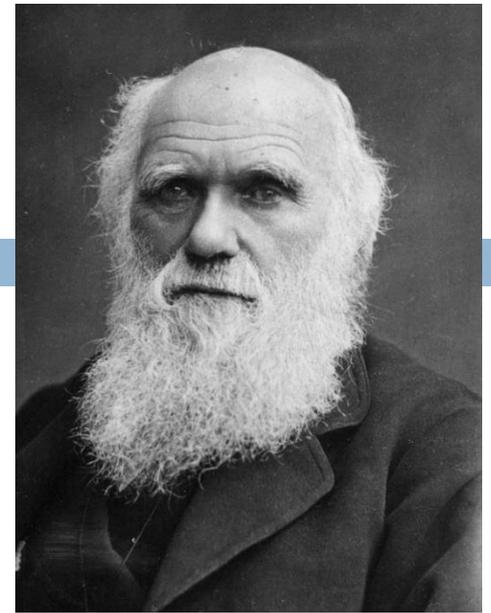




RACIAL IMPERFECTION

The Murder of the Handicapped and Disabled

Social Darwinism



- Charles Darwin (1809-1882)
 - “survival of the fittest”
 - “natural selection”
- “Social Darwinism” = application of evolutionary theory to social theory
- Treatment of the disabled, prior to Nazis?
 - Middle Ages / Early Modern Europe
 - “Pseudo-science” of the 19th century
 - Example: Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909)

The Eugenics Movement

- Eugenics = belief that society can improve its genetic makeup
- United States = model for the Nazis?
- All major European states had programs . . .
 - ▣ 1921 = Second International Congress of Eugenics
- Importance of World War I
- Support from political Progressives

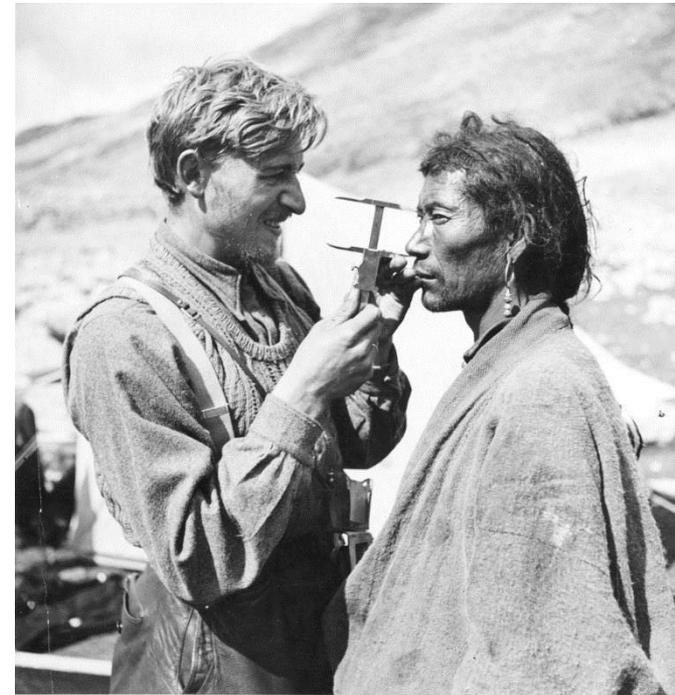


Hitler and the Disabled

- Hitler, in 1929:
 - “If Germany were to get a million children a year and were to remove 700-800,000 of the weakest people, the final result [would] be an increase in strength . . . As the result of our modern sentimental humanitarianism we are trying to maintain the weak at the expense of the healthy. It goes so far that a sense of charity . . . [ensures] that even cretins are able to procreate while healthy people refrain from doing so.”

