

Chapter 12:

Funding the Eugenics Movement

When Francis Galton coined the word eugenics and set out to promote the idea, he launched a movement based on an ideology. Different people at different times have been attracted by different aspects of eugenics — and have often rejected some pieces. There is no neat package, no central headquarters, no guiding Fuhrer. Rather, eugenics is a collection of ideas and projects about improving the human race by social control of human reproduction.

The eugenics movement has spread around the world, and into all facets of social life. No one in the United States (or anywhere in the developed world) today needs to look far to find eugenics: if you have trouble finding it in the mirror, you might look in your high school textbooks, and even in papers that you wrote yourself. It is in our newspapers (and all media), in the fiction we enjoy (and in much nonfiction), in government, at the mall, in your best friend's head. It is a way of thinking about life that some very smart people have been pushing for a century, with little or no resistance in the last 50 years.

To ask, then, about the funding for the movement is to pose a huge and tangled question. Nonetheless, we will wade into the thicket, not planning to get a complete answer, but expecting to get some idea of the size of the eugenics movement, some sense of the magnitude of the challenge we face.

The Robber Barons

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the United States changed dramatically, from a society based on agriculture to a society based on industry. The population did not shift from the farms to the cities right away, but the money and power shifted. Men no longer made huge fortunes based on tobacco or cotton plantations; instead, men made huge fortunes from steel, oil, railroads and banking. In 1934, Matthew Josephson stuck a label on the small handful of very aggressive and successful businessmen who amassed huge fortunes in that period, and the label stuck — the "robber barons." The eugenics movement was funded substantially by them (and other multimillionaires).

Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) made his fortune in railroads and then steel. In 1889, he wrote an essay about the life of a rich man, explaining his view that the successful should spend part of life acquiring wealth and then part of life distributing it wisely. And he tried to follow his own advice. Unfortunately, some of his money went to the eugenics movement.

The Carnegie Institution of Washington funded the Station for Experimental Evolution at Cold Spring Harbor on Long Island, beginning in 1904. This beautiful little outpost of biological research and study hosted the Eugenics Record Office (funded with Harriman money), beginning in 1910. C. B. Davenport was the director of the Cold Spring Harbor lab, and also the director of the Eugenics Record Office. Throughout the century, a number of universities and think-tanks have welcomed and groomed eugenics theorists and leaders. Individuals moved among these institutions as if there were revolving doors between them. The Carnegie Institution of Washington was among these eugenics think-tanks. For example, Robert S. Woodward was president of the Institution from 1904 to 1920, and helped to

plan the Second International Congress of Eugenics. Other eugenics activists who went through the Carnegie revolving door included Ellsworth Huntington, Michael Teitelbaum and Howard Newcombe.

In 1952, when the eugenics movement was reorganizing, the Carnegie Institution of Washington helped out. George W. Corner, representing the Carnegie Institution, argued that there was "a great and emergent need for which special weapons are required." The Institute helped to fund research on these "special weapons" — new birth control methods.

Edward Henry Harriman (1848-1909) made his fortune speculating on the stock market. In 1897, he took over the bankrupt Union Pacific Railroad, and then went on to build a railroad empire in the West. When he died, his wife inherited his money. The following year, she provided \$500,000 to found the Eugenics Record Office. The Eugenics Record Office was involved in the forced sterilization campaigns and the anti-immigration laws.

In 1932, the Third International Eugenics Congress was held in New York, at the Museum of Natural History. (The First International Eugenics Congress had been in 1912 in London, and the Second was in New York.) Mrs. E. H. Harriman was among the sponsors, along with Mrs. H. B. DuPont and Dr. J. Harvey Kellogg, among others.

John Davison Rockefeller (1839-1937) made his fortune in the oil industry. He founded Standard Oil, which at one time controlled 95 percent of the oil refining business in the country. He and his descendants gave away hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Rockefellers funded the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Germany, when eugenicists were preparing the way ideologically for what eventually became the world's most infamous slaughter, the Nazi holocaust. The Rockefeller Institute supported Alexis Carrel, who advocated the use of gas to get rid of the unwanted. John D. Rockefeller III founded the Population Council. Rockefeller money made Alfred Kinsey's sex research possible.

