Assigned Reading


PROCTOR, Robert, Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1988): Especially chapters 1-5, 7 and 9. The whole book is worth reading, however, so I would suggest you try to get through it all if you can.

PAUL, Diane. Controlling Human Heredity, 1865-Present (Atlantic Highlands, N.J., Humanities Press, 1995): Chapter 5-7. This is a good summary, but I would give the Proctor book higher priority if you are crunched for time


Additional Reading (optional)


BLACK, Edwin. War Against the Weak. Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create A Master Race (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows Press, 2003). An interesting book with lots of good information. However, Black makes the questionable claim that the Nazis got all their eugenic ideas from the U.S., in some sense disregarding their own earlier eugenics movement from 1907-1933.

K’UHL, Stefan. The Nazi Connection. Eugenics, American Racism and German National Socialism (New York: oxford University Press, 1994). Studies how the Nazis used already-existing American eugenics work, and how American eugenics admired what the Nazis were doing.


UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM, Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2004). A handsomely produced book with a large number of outstanding illustrations; it was produced for the exhibit by the same name the Holocaust Museum, opening in 2004, and currently in Dresden.


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**General Questions for Discussion**

1. As you read the Proctor book, try to determine how groups are targeted as "inferior". How is "inferior" defined? What is the socio-economic position of those deemed "inferior"? What are the more broad-scale social and economic problems Germany faced at the time the Nazis rose to power? What kind of "scientific" data did Nazis collect to support eugenic and racial hygiene programs?

2. How might you compare the economic and social conditions in Weimar Germany to those in the United States about the same time? What factors in the two places might have given rise to eugenics?

3. It is often said "How could the German people let something like Nazi genocide take place?" How might you respond to that statement?

4. What role did German scientists and doctors (especially the non-Jewish ones who stayed on) play in the acceptance (or rejection) of eugenics and race hygiene?

5. What sort of resistance was there to eugenics during the Nazi period? From whom did that resistance come?

6. Is eugenics an ideology only for reactionaries and members of the political right? How could members of the political left accept eugenics?

7. Is any decision to control reproduction eugenics? How broad should the definition of what constitutes eugenics be?

**Reports**


2. Biology and the Roots of Nazism [Reference: Stein article, “Biological Science and the Roots of Nazism”]: Chandrika Christie