

INSIDE
NAZI GERMANY

*Conformity, Opposition and
Racism in Everyday Life*

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translated by Richard Deveson



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- 1 Stadtbildstelle Essen.
- 2 'Resurrection', painting by Elk Eber. Cf. *Der Schulungsbrief*, published by Reichsorganisationsleiter der NSDAP, vol. 6, series 3, 1939. Sammlung Alte Synagoge, Essen.
- 3 Staatsarchiv München, Bestand Oberkohle. I am grateful to Klaus Tenfelde for kindly making this picture available. Stadtbildstelle Essen.
- 4 *Berliner Illustrierte*, no. 15, 13th April 1939, p. 583. Sammlung Alte Synagoge, Essen. Stadtbildstelle Essen.
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- 5 From Elly Rosemeyer-Beinhorn, *Mein Mann, der Rennfahrer. Der Lebensweg Bernd Rosemeyers*, Deutscher Verlag, Berlin, 1938, pp. 80f. Stadtbildstelle Essen.
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- 7 From Hans Roden, "Polizei greift ein". *Bilddokumente der Schutzpolizei*, Leipzig, 1934, p. 225. Sammlung Alte Synagoge, Essen.
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 Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, RW 58, Bd. 12111.

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Racialism as social policy

The violence and brutality of the National Socialists were not directed only against political dissidents or foreign countries: 'traitors' or the 'racially inferior'. Nor were the racial doctrines of National Socialism merely an unreal utopia fleshed out with biological absurdities – though they were not without their bizarre features. What should not be forgotten is that fascist racialism provided a model for a new order in society, a new internal alignment. Its basis was the racialist elimination of all elements that deviated from the norm: refractory youth, 'idlers', the 'asocial', prostitutes, homosexuals, the disabled, people who were incompetents or failures in their work. Nazi eugenics – that, is, the classification and selection of people on the basis of supposed genetic 'value' – was not confined only to sterilisation and euthanasia for the 'valueless' and the encouragement of fertility for the 'valuable'; it laid down criteria of assessment, categories of classification and norms of efficiency that were applicable to the population as a whole. The goals were 'people of German blood and Nordic race: four-square in body and soul';¹ social conformity; and 'German hard work':

Satisfactory performance or failure in work effort, or as regards incorporation into the national community, are often better measures of the total hereditary value of a kinship group [*Sippe*] than the results of brief medical investigation. They are therefore of particular value for investigating and assessing applicants for marriage loans, as indeed for all cases of eugenic assessment.

Such 'assessments' found their way not only into Nazi social policy but into day-to-day Gestapo procedures.

Whereas the persecutions of Jews and of those ideologically opposed to the NSDAP have long been on the record, post-war German society found it hard to bring itself to enquire into the wider aspects of Nazi social-Darwinist practice. Comparatively little is known about the use of euthanasia or about standard psychiatric procedures during the

Third Reich. Victims of compulsory sterilisation and homosexuals who were held in concentration camps generally received no reparations after the war. Refractory teenagers, the 'work-shy' and the 'asocial' continued to be socially ostracised, although people who regretted that there were no more concentration camps to put them in generally kept their mutterings private.

The National Socialist utopia of the *Volksgemeinschaft* had a double thrust: its 'internal' aim was to engineer the conversion of a society of fractured traditions, social classes and environments into an achievement-orientated community primed for self-sacrifice; its 'external' aim was to segregate and eventually 'eradicate' (*ausmerzen*) all those who, on real or imaginary grounds, could not be allowed entry into the *Volksgemeinschaft* – 'aliens', 'incurable' political opponents, the 'asocial' and the Jews.

