence or athleticism), which could lead to the creation of 'designer babies' or to discrimination against those with 'undesirable' traits. Disability advocates warn that the current quest to end disabilities will lead to increased discrimination against those living with a disability. Using genetic reproductive technologies mechanizes the process of procreation and may lead to the birth of individuals, whose uniqueness can no longer be attributed to nature but rather to parental selection. Embryos or foetuses should not be used or destroyed in the research process, as this decreases the value of individual human life.

READING #9 (CHAPTER 7)

Canadian Genetic Legislation

Genetic technologies have the potential to benefit society, but there are also risks associated with its use. Governments must balance these concerns when designing legislation to govern genetic technology and therapies. Canada, the United States and Britain are some of the leaders in genetic research and technology but their legislation is struggling to keep up with the rapidly changing science. Currently, the three countries allow genetic testing so long as it is accompanied with the opportunity for genetic counselling. As well, all permit somatic cell therapy and prohibit genetic engineering and reproductive cloning.

Canada Currently Prohibits:

- the creation of animal-animal hybrids and human-animal hybrids
- the creation of embryos for research purposes
- genetic alteration of embryos or germ cells
- the creation of pregnancy with genetically manipulated embryos
- reproductive cloning or somatic cell nuclear transfer

In Canada there is a bill before the Standing Committee on Health that is scheduled to be introduced in the year 2002 which will likely ban sex selection, human cloning, commercial surrogate motherhood, buying and selling of eggs and sperm and the removal of genetic material from a dead body.

The bill will probably permit disability selection to continue. This means that parents will continue to have the right to screen embryos before birth for genetic disabilities such as Down's syndrome.

GLOSSARY

Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act

The Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act was passed in 1928, five years before similar legislation in Germany. It was not repealed until 1972. Some of the people viewed as 'unfit' to bear children were alcoholics, epileptics, the poor and native peoples. Alberta sterilized 2,832 people in the 44 years that the law was in place.

Aryan

A term perverted by the Nazis to mean a so-called master race of pureblooded Germans. The Nazis considered Aryans superior to all other races. The Germans were the prime example of Aryan stock according to Nazi theory. Dutch, Flemish and Scandinavians were also considered Aryan. The idealized Aryan was blond, blue-eyed, tall and muscular. The term was also applied to non-Jewish Europeans, although Nazis viewed these people as having less worth than Nordics.

Asocials

Individuals considered as socially unfit including, criminals, juvenile delinquents, homosexuals, prostitutes, vagrants, 'work shy people', drug addicts and Roma (Gypsies). The Nazis believed asocial behaviour was biologically determined and was a result of intermarriage between different races. In the concentration camps asocials were identified by a black triangle on their clothing.

British Columbia Sexual Sterilization Act

In 1933, British Columbia passed the Sexual Sterilization Act, similar to the Alberta Sterilization Act, to sterilize women who were considered 'unfit' to bear children. It remained in effect for 40 years until its repeal in 1973.

Concentration Camps

The Nazis established prison camps shortly after assuming power in 1933 to hold and isolate political opponents and those considered to be 'racially' undesirable such as Jews and Gypsies. Most of the approximately 1800 camps were transit or labour camps. The first were Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen. After the occupation of Poland, extermination camps were established for mass murder at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, Chelmno and Majdanek.

Crematorium / Crematoria

Building at concentration camps that housed the ovens that burned murdered inmates.

Eugenics

The term meaning 'well born' was first used in England in 1883 by Francis Galton and embraced by other countries including the United States, Canada and Germany. The Nazi term 'racial hygiene' was often used interchangeably with eugenics. The Nazis distorted the idea of human improvement to mean that 'superior races' (Aryan and Nordic) should be encouraged and inferior races (Slavs) and racial enemies (Jews and Roma) should be eliminated.

Euthanasia

Term meaning a good death. Currently used to mean a consensual, mercy killing.

Euthanasia Program (T-4)

Hitler issued a decree in October 1939, backdated to September 1, 1939, establishing the euthanasia program, as part of the T-4 operation. The murder of euthanasia victims by carbon monoxide gassing took place in former mental institutions or nursing homes: Brandenburg, Bernburg, Sonnenstein, Grafeneck and Hadamar. Children were usually murdered by lethal injection. The decision to kill Jews

in the T-4 program came in spring 1940. The operation was later used as the prototype for the mass gassings at the extermination camps.

