

Book Reviews

THE NAZI CONNECTION: EUGENICS, AMERICAN RACISM, AND GERMAN NATIONAL SOCIALISM. By Stefan Kühl. New York: Oxford University Press. 1994. 166 pp. ISBN 0-19-508260-5. \$22.00 (cloth).

The very existence of the concept of race derives from the circumstances of the European "discovery" and colonization of the New World. If this is still poorly understood, the extent to which the western hemisphere's condition of imposed "racial" inequality continued to shape the European outlook is even less appreciated. The role of the New World in creating the concept in the first place still awaits full treatment, but its contributions to the "racial" ideology and practice of the Old has been the focus of a series of exemplary studies over the last some years. Stefan Kühl's *The Nazi Connection* can claim a place right at the top of this distinguished list, and it is a work that everyone who deals with "racial" anthropology in any way whatever will certainly want to read.

How many know, for example, that the "racial" ideology expressed in Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and put into practice with lethal consequences by Nazi Germany had components with "made-in-America" stamps on them? Kühl provides the documentation for this in overwhelming fashion. The compulsory sterilization law enacted within six months of the Nazi take-over in 1933 was based on the wording of the Model Sterilization Law that was worked up by Harry Hamilton Laughlin, assistant director since 1910 of the Eugenics Record Office under C.B. Davenport at Cold Spring Harbor. Davenport, author of works purporting to show that pellagra, epilepsy, "antisocial" behavior, and other such things are inherited, was one of the founding stalwarts of the eugenics movement in America.

Laughlin, like Davenport, was "utterly humorless and rigid" and, along with his good friend Madison Grant, an active collaborator in the promotion of eugenics. Grant's

book, *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916), was an unacknowledged paraphrase of the views of Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and William Z. Ripley, and a paean to "Nordic" (= "Aryan" = "Teutonic") "racial" superiority. At the same time, Grant represented an equally powerful commitment to anti-Semitism. As Kühl was able to uncover, the German translation of his book earned Grant a personal letter of thanks from Adolf Hitler himself.

In 1924, Laughlin testified before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization producing reams of "biological" data amassed by the Eugenics Record Office to "prove" the genetic inferiority of central and southern Europeans and Jews. The result was the framing of the Johnson Immigration Act that determined the percentage by "ethnic" origin of those who were allowed to immigrate to the United States for the next 40 years. Calvin Coolidge signed it in 1924 with the self-satisfied declaration that "America must be kept American," and it was regarded as a model to be emulated by both the Germans of the Weimar Republic and the Nazis who were to replace that regime less than a decade later. Hitler himself mentioned it with favor in *Mein Kampf*.

Not only did America provide articulated models for the incorporation of a "racial" component in governmental regulations controlling reproduction and immigration, but America also provided a healthy infusion of money to a Germany that was anxious to follow America's lead. After the enactment of the U.S. Immigration Act, the Rockefeller Foundation provided hundreds of thousands of dollars for the construction of buildings and the support of research at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes in Berlin. Although Rockefeller documents did not favor the term, the work in Germany that was supported by Rockefeller funds was explicitly of a eugenic sort—"racial hygiene" being

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the preferred designation. These became increasingly focused on matters of "race," especially what was referred to as the Jewish "question," or the Jewish "problem." With Rockefeller help, the building of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Eugenics, and Human Heredity was opened in 1927 under the directorship of Eugen Fischer. The inaugural ceremony featured a speech by C.B. Davenport. As late as 1942, a visiting American geneticist, T.U.H. Ellinger, was impressed by the "amazing amount of unbiased information" collected by Fischer's Institute on the "physical and psychological defectiveness of Jews" (p. 60).

One of the most interesting connections explored by the book is the continuing thread of influence manifested by the Pioneer Fund, noted recently especially for its support of such figures as Arthur R. Jensen and J. Philippe Rushton. It was initiated in 1937 by a group that prominently included none other than that convinced eugenic enthusiast and bigot, Harry H. Laughlin. Madison Grant was also a member of that group, although Kühl does not mention it. At that time, it supported Nazi propaganda in the United States with a particular focus on the supposed susceptibility of Jews to mental retardation and moral deviancy. Kühl traces the continuity of its support after the war and notes that the list of recent "recipients of Pioneer Fund grants reads partly like a 'Who's Who' of scientific and political racism in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Ireland" (p. 9).

Kühl's little volume is a most remarkable production. An interested reader can go through it easily enough in a single evening. On the other hand, however, it took me a whole month of steady mining to get a handle on the documentation amassed in its support. Kühl's efforts at covering the relevant writings are truly prodigious. Not only has he read just about everything published, but he has also gotten into the archives of notes and letters of all the major figures involved both in Germany and the United States, and he has ferreted out the relevant unpublished doctoral dissertations on both sides of the Atlantic. Inevitably there are a few minor slips (Gosney was Ezra and not

Eugene; Deull should be Duell), and there is an occasional Germanic placement of "already" and "also," but on the whole it is both scrupulously accurate and easily readable.