What, then, was the relationship between National Socialism's generalised racialism and its anti-Semitism? The image of 'the Jew' as the root of all evil, 'pulling strings' behind the scenes, was an ideological synthesis of diffused anxieties about civilisation and separate, self-contradictory racist notions, all focused on to a political target. The very diversity of actual modern Jewish experience was taken to point to the existence of the mythical hate-figure of the essential 'Jew' lurking behind the most disparate surface appearances. The intellectual, culturally assimilated Jew stood for detestable modernity; the religious Orthodox Jew matched the traditional hate-image of Christian anti-Semitism; the economically successful Jew stood for 'money-grubbing capital' and liberalism; the Jewish socialist represented abhorrent 'Bolshevism' and 'Marxism'; the 'Eastern Jew' from the alien culture of the ghettos was a suitable target for the aggression and arrogance of the civilising and colonialist missions of the imperialist era. Unlike traditional anti-Semitism of a religious or nationalistic cast, the anti-Semitism of the NSDAP was thus directed not against selected characteristics of the Jews but against an abstract object, 'the Jew' as such: an artificial racist construct. This all-encompassing image entailed an all-encompassing 'final solution', for the very reason that the mythical target of 'the Jew' served to conceal the otherwise obvious fact that a racist interpretation of world problems bore little relation to reality. The ostracism and, later, annihilation of Jewry therefore stood at the head of the long list of measures for racial purification. The sheer rigidity of the machinery of destruction also helped the Nazis to deceive themselves that their pursuit of the fantasy of a 'new racial order' for Europe was proceeding in a systematic and efficient fashion. The more the Nazis' unmasking of racial enemies failed to deliver the promised concord of *Volksgemeinschaft* and the solution of society's real problems

and contradictions, the more radical and ruthless had to be the destructive pressure exerted against the 'community aliens'. The fact that the mass murders were kept secret does not gainsay this. They were the defining core of the Nazis' programme.

Since the fate of the Jews, who constituted the largest group among the victims of National Socialist racialist policies,² has been documented in extensive detail, we shall not provide a further account here. It is only recently, on the other hand, that historians and the public have turned their attention to the second major population group which the National Socialists proposed to exterminate in its entirety: the gypsies.³ The hate-image of the gypsies which the Nazis propagated fused two figures of Nazi demonology: the 'alien', whose culture is a source of mistrust and distaste; and the 'asocial', who refuses to submit to the values of work discipline and stable social relations. This labelling of deviant behaviour was made additionally ominous by the Nazis' racialism, according to which the causes of 'incurable' nonconformity were hereditary.

It is true that the gypsies were subjected to police surveillance and discriminated against in many ways before 1933, because of their different culture, their unwillingness to accept the work discipline of industrial society and their unsettled mode of life. The National Socialists at first merely continued this tradition, though with extra severity. A further level of proposed discrimination, however, began to become apparent in research publications in racial biology, a field given new respectability by National Socialism. An important role was played here by the former Tübingen neurologist Dr Robert Ritter. From 1936 onwards Ritter headed a so-called 'Establishment for Research in Hereditary Science' in Berlin, which, after various changes of name, became the 'Institute of Criminal Biology' and was merged during the war into Himmler's Head Office for Reich Security. Ritter's *idée fixe* was that a hereditary disposition towards criminality was produced by inter-breeding with 'blood' of 'criminal stock'. From the point of view of 'criminal biology', accordingly, there were basically three human groups: those of straightforwardly 'good type' (*gut Geartete*), those totally deficient as to 'type' (*Ungertete*), and a large intermediate group whose degree of educability and adaptability could be determined by 'expert' genetic opinion and 'pedagogic' practice.⁴ 'Gypsy half-castes', however, were clearly of 'inferior value' and a focus of criminality. (Ritter and Himmler had a higher opinion of the small number of gypsies of supposedly 'pure race'.) Being 'ineducable', 'gypsy half-castes' were not to be dealt with by the legal system, where the purpose of punitive measures was at least potentially remedial; they were 'biologically depraved' and as such were to be singled out for

biological 'eradication' by Himmler's police (which in the first instance meant sterilisation).

Ritter expounded these basic ideas in two studies of 1940 and 1941. He wrote:⁵

Primitive man does not change and cannot be changed. [. . .] Instead of punitive measures, suitable provision [should be] made [for] preventing the further emergence of primitive asocials and the offspring of criminal stock by way of segregation of the sexes or sterilisation. [. . .]