Final Solution

The Nazi code name for the plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe. Intended as a resolution to what the Nazis called the 'Jewish Question'. The plan was formalized at the Wannsee Conference, held in a suburb of Berlin in January 1942.

Forced Labourers

People forced to work under conditions resembling imprisonment, under extremely harsh living conditions or part of the Nazi policy of "extermination through work."

Galen, Bishop

Although Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen was an early supporter of Nazi nationalism, he tried to stop the Nazi euthanasia program by publicly denouncing it in 1941. The Nazis falsely linked him to the July 1944 assassination attempt on Hitler's life and imprisoned him in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

Hadamar

Killing centre in central Germany used as part of the euthanasia program. Originally a psychiatric hospital, founded in 1901 for alcoholism, Hadamar was renamed the State Psychiatric Hospital in 1933. From 1944 to 1945, the facility was used to murder sick slave labourers. Between 1941 and 1945, 11,000 people were murdered. American troops liberated it in March 1945. In October 1945, several staff members were tried for murder. Convictions were handed down for seven defendants; three were executed.

Hitler, Adolf (1889-1945)

Founder of the German Nazi Party and its leader from 1919 until 1945. Hitler became Chancellor of the Third Reich from 1933-45. He outlined his plans for territorial conquest and expressed his hatred for Jews in his autobiography *Mein Kampf* written in 1923. On January 30, 1942 Hitler set in motion the destruction and murder of six million Jews. He committed suicide in an underground bunker in Berlin on April 30, 1945.

Holocaust

The mass murder of nearly 6 million European Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II. Many individuals and groups were persecuted and suffered during the Holocaust, but only the Jews were targeted for total 'extermination'. The term literally means a burnt sacrifice, or sacred burning. The biblical word 'Shoah', meaning catastrophe, is the Hebrew equivalent.

Lebensborn Program

In 1935, the Lebensborn program was established to breed Aryan children, using women who were considered to be racially and biologically precious and who were expected to give birth to children of the same quality. These selected women were encouraged to become pregnant by SS men in order to improve the race. Over 7,000 children were born in Lebensborn homes. Those who were born sick or disabled were immediately 'selected' and killed.

Master Race Theory

The theory held by Hitler and the Nazi party, based on a distorted view of Social Darwinism. It promoted the superiority of the Aryan race over all other races. The 'Master' Aryan race was seen, ideally, as made up of white, blond haired, blue-eyed individuals and was seen as destined to rule over all

other races. According to this theory Jews were considered as 'sub-human'.

Mein Kampf

Adolf Hitler's autobiography and philosophical /political creed, written in 1924 with the aid of his secretary, Rudolf Hess, in Landsberg Prison. It spelled out his plans for the Jews.

Nazi

A member of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) founded in 1919 and brought to power in 1933 under Adolf Hitler.

Nuremberg Racial Laws

Anti-Jewish legislation announced during the Nazi party rally in Nuremberg, Germany on September 15, 1935. The first of many decrees, which stripped Jews of their German citizenship, defined a Jew according to the number of Jewish grandparents, prohibited marriages and sexual relations between Jews and Germans, prohibited the hiring of German maids under the age of forty-five by Jews and forbade Jews to raise the German flag.

Propaganda

Generally defined as the opinion expressed for the purpose of influencing the actions of individuals or groups. The Nazis exploited popular mass media as part of their propaganda campaign from 1933-1945.

Race

A term, historically used to describe a group of people distinguishable from others, based on shared physiological traits. The concept stems from the idea that the human species can be subdivided into biologically distinct groups. Scientists have found no genetic basis to the concept of race. However, race persists as a powerful social and cultural concept used to categorize people based on perceived differences in physical appearance and behaviour.

Racial State

The primary objective of the Nazis was to have a racially organised state and society. They believed that inferior races, particularly Jews, were a threat to Aryan culture, beauty and order. German blood purity had to be protected from alien races and Jews had to be exterminated through the Final Solution.