In the fall of 1993, the Rockefeller Archive Center Newsletter published "The Rockefeller Foundation, the Population Council and the Groundwork for New Population Policies" by John B. Sharpless of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Sharpless had been studying the files of the Rockefeller Foundation (RF), the records of the Population Council, and the personal papers of John D. Rockefeller III. He concluded that "Foundations and individual philanthropists are important in understanding the impressively quick and nearly unanimous change in attitudes and ideas about population that occurred during the 1960s." Such foundations funded the development of contraceptives, but also built the international network of experts who shaped the public debate, who shared "a core body of knowledge and a common mode of discourse" as well as a "shared set of assumptions about how population dynamics worked."

Sharpless wrote, "The power to accomplish this task was based on their relationship with the philanthropic community. In addition to the Rockefeller Foundation and the Population Council, other Foundations active in this area included the Ford Foundation, the Milbank Memorial Fund and, to a lesser extent, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Conservation Foundation."

Henry Ford (1863-1947) was a pioneer in the use of assembly lines, and mass-produced the first inexpensive automobile, the Model T. He and his son Edsel (1893-1943) established the Ford Foundation in 1936. For many years, this was the largest foundation in the world, giving away billions of dollars.

For many years, the Ford Foundation supported population control. In the 1970s, Michael Teitelbaum worked quietly on Capitol Hill to shape American population policy (without any public debate or scrutiny); he was supported for part of his career by the Ford Foundation. The foundation's impact on population policy is described at length in John Caldwell's 1986 book, *Limiting Population Growth and the Ford Foundation*.

John Harvey Kellogg, M.D. (1852-1945) figured out new ways to get Americans to eat the abundant grain of the Midwest. His best known product was corn flakes, a staple on American breakfast tables for generations.

Kellogg was on the Advisory Council of the American Eugenics Society from the early days. He founded the Race Betterment Foundation, and was a sponsor of three eugenics conferences.

Clarence J. Gamble used part of the fortune made by Procter & Gamble products (including soap) to finance birth control projects for the poor in many parts of the world. He helped to push through legislation in 1937 legalizing birth control in Puerto Rico; the law specified that birth control material was to be distributed by trained eugenicists. He supported birth control distribution in Appalachia and in rural Japan. A leader in Margaret Sanger's Birth Control Federation, he suggested that they set up a "Negro Project," using black clergy and physicians to promote birth control. He founded the Pathfinder Fund, to promote population control around the world.

In 1930 in New York, many of the wealthiest people in the world were members of the American Eugenics Society. They did not all provide funds for major eugenics initiatives, but their support certainly opened doors. It does not hurt an organization financially if its membership includes:

- J. P. Morgan, Jr., chairman, U. S. Steel, who handled British contracts in the United States for food and munitions during World War I;
- Mrs. Mary Duke Biddle, tobacco fortune heiress;
- Cleveland H. and Cleveland E. Dodge and their wives, who used some of the huge fortune that Phelps Dodge & Company made on copper mines and other metals to support eugenics;
- Robert Garrett, whose family had amassed a fortune through banking in Maryland and the B&O railroad, who helped finance two international eugenics congresses;
- Miss E. B. Scripps, whose wealth came from United Press (later UPI);
- Dorothy H. Brush, Planned Parenthood activist, whose wealth came from Charles Francis Brush (1849-1929), who invented the arc lamp for street lights and founded the Brush Electric Company;

- Margaret Sanger, who used the wealth of one of her husbands, Noah Slee, to promote her work. Slee made his fortune from the familiar household product, 3-in-One Oil.

Wealth Opens Doors to Wealth

Rich people generally don't get rich by being dumb. The people who funded the eugenics movement were smart enough to use their power and influence to develop additional sources of funding for their projects. Two huge sources of additional funds for eugenics are tax dollars and corporate donations.

Today, a large part of the eugenics movement is involved in population control, a form of negative eugenics. The funds that international bodies and national governments spend on population control stagger the imagination. A few examples follow.

From its beginning, the United Nations was a major battleground for population control. The Vatican and many Catholic countries resisted population control there, as did many Muslim nations. Still, the flow of funds from the United Nations for eugenics purposes has grown steadily.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) puts out an Inventory of Population Projects every year, which gives a quick view of programs and their financial support around the world. The inventory shows "multilateral" support from international bodies, "bilateral" support from one nation to another, and support from "non-governmental organizations," or NGOs.