[. . .] As a rule [gypsy half-castes are] highly unstable, lacking in character, unpredictable, unreliable, as well as slothful or unsettled and hot-tempered: in short, work-shy and asocial.

The 'gypsy question', in Ritter's view,

can be considered solved only when the majority of the asocial and unproductive gypsies are placed in large work camps and the further reproduction of this half-caste population is terminated. Only then will future generations of the German people be freed of this burden.

The gypsy policy of the National Socialist state followed these general lines, albeit with some tactical time-lags. The semi-official commentary on the Nuremberg race laws by Globke and Stuckart in 1935 declared the gypsies, like the Jews, to be of 'alien type' (*Artfremde*); and coercive measures rapidly increased. In the crucial decree announcing 'Preventive Police Measures to Combat Crime' issued by the Prussian Minister of the Interior on 14th December 1937, gypsies were already listed among the escalating category of the 'asocial'.⁶

Such persons shall be deemed asocial who, through behaviour which is inimical to the community (but which need not be criminal), show that they are not prepared to be members of the community. The following are instances of asocial persons:

- (a) Persons who, by virtue of petty but repeated infringements of the law, are not prepared to comply with the order that is a fundamental condition of a National Socialist state (e.g. beggars, vagrants [sc. gypsies], prostitutes, drunkards, persons with contagious diseases, especially persons with sexually transmitted diseases who fail to adhere to the regulations of the health authorities).
- (b) Persons, regardless of any previous convictions, who evade the obligation to work and who are dependent on the public for their maintenance (e.g. the work-shy, work evaders, drunkards).

The use by the police of the powers of preventive arrest shall apply in the first instance to asocials with no fixed abode. Under no account shall political considerations play a part in determining whether a person is to be designated as asocial.

In the wave of mass arrests of the 'asocial' and 'work-shy' that ensued, gypsies were among those assigned to the concentration camps. A decree to 'Combat the Gypsy Nuisance' of 8th December 1938 provided for a further stepping-up of established police powers of arrest, and this was followed after the outbreak of war by the 'Custody Decree' of 17th October 1939, which stipulated the committal of all gypsies and gypsy half-castes to assembly camps. The first deportations of 2,500 gypsies into occupied Poland took place in the spring of 1940, but were continued on a systematic basis only from the autumn of 1941 onwards (when 5,000 Austrian gypsies were deported to a special section of the Lodz Jewish ghetto). Himmler's 'Auschwitz Decree' of 16th December 1942 ordered the 'assignment of gypsy half-castes, Roma gypsies and Balkan gypsies' into the so-called 'gypsy camp' within Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. A total of about 20,000 gypsies from 11 countries were subsequently deported to Auschwitz. Although no gassings of gypsies took place there at first, the gypsy camp was broken up in August 1944, in view of severe epidemics and the advance of Soviet troops, and its inmates were murdered. Altogether, according to research estimates, about 219,000 gypsies were murdered in the territories controlled by the Nazis, including about 15,000 of the 20,000 gypsies who had been living in Germany in 1939.

The same principles of conformity with social and cultural standards, especially work-discipline, as were invoked in the elimination of the gypsies from the 'national community' were also applied 'internally' in disciplining and regimenting the 'national comrades' themselves. Closely linked to the 'gypsy question' was the more general problem of 'vagrancy' or the 'travelling population',⁷ which had earlier been a source of disquiet for welfare associations in the Wilhelmine and Weimar periods. The highways had then been populated by a shifting, complex and highly variegated army of journeymen, men seeking work, young people seeking adventure, beggars and tramps, and the welfare bodies and public authorities had sought in vain to impose order on this confusion. The principal criterion proposed was a division of the 'travellers' into those willing and those not willing to work. In this respect the National Socialist public welfare authorities' call for a fundamental distinction between 'respectable and non-respectable travellers'⁸ chimed entirely with long-standing reformist efforts on the part of non-fascist welfare workers. In 1934, for example, the strict Catholic *Land* Administrator for Kassel, Wuermling, wrote:⁹

The goal of legislative and administrative measures should not be merely to follow the line of least resistance and channel the travelling population along highly orderly lines; the aim must be to remove entirely the destitute

vagrant's right to exist. It cannot be denied that this aim will be achieved only with great difficulty, but if ever there was a fitting time for achieving it, it is now, when the state is in fact in a position to act if there is resolute co-operation between the judiciary and the police.