Racism

The mistreatment of a group of people on the basis of race, colour, religion, national origin, place of origin or ancestry. Also refers to an unreasoning hatred or prejudice. Expressions of racism include ethnic slurs, discrimination, intimidation and physical violence.

SS

Abbreviation for Schutzstaffel (Defence Protective Units), usually written with two lightning symbols. Initially established as Hitler's personal bodyguards, the SS was transformed into a terrorist organization by Heinrich Himmler. The organization is best known for its role in the destruction of European Jewry.

Slave Labourers

People forced to work in concentration camps, ghettos or other places of confinement under conditions of hardship.

Social Darwinism

A social theory, that applied Charles Darwin's theory, about the struggle for survival to human society. Ernst Haeckel, a German biologist, ranked the Aryans as 'fit', superior and at the pinnacle of the racial pyramid, while Jews, 'the unfit', were at the bottom. The Nazis combined this theory with the concept of eugenics in their attempt to breed a super race of Aryans.

Sterilization

A surgical procedure that prevents reproduction by the total or partial removal of the reproductive organs.

T-4 Operation

Code name for the plan to kill mentally ill and physically disabled German citizens, as well as those deemed 'undesirable' to the Third Reich. The "Law for the Prevention of Progeny of Sufferers from Hereditary Diseases" was passed on July 14, 1933 and implemented six months later. Between 200,000 and 350,000 German citizens were sterilized. T-4 refers to the address of the operation's headquarters at Tiergartenstrasse 4.

Third Reich

Term given by Hitler to his regime (1933-1945), which was to last "a thousand years" but lasted only twelve. The first Reich was the Holy Roman Empire; the second was the Kaiser Reich.

HADAMAR TIMELINE

1883

British scientist, Francis Galton coined the term 'eugenics'. Galton believed that society would be improved if hereditarily favourable families had more children, while genetically inferior families were discouraged from reproducing.

1894

Social Darwinist Alfred Ploetz describes selective breeding of human beings as 'racial hygiene'.

1905

In Germany the International Society for Racial Hygiene is founded to advance theories of Social Darwinism and selective breeding of human beings.

1907

The English Eugenics Education Association is founded.

1910

British Home Secretary Winston Churchill, inspired by eugenics theories of Sir Frances Galton, urges that some 100,000 degenerate British citizens be sterilized or interned in labour camps.

1907-1941

Approximately 38,000 mentally disabled men and women are sterilized in American mental institutions.

1921

The standard eugenics textbook "The Principles of Human Hereditary and Racial Hygiene" by Erwin Baur, Eugen Fischer and Fritz Lenz is published in Germany. Hitler bases his racist and eugenic theories in *Mein Kampf* on large parts of this book.

1925

Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is published.

1927, January 21

The Law for the Prevention of Venereal Disease is passed in Germany, an important achievement for the social hygiene movement.

1928 - 1972

The Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act is passed, five years before similar legislation in Germany. Some of the people viewed as 'unfit' to bear children are alcoholics, epileptics, the poor and native peoples. It is repealed in 1972 after 2,832 people are sterilized.

1929

The National Socialists German Physicians League, in support of the eugenics movement is founded in Germany

1933 - 1973

British Columbia passes the Sexual Sterilization Act, similar to the Alberta Sterilization Act, to sterilize women who were considered 'unfit' to bear children. It is repealed in 1973.

1933

Dachau, the first concentration camp, is established near Munich. The first inmates were political opponents of the Nazi regime.

January 3

President von Hindenburg appoints Hitler Chancellor of the Reich.

April 4

Law for the Restitution of the Civil Servants' Status ordering the exclusion of 'non-Aryans' and "enemies of the state" from civil service.

March - April

Purge of Jewish and socialist physicians by SA storm troopers in all state hospitals and public health institutions.

June 1

Germany introduces the Law for the Reduction of Unemployment, which provides for marriage loans and other incentives to genetically 'fit' Germans.