The biologically oriented will note the absence of any consideration of the horrendous errors in basic scientific procedure and quantification represented in the works of figures such as Davenport and Fischer. That, however, is something that the readers of the AJPA should be able to provide for themselves. What Kühl has done is to give us the social and historical framework that is the province of the sociologists and historians that he represents. He has done this with a clarity and sophistication that makes his material painlessly accessible.

I want to conclude this review with a brief consideration of the kind of sophistication that would almost certainly have been missed if this study had been done by someone whose background was chiefly in the aspects of biological anthropology represented. The equivocal figure of Eugen Fischer will serve to illustrate. Fischer was a Nazi Party member, and Kühl documents his involvement in supporting Nazi claims for the superiority of the "Nordic race" and the "solution" of the Jewish "question" (p. 60, 93). On the other hand, Kühl is able to note that the Nazi state was not a fully totalitarian entity when it began. While Fischer became Rector of the University of Berlin six months after the Nazis gained power, he did so in opposition to the official Nazi candidate, and he only joined the Party six months before he retired in the early 1940s. In fact, as Kühl noted, Fischer was a hold-over from the ethos of the Weimar Republic which was the particular focus of Nazi political denigrations and, as a conservative Catholic, he was held in suspicion by the Nazi regime.

I do not say this to make excuses for the despicable, dyed-in-the-wool racism that is so blatantly evident in Fischer's career, but to show that there were currents of complexity in the larger picture that often get left out by so many who look back at that horrendous time and perceive it in stereotypic simplicity. Although the text is not long, it is able to present many such complicated mat-

ters with a clarity that is quite remarkable. With more than one-third of the book devoted to documentation, it is a thoroughly satisfying representation of scholarship at its best. We still live with surviving pieces of the ignoble themes depicted, and it is gratifying to know that there is a book like this to

help us understand the roots and connections of that legacy.

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THE LEMURS' LEGACY: THE EVOLUTION OF POWER, SEX, AND LOVE. By Robert J. Russell. New York: Tarcher/Putnam. 1993. 274 pp. ISBN 0-87477-714-3. \$23.95 (cloth).

Russell believes that by looking at primate fossils, anatomy and biochemistry, and behavior, we can build the syntheses and explanatory theories for the biological explanation of human behavior. According to Russell, this synthesis begins with the earliest primates, the lemurs. The first five chapters include basic material on evolutionary theory, genetics, and a review of primate evolution and taxonomy, setting the stage for his targeted popular audience. In Chapter 6, Russell reviews the behavior and biology of shrews, concluding that these tiny mammals are quite unlike our primate ancestors.

The real roots of human behavior began with the first lemurs and more precisely, according to Russell, with a mouse lemur-like ancestor. "Their story offers a glimpse at the beginnings of human social behavior, and the tangled roots of power, sex and love" (p. 101). From the mouse lemur, Russell believes, humans inherited mother-daughter bonds, the matrilineage ("the stable base of primate social groups. Including . . . our own." [p. 117]), and a number of gender differences in behavior, including the evolutionary strategy for males to impregnate as many females as possible and for females to choose *the* male with the best possible genes for survival.

Young mouse lemur females remain with their mothers, whereas young males, "awash in androgynous hormones" (p. 110), travel through the forest alone or in small groups, finally settling in regions peripheral

to female ranges. Females (human and mouse lemur) are by nature timid and stay close to home and males are adventurous and risk-taking. Of the few males that survive to adulthood, the females choose to mate with those best fit, while males attempt to mate with anybody. A few of these males become old, fat, docile, and unaggressive ("grandfatherly, Sir John Falstaffs" [p. 116]). These are allowed to remain in female nesting groups. Russell asserts, "A female's preference for a mellow male companion is characteristic of almost all primates studied so far. A low level of male aggression appears crucial to sustaining a male-female bond" (pp. 116-117).

There are major problems with Russell's scenario, but I will only discuss two of these. First, Russell's view of mouse lemur behavior does not match that of published reports. Females do sleep in nesting groups but whether daughters remain in these groups remains to be seen. Fully adult males share home ranges with females and young. Possibly old and injured males are peripheralized; these males generally weigh less than prime males. Finally, there are no published accounts of wild mouse lemur mating patterns.

Second, many of Russell's conclusions are contradictory or wrong. To Russell, males are inherently more adventurous, exploratory, aggressive, and "macho." On the other hand, the mouse lemur female's "preference for nonaggressive males was born in the jungles . . . more than 50 million years ago" (p. 117). After 50 million years of selective mating, one would think that macho genes would have disappeared. Furthermore, according to Russell, although the mouse lemur mother-daughter bond leads to an an-