This sweeping proposal, made when millions were still unemployed, makes plain the essence of the thinking behind the plans for a new order in social policy. Welfare workers, demoralised by shortages of funds, by the pluralistic decision-making processes of democracy and by a greater self-assertiveness on the part of their clientele, were looking for a fundamental restructuring of the welfare system by a state which had apparently become much stronger after 1933. Above all, in the new society those who worked hard and efficiently would be assigned their rightful place; deviant and disturbing behaviour would be eliminated as socially unbeneficial.

As labour shortages set in during the rearmament boom of 1936-37, the economic argument was added to the argument from social order. The long-serving administrative head of the German Association for Public and Private Welfare, Hilde Eisenhardt, said in 1938:¹⁰

We need their hands to help us in the great economic programme that lies ahead, and we therefore cannot continue to allow people who are capable of work to spend months and years on the open roads.

The implications were spelled out in plain language by Oberführer Greifelt, a member of Himmler's personal staff, in a report on the results of the national 'Work-Shy' campaign conducted in 1937-38:¹¹

The tight situation in the labour market necessitated the work-discipline principle that all persons who were unwilling to participate in the working life of the nation, and were merely scraping by as work-shy or asocials and making the cities and main roads unsafe, should be dealt with by coercive means and set to work. Following the lead of the 'Four Year Plan' department, the Secret State Police took energetic and vigorous steps in this matter. At the same time, vagrants, beggars, gypsies and procurers were picked up by the criminal police and, finally, those wilfully refusing to earn a living were apprehended. Considerably in excess of 10,000 asocials are currently undergoing a diet of work training in concentration camps, which are eminently suited to this purpose.

National Socialist policy towards social outsiders rested on approaches to the question similar to those that had earlier been advocated by non-fascist policy-makers, academics and welfare workers. At first it pursued the same solutions, albeit more harshly and by discarding constitutional restraints. The new elements which the Nazi state introduced – not infrequently to the applause of professional

social and welfare workers – were the legitimation, based on racial biology, of the distinction between those eligible for training and the 'biologically degenerate' (who were to be separated out) and the use of the concentration and extermination camps. Even though many welfare workers may not have approved of the murder of the socially 'unfit' and the nonconformist, their calls for 'incurable' cases to be segregated, taken into compulsory 'protective custody' and maintained at minimal expense helped pave the way for the concentration camps and the gas chambers.

The committal of 'asocials' to concentration camps in accordance with the crucial 1937 decree instituting 'Preventive Police Measures to Combat Crime' was followed in 1940 by the establishment of work education camps. According to a decree of Himmler's of 28th May 1941,¹² these were

intended exclusively to receive those refusing to work or reluctant to work whose activities are tantamount to work sabotage. The purpose of committal is education and training; the aim is not punishment, nor is it to be officially recorded as such. [...] Detainees are to be made to do arduous work, so that they can be forcibly brought to realise that their behaviour is detrimental to the nation, so that they can be trained to work in orderly and regulated fashion and so that they may serve as a warning and deterrent to others.

If, however, several weeks of forced labour in a work education camp failed to achieve their 'educational' purpose, and it was noted that the person concerned was once again refusing to work, then the concentration camp loomed.