To take one random example: in Egypt in 1988-89, there was support from three multilateral organizations. The World Bank had supported two projects over a period of years, with a cost of over \$45 million (costs split with the Egyptian government). UNFPA had provided support for eleven projects, expending over \$30 million. The World Health Organization (WHO) had provided approximately \$2.5 million over the previous 17 years.

Egypt received bilateral agency assistance from three nations. The United States provided \$25 million over a two-year period. Germany and Japan provided much smaller sums.

There were 17 NGOs providing funds for population assistance in Egypt that year. The NGOs are much more flexible than national governments; they can get funds approved faster than donor nations, and can work around laws in recipient nations. One clear example is the Pathfinder Fund in the United States, which provided funds for abortion equipment when the American government refused to do so, and provided the equipment in a nation where abortion was illegal (by saying that the suction devices were for "menstrual regulation). NGOs active in Egypt that year included:

- Association for Voluntary Surgical Sterilization (formerly the Human Betterment Foundation, founded by E. S. Gosney, a member of Advisory Council of the American Eugenics Society), which provided about \$125,000 for six sterilization projects;
- Family Planning International Assistance, which reported "a cumulative total of \$2,952,940 in family planning commodities [that is, condoms, Pills, IUDs, etc.] to 27 institutions in Egypt";
- International Planned Parenthood Federation, which spent \$588,500 in Egypt that year;

- John Snow, Inc, which was spending \$4.5 million over seven years to save children from diarrhea, plus another \$532,000 in one year to strengthen family planning programs;
- Pathfinder Fund, which was spending \$300,226 over two years helping to build or improve 258 family planning clinics;
- Population Council, which reported four projects in Egypt that year, including one on Norplant and two on IUDs, at a cost of \$59,000;
- Rockefeller Foundation, which was spending \$55,000 on two projects over several years to study Norplant and Pill usage.
In Kenya, to take another example, the same multilateral agencies provided population control funds that year (World Bank, UNFPA and WHO). Bilateral support came from the United States, Sweden, Norway, Britain, Finland, Germany and Canada. There were 22 NGOs funding population control in Kenya that year, including all the groups mentioned above.
In the years since the report used in these example, population funding has increased substantially, from all sources.

The major international population control funders are the World Bank and UNFPA. The leader among the national governments that have made a serious commitment to population control has been the United States, but Japan has been catching up. The Scandinavian nations have made the largest per capita contributions. The British and the Canadians are also large donors to population control.

Corporate Support

Each year, corporations in the United States make a long list of charitable donations. These donations are a way that the companies can share their wealth with the community, but they also get good public relations. When people watch a television program funded by an oil company, they don't automatically switch their gas purchases, but the company gets name recognition and good feelings that can generate more sales over time.

As a result, it is often possible to persuade companies that make controversial donations to stop it. So it would be a mistake to put out a list of companies that fund eugenics today; they may stop tomorrow, and the list would change. However, there are hundreds of companies on the list.

Drug companies that manufacture oral contraceptives and other birth control material are not likely to change their ways quickly. American corporations that make birth control Pills include American Home Products, Johnson & Johnson, Bristol Myers Squibb, Monsanto, Alza, Warner Lambert and Pharmacia-Upjohn. The products — both good and bad — of these huge companies are in every household in America. In fact, virtually every household in the nation buys their products every time they go shopping.

The drug companies have provided funds and lobbyists in Washington for eugenics-related work. But today, they are joined by biotechnology companies. The fastest growing companies in the nation are computer firms and biotechnology firms.

Dark Clouds on the Horizon

There may be huge sums of new money coming to the eugenics movement in the beginning of the 21st century. Three of the richest men in the world have indicated that they intend to use their wealth to improve the quality of life (for some).

Ted Turner became a billionaire by developing a television network, CNN. He is giving one billion dollars to the United Nations, doled out over ten years by his own foundation, and is steering a large portion of it to population control.

Warren Buffett has discussed plans for a foundation to distribute his money after he dies. The foundation is to focus on two issues: world peace and population control. His fortune in early 1999 was reported to be over \$30 billion and growing steadily.

Other billionaires have begun funding parts of the eugenics movement. Bill Gates, the richest man in the country, and George Soros, the financier, have started putting their money into population control projects.

The struggle over eugenics is a battle for minds and hearts, and can be won by telling the truth with courage and love. But it is prudent to assess the strengths of our opposition. They do have money and power.