July 14

"Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Disease" which allows for the sterilization of 'unfit' parents, patients with hereditary epilepsy, schizophrenia, manic-depressive illness, feeble-mindedness and severe alcoholism. It also allows for the 'euthanasia' of 'useless eaters' and the 'defective'. The Government terms these people *lebensunwertes Leben* - Life Unworthy of Life. The American Eugenics Society endorses the Law.

November 24

The German Law Against Dangerous and Habitual Criminals allows for the compulsory sterilization (castration) of 'hereditary' criminals.

1935

September 15

Nuremberg "Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour", which establishes criteria for defining Jews, prohibits marriages between Jews and 'Aryans' and limits other civil rights of Jews.

October 18

The sterilization law is extended to prohibit marriages between 'hereditary ill' and 'healthy' people.

1936

February 5

Decree by the Ministry of the Interior setting up a system of records on hereditary-biological data for patients in mental hospitals.

November

Psychiatrist Robert Ritter begins working on the racial classification of the Gypsies in the Section for Research on Race-Hygiene and Population Biology in the National Department of Health in Berlin.

1938

Spring

Sterilization of black children of French-African occupation soldiers, the so-called "Rhineland Bastards," is carried out on the basis of 'expert' reports.

September 30

Jewish physicians lose their licenses.

1938

November 9-10

Kristallnacht, a state-sanctioned pogrom against Jews throughout Germany.

1939

September 1

World War II begins with the German invasion on Poland. Hitler's *Enabling Act* for 'euthanasia', the 'mercy killing' of mental patients, is backdated to the same date. Hitler orders that selected physicians be authorized to administer 'mercy deaths' to incurably ill or undesirable German citizens. No legal justification for the killing is necessary.

October

Questionnaires are distributed to mental hospitals. Using these questionnaires, leading psychiatrists decide which patients are to be subjected to 'mercy killing'.

1940

January

Six 'euthanasia' centres are set up in Germany to murder the mentally ill, physically disabled and the handicapped. The killing of mental patients using gas begins in a number of selected hospitals. Shooting of mental patients is carried out in occupied Poland. By August 1941, about 70,000 people are murdered.

July

Bishop Theophil Wurm, head of the Provincial Lutheran Church at Württemberg, Germany objects to the euthanasia killings at nearby Grafeneck Institution in the first of many letters sent to German Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick.

December

The Vatican condemns Nazi 'mercy killings' of 'unfit' Aryans as "contrary to both natural and divine law."

1940

August

Due to public protests by Catholic Bishop von Galen and other priests, Hitler suspends the use of gas to murder mental patients in the euthanasia program; however the program continues unofficially on a decentralized basis.

1942

January 20

Wannsee conference, where SS leaders and government officials discuss details the "final solution of the Jewish question." The deportation and the killing of the European Jews have already begun.

1943

May 30

Joseph Mengele becomes the camp doctor at Auschwitz, where he carries out research, under von Verschuer's supervision.

1944

March 9

Neuropathologist Julius Hallervorden reports receiving 697 brains for research from patients killed at Brandenburg Hospital.

Summer

Mengele has large quantities of scientific material sent from Auschwitz to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Hereditary and Eugenics in Berlin.

1945

May 8

Surrender of Germany, end of World War II in Europe.

December 9, 1946 - July 19, 1947

Trial of the First U.S. Military Court in Nuremberg against 23 physicians, SS officers and administrators responsible for human experiments in concentration camps and research institutes as well as for the euthanasia killings (Nuremberg Doctors Trial).

BOOKS

Recommended for Teachers or Senior Secondary Students

Biesold, Horst. *Crying Hands: Eugenics and Deaf People in Nazi Germany*. (London 1999).

Burleigh, Michael and Wolfgang Wipperman. *The Racial State: Germany, 1939-1945*. (London 1991).

Gallagher, Hugh G. *By Trust Betrayed: Patients, Physicians and the License to Kill in the Third Reich*. (New York, 1990).

Lifton, Robert J. *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*. (New York, 1986).

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Muller-Hill, Benno. *Murderous Science: Elimination by Scientific Selection of Jews, Gypsies and Others; Germany 1933-1945*. (Oxford, 1988).

Proctor, Robert. *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis*. (Cambridge 1988).