It is true that only a small number of German workers were detained for 'idling' at work, but such cases formed only one item in a long catalogue of warnings and punishments involving the workplace and beyond. Their chief significance was not the 'education' or 'training' the inmates received but the deterrent effect they had on the great mass of workers, who were faced with a constant reminder of the consequences that could flow from insubordination, slow working and absenteeism. Indeed, as far as can be ascertained from the scattered information available, punitive detention in specific camps far more commonly involved foreign workers than Germans. In the course of the war, on the other hand, complaints by industrial firms about 'idling' by young German workers increased to a quite extraordinary degree, with the steps taken to combat it again ranging from special 'educational' and 'training' terror measures to detention in youth concentration camps.

The extent to which the state-police punitive system had bitten into everyday working life is demonstrated by statistics from Krupp's steel casting works in Essen, which reported 5,426 cases of 'idling' to the

Gestapo between the end of September 1939 and the end of 1944.¹³ (The numbers of warnings issued which never went beyond the factory, and of threats to inform the Gestapo, will have been considerably greater.) Of these 5,426 members of the workforce who were reported, 224 were dismissed from their jobs, 105 were drafted into the Wehrmacht, 584 received a warning, 553 received a 'disciplinary penalty' (usually a fine), 204 were taken into juvenile detention or reform schools, 23 received an 'official warning', 224 received court sentences, 132 were taken into 'protective custody', 313 were sent to work education camps and 6 to concentration camps.

Even the brutal conditions in the work education camps, with their procedures for 'educating' 'national comrades' adjudged guilty of nonconformist behaviour, were intended solely to break the will of the inmates and, through the harshness of their methods, to serve as a deterrent to others. In the process the factitious distinction between 'educable' national comrades and the 'biologically depraved' – who, being 'asocial' and 'ineducable', were subjected to sterilisation, concentration-camp detention and 'annihilation through labour' – tended to dissolve. Instead of the dualism, tricked out in racial biology, of 'national comrades' and 'community aliens', there was a continuum of police-enforced pressures to conform, stretching from initial sanctions against nonconformist behaviour, via 'education' and 'training' by means of terror, to systematic extermination.

National Socialist racialism, then, was by no means merely a murderous ideological farrago, involving the spurious 'scientific' designation of races of 'lesser value'; it was also the instrument and ideological expression of the enforcement, through terror, of conformist social behaviour within the so-called 'national community' itself. In this respect one of the purposes of Nazi racialism, in both a theoretical and a practical sense, was to provide norms for, and to regulate, social behaviour. There were two reasons, inherent in the structure of its concept of race, why this was so.

First and foremost, the vagueness of its biogenetic concepts meant in practice that people's social behaviour served as a central criterion of their supposed 'racial character'. This is made plain by the following extract from an 'expert opinion' submitted by the Racial Hygiene Research Centre within the Reich Public Health Office, dated 10th July 1944:¹⁴

[...] Although membership of the Gypsies in terms of blood is denied by family X, the racial diagnosis as regards the members of family X is undoubtedly 'Gypsy' and/or 'Gypsy-Negro-Hybrid'.

This verdict is based on
1. racial and psychological features

2. anthropological features
3. genealogical data
4. the fact that the family is regarded as Magyar by Hungarians. [. . .]

These few data are sufficient on their own for family X to be regarded as presumptively Gypsy. Itinerancy and unsettled journeying as a family unit are characteristic of Gypsies as far as Central European conditions are concerned. Whereas the external appearance of the members of family X is not entirely typical Gypsy, and in fact – with the exception of the mother – suggests Negro-Hybrid, the gestures, affectivity and overall behaviour are not only alien-type [*artfremd*] but in fact positively indicate Gypsy descent. The false show of civility of manner, the moulding of emotional impulses (in any case superficial in themselves) to prevailing external circumstances, the lack of discernment and poor judgement on matters of factual evaluation and inference, and the deficiency as regards opinions and instability of personal attitudes indicate, for all the artfulness and cunning, what is essentially a high degree of naivety and primitivity. This type of slackness is not encountered among settled Europeans with a developed work sense. With family X, in addition, certain peculiarities by way of histrionic expressions, the manner of engaging in bargaining and the attempt to curry favour and create a good impression by using varying emotional moods, testify to the specifically Gypsy character of the alien-type primitivity involved. [. . .]