Hitler and the Disabled

- 1933 = Nazis gain control, sympathetic to eugenics
 - Justified programs with cost-benefit analyses
 - Worked to de-fund state budgets working with the handicapped
 - Supported dehumanizing literature
 - “A Courageous Step” (1937)
 - Toured facilities



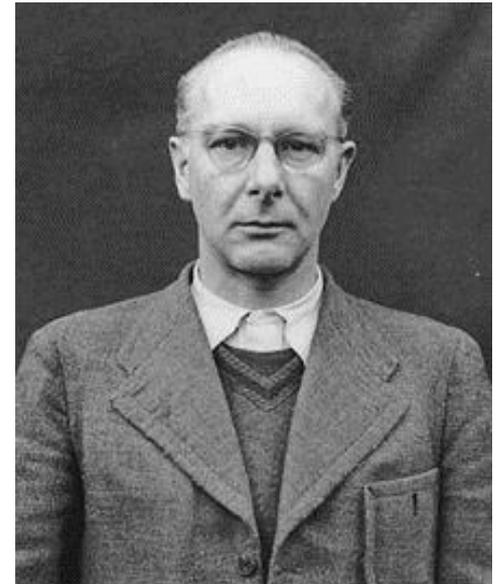
Sterilization Laws

- July 1933 = Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Progeny
 - Required sterilization
 - Created special courts
 - 400,000 Germans sterilized before 1939
 - Including 500 Roma
 - Lots of surgical problems/complications



The Decision to Kill

- After September 1939, euthanasia programs
 - ▣ Euthanasia = “mercy killing”
- No public law establishing programs
- Coordinated through Hitler’s chancellery
 - ▣ Philipp Bouhler (1899-1945)
 - ▣ Karl Brandt (1904-1948)
 - ▣ Viktor Brack (1904-1948)



The Decision to Kill

- Hitler, October 1939:
 - “Reichsleiter Bouhler and Dr. med. Brandt are charged with the responsibility to extend the powers of certain doctors, in such a way that, after the most careful assessment of their condition, those suffering from illness deemed to be incurable may be granted a mercy death.”

Children First

- Summer 1939 = parents request euthanasia
- August 1939 = Reich Committee for the Scientific Registration of Serious Hereditary and Congenital Illnesses
 - Required nurses/doctors to report children under 3
 - “+”s vs. “-”s
 - Never see a single patient, in person
- 1940 = pediatric wards established for euthanasia
- Most deaths from starvation, disease, luminal
- 1940-1945 = 5000-6000 children murdered

The T-4 Program

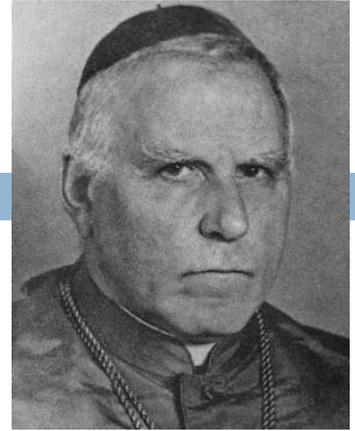
- October 1939 = seized some remote hospitals
- 21 September 1939 = local gov'ts required to send Nazi regime lists of institutions
 - ▣ Institutions required to file forms on patients
 - Sent 200,000 back to the Nazi gov't
- Patients bussed to killing centers
- Most killed with gas . . .



The First Gas Chambers

- January 1940 = first hospital starts murder
- Patients, in groups, are assembled . . .
 - ▣ Told to undress
 - ▣ Measured, weighed, photographed
 - ▣ Led to mock shower
 - ▣ Gassed with carbon monoxide
- Bodies removed, disposed of
 - ▣ All within 24 hours
- Nazis work hard to deceive families

Hitler's "Stop Order"



- Deceit did not work long . . .
- Locals, near the hospitals, weren't pleased
- Opposition from the Catholic Church
 - ▣ Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen (1878-1946)
- 24 August 1941 = Hitler's "stop order"
- T-4 continues, but without central coordination
 - ▣ Major exception: children's program

Final Tally

- We really don't know
- January 1940- August 1941 = 70,273 murdered
- September 1939-April 1940 = Polish disabled
 - ▣ Ca. 10,000 murdered
- Action 14f13 = murder of KZ prisoners
 - ▣ Ca. 20,000 murdered
- Site-specific: Mesertiz-Obrawalde
 - ▣ Mass grave: 18,232 people
 - ▣ 1944 = 3,948 admitted; 3,814 murdered