Pross, Christian and Gotz Aly. *The Value of the Human Being: Medicine in Germany, 1918-1945*. (Berlin 1991).

Weindling, Paul. *Health, Race and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism 1870-1945*. (Cambridge 1989).

Cass, Frank. *The Journal of Holocaust Education*. (London 1999).

VIDEOS

Selling Murder

Opens at Hadamar in 1991 at a commemorative event marking the events of the euthanasia program at Hadamar. Includes excerpts of Nazi killing films, with degrading depictions of patients, deemed to be 'hereditarily ill'. The second part of the video, features a survivor of Hadamar, revisiting the site to which she had been deported as a child. Residents of the town of Hadamar explain that they were aware of the gassings at the institution. Also featured is Bishop Galen's opposition to the German euthanasia program. In two parts, each approximately 25-30 minutes.

Time 50 min./ Colour/ B&W, Date 1991 Available at the VHEC

Shadow of the Reich: Nazi Medicine

This film depicts the role and culpability of the medical profession in the Nazi euthanasia campaign and the Final Solution. Briefly examines the history of eugenics, the scope of the eugenics movement around the world and the German-American theoretical and monetary connection through eugenics. It explains the Nazi sterilization policy, which was widely praised in the United States and was supported by medical professionals in both countries. It also explains the euthanasia or T-4 campaign in Germany. The film establishes the link between eugenics, the Nazi 'Master Race theory' and the Final Solution as well as the symbiotic relationship between the medical profession in Germany and the Nazi party. It depicts the medical profession's role in the extermination and concentration camps through implementation of the mass murder of 'undesirables' and inhumane medical experimentation. The film concludes with a look at the post-war physician trials and a discussion of the medical professions culpability.

Time 47min./Colour/ B&W, Date 1997 Available at the VHEC

The Sterilization of Leilani Muir

Unbeknownst, Leilani Muir had been sexually sterilized at the age of 14, by an Act of the Alberta government. The film entwines her personal search for justice with the background story of eugenics, a respected 'science' during the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1928, the Alberta government, supported by some of society's most prominent members, passed the Sterilization Act. This preceded similar legislation in Nazi Germany by five years. By the time the Act was repealed in 1972, the lives of nearly 3,000 individuals were irreparably changed. Included in the wide net of people considered 'unfit' to bear children were new immigrants, alcoholics, epileptics, unwed mothers, poor and native people. Includes footage from the Nazi propaganda film *Genetically Diseased*.

Time 46min./ Colour/ B&W, Date 1996 Available at the VHEC

The Nazis: A Warning From History / Tape 2 - Chaos and Consent

Second tape of the critically acclaimed BBC series. Begins with a look at the discontent in Germany in the wake of the First World War and follows the story through the 1920s and ends with Adolf Hitler becoming chancellor in 1933. Good overview of the political turmoil of the Weimar years and the mistakes made by conservative elements, such as the notion that they could 'tame' Hitler. H

Time 45 min./ Colour/ B&W, Date 1996 Available at the VHEC

POSTERS

Wiesenthal Poster Set : #13 - Deadly Philosophy: Racial Purity

Description

"At the core of the Nazi ideology was a deadly vision of a racially pure society: a vicious form of social, genetic and population planning that eliminated every individual not fitting its narrow definition of perfection." This poster includes an illustration of Nazi racial propaganda in the form of a pamphlet cover. It also depicts Nazi photographs of a gypsy mother and child, the transport of those deemed by the Nazis as 'racially impure', the selection of 'the physically defective' upon arrival at the Birkenau concentration camp and a Nazi school demonstration of 'Aryan features'.

Available at the VHEC

WEBSITES

Holocaust Education Foundation

www.holocaust-trc.org

Go to *Lesson Plans and Curricula* and scroll down to:

1. Faces of Courage: Children Who Resisted
2. Hitler's Unwanted Children

Image Archive on the American Eugenics Movement

<http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics>

The Mentally and Physically Handicapped: Victims of the Nazi Era

<http://www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators>

Go to *Teaching Materials and Resources* and scroll down to:

1. Victims of the Nazi Era, 1933-1945
2. Click on Handicapped