In addition, the theory of the cross-breeding of different hereditary characteristics implied a graduated categorisation of people ranging from the 'educable', via those 'educable with difficulty', to the 'ineducable'. Again, in practice, this scheme could be operated only on the basis of the observation of everyday behaviour. Thus Ritter's 'Institute of Criminal Biology' (Ritter, incidentally, also pronounced on the gypsy question) had devised a 'scientific' procedure for screening the 'pupils' of the concentration camp for young people set up at Moringen in 1940, using criteria that were unambiguously concerned with conformity of behaviour.¹⁵

These two basic features of National Socialist racialism – eking out biological grounds for 'suspicion' by using indicators of deviant social behaviour; and systematically extending the classification of types of behaviour from descriptions of small, excluded groups to include norms which could cover practically everyone – can be found not only in the treatment of the gypsies but also, for instance, in a sphere which, according to Nazi propaganda, represented the 'positive' and 'constructive' side of their racial scheme. This was their designation of 'woman' – *die Frau* – as the 'German mother'.¹⁶ The campaign to steer women into housework and the bearing and rearing of plentiful offspring – a campaign backed up by awards of the quasi-decoration, the Cross of Motherhood – was only one facet of the Nazis' policies on

women and population control. Marriage loans, for example, which could be 'paid off' by arrivals of children (*abgekindert*), were granted only to women who were 'genetically healthy'. Those who did not meet this condition not only were turned away empty-handed but, if they had (or were thought to have) hereditary diseases, could be compulsorily sterilised, in accordance with a law of 14th July 1933. In addition, the executive orders ancillary to the Nuremberg Laws, which prohibited marriages between Jews and 'Aryans', extended the categories of those covered to include gypsies and negroes. Children who had been born to liaisons between German women and non-white occupation troops in the Rhineland – 'Rhineland bastards' – were compulsorily sterilised. This '*Berufsverbot* for mothers' (Gisela Bock's phrase) was the complement to the Third Reich's policy of encouraging fertility. (See also Plate 18.)

When the 'Law for the Prevention of Progeny of the Genetically Unhealthy' was announced in 1933, the Reich Minister of the Interior, Frick, issued a rallying cry in support of the 'differentiation' of birth-rates: 'We must once more have the courage to classify our people according to their hereditary value.' Not the least important criterion bearing on sterilisation was general 'social usefulness', which proved to consist of obedience to the paramount norms of hard work, conformist behaviour, orderliness and efficiency. A questionnaire issued to doctors called for possible sterilisation cases to be assessed, in part, in the light of their responses to questions about 'general moral notions':¹⁷

Why do we learn? Why do we save, and for whom? Why is it wrong to set fire to a house – even your own house? If you find 5RM, what should you do with it? 20RM? 200RM? How do you see your future? What would you do if you won first prize in the lottery? What are loyalty; piety; deference; modesty? What is the opposite of courage?

The formulators of National Socialist racial policy quite explicitly wanted to prevent the reproduction of families which they labelled 'alien' or 'asocial'. In this they were continuing a tradition of eugenic and demographic thought going back to the Imperial period, when there was concern that academic and middle-class families which were 'German through and through' were reproducing at a lesser rate than families from lower social groups – more specifically, the non-'respectable' orders. Even utterly non-fascist medical writers had argued in favour of a differentiated population policy, in order to encourage 'better' genetic stock (defined as 'better' in terms of sociological 'success'). On the other hand, there was little public support before 1933 for views such as those of Karl Binding and Adolf Hoche, who had called in 1920 for 'the authorisation of the destruction

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of lives not worthy of life', on the grounds that people suffering from certain incurable mental illnesses were mere 'ballast existences', 'empty human shells' and 'mentally dead'.¹⁸

At first, in 1933, the National Socialists opted for the more 'restrained' policy of social isolation and sterilisation for the 'genetically unhealthy'. This could include compulsory sterilisation of people, such as schizophrenics and severe alcoholics, whose illnesses could at best only be postulated as hereditary but not scientifically proved to be. In addition, the Genetic Health Courts, which subjected the people concerned to a degrading examination procedure, commonly operated with non-medical criteria of 'correct' behaviour which could be totally arbitrary. One verdict of such a court noted:¹⁹

In addition, there is the appellant's behaviour, both in life in general and towards the legal system. He has twice been sentenced for larceny and once for aggravated larceny, and is at present in detention on strong suspicion of grand larceny. That his feeble-mindedness is inborn is proved by its having appeared in early youth (failure at school) and in virtue of the fact that there are no external circumstances that might have induced it.

The court passed a similar judgement in another case:

Failure in the intellectual sphere is matched by complete failure in life, as well as by H.'s attitude towards the legal system.

In many cases there was an elision of criteria: conjectural mental illness, an unconventional and suspect life-style, and dissident, prohibited political opinions. Bruno T. from Wermelskirchen, who had been 'constantly attacking senior officials of the NSDAP in long written documents sent to the *Land* Administrator and other offices', was taken into 'protective custody' in 1936. The public health officer for the Rhine-Wupper *Kreis* cited 'psychiatric' reasons for the decision:²⁰

I examined T. in Wermelskirchen on 25.4.1936 and became convinced that he was mentally ill. Some years ago T. published a very muddled pamphlet discussing political and reformist ideas. During my examination his behaviour was quiet and orderly, but it revealed unmistakably pathological ideas of a megalomaniac nature. A characteristic example is what he said, quite seriously, at the close of the examination: 'It's strange: they all believe Hitler, but they don't believe me.' I inferred schizophrenia or progressive paralysis and advised the local police authorities to take T. in for observation in a closed institution as a mentally ill person who posed a danger to the community.

By 1945 a total of between 200,000 and 350,000 people had been sterilised.

With the outbreak of war, the National Socialists' ruthless pursuit of

their programme of 'eradication' reached a new level, when Hitler issued a secret order, backdated to 1st September 1939, in accordance with which the allegedly incurable mentally ill were to be singled out and murdered. In an operation which was conducted by a group of initiates numbering only a few dozen – doctors and administrators of the so-called 'Public Ambulance Service Ltd.' (*Gemeinnützige Krankentransport GmbH*) – about 70,000 people were murdered up to August 1941. The operation was then shelved, after numerous protests, particularly from the churches. This episode, like many other cases in which institutional doctors or relatives took up the cause of mentally ill people in their care, shows not only that there was resistance to the Nazis' policy of 'eradication' but that such resistance could be successful. It contrasts all the more starkly with the silence in the countless cases when the measures for eliminating 'community-alien' groups within the population were accepted and even approved, provided that they were applied within a framework that was outwardly legal.

Majority public approval was certainly accorded to the terror which the National Socialists directed at another minority: homosexuals.²¹ The Nazis' fundamental hostility to homosexuality should not be underrated on the grounds that some leading individual National Socialists were homosexuals. The infamous denunciation of the head of the SA, Ernst Röhm, in 1930 by, of all bodies, the Social Democratic press, which had banked on winning votes by its appeal to 'healthy popular feeling' – and, in so doing, besmirched its own liberal tradition – was taken up once again after the so-called 'Röhm putsch' of 1934 and used by the National Socialists in legitimation of their recourse to murder. The fascists' deadly hostility to homosexual 'deviations' from the norm had two sources. One was their dominant image of the 'strict' soldierly man, obliged to repel with brute force all temptations to 'soften' the identity and sexual role indoctrinated into him and seeing homosexuality as a target for his projected aggression. The other was their racialist programme, which had as its goal the strengthening of the 'healthy body of the nation' and which sought to 'eradicate' homosexuality because it deflected sexual energies that were needed in the 'battle for the birth-rate'. Accordingly, the liberalisation of homosexuals' lives and legal status which had begun under the Weimar Republic (the repeal of Paragraph 175 had been planned in the draft penal code of 1929, but was never implemented) was abruptly terminated in 1933. The homosexual sub-culture, its bars and clubs, were smashed, and in 1935 Paragraph 175, which made homosexual acts a prison offence, was considerably tightened up. Merely the indication of sexual interest, not even the consummated act, was made a

punishable offence, and the way was thus made clear for denunciations and arbitrary police action.

In 1936-38 homosexuality was frequently the publicly cited ground for proceedings taken against former youth-movement leaders and against priests and clergy who were out of political favour. Concurrently, the increase in the numbers of 'asocials' being sent to concentration camps after 1937 included many homosexuals. In the camps they were left to stagnate at the bottom of the hierarchy, terrorised by the guards, victimised by the criminal prisoners and often enough despised by the political prisoners too. In 1943 a secret order by Himmler laid down the death penalty for all cases of homosexuality falling within the purview of the SS and the police.

No homosexuals obtained reparations after 1945, because Paragraph 175 was in formal terms 'lawful'; only a few even dared to make application, since the paragraph in its harsher form survived until 1969. Even those who had survived the Third Reich without being held in camps had undergone twelve years of profound damage to their lives and their identities.

This example shows that it is not enough to cite the numbers of ascertainable victims of National Socialist racialism. Besides the different groups that have been mentioned already, there were also the millions who only just escaped the net, who were 'merely' threatened with detention in a labour camp, who were 'merely' interrogated and cautioned by the Gestapo, or who were 'merely' oppressed, burdened and robbed of the freedom to articulate their needs by the sheer existence of an ever more elaborate and sophisticated system of discrimination.

Although the National Socialists' use of terror against 'community aliens' tended in practice to be somewhat unsystematic, so that huge, ambitious schemes might at first not be implemented, while far-reaching actual expansions of the concentration-camp state, causing thousands of deaths, could result from the decisions of a moment, the regime can nevertheless be seen overall to have possessed an inner dynamism making for ever greater radicalisation. The goal was a utopian *Volksgemeinschaft*, totally under police surveillance, in which any attempt at nonconformist behaviour, or even any hint or intention of such behaviour, would be visited with terror. This fundamental goal is also evident in a law projected by Himmler²² which ultimately fell foul of internecine squabbles between the judiciary and the police but which nevertheless represented, at each of its many draft stages, a strategic summation of all the separate measures which the Nazis had hitherto implemented or planned. The two crucial paragraphs from the last draft of this 'Law for the Treatment of Community Aliens' of 1944

deserve quotation. (Later paragraphs of the draft dealt with co-operation between the judiciary and the welfare authorities, arrangements concerning sterilisation, the imposition of the death penalty etc.)

[. . .] Article I

Community Aliens (*Gemeinschaftsfremde*)

§1

'Community aliens' are such persons who:

1 show themselves, in their personality or in the conduct of their life, and especially in the light of any unusual deficiency of mind or character, unable to comply by their own efforts with the minimum requirements of the national community;

2(a) owing to work-shyness or slovenliness, lead a worthless, unthrifty or disorderly life and are thereby a burden or danger to the community;

or

display a habit of, or inclination towards, beggary or vagrancy, idling at work, larceny, swindling or other less serious offences, or engage in excessive drunkenness, or for any such reasons are in breach of the obligation to support themselves;

or

(b) through persistent ill-temper or quarrelsomeness disturb the peace of the community;

3 show themselves, in their personality or in the conduct of their life, mentally disposed towards the commission of serious offences (community-hostile criminals [*gemeinschaftsfeindliche Verbrecher*] and criminals by inclination [*Neigungsverbrecher*]).

Article II

Police Measures against Community Aliens

§2

1 Community aliens shall be subject to police supervision.

2 If supervisory measures are insufficient, the police shall transfer community aliens to the *Gau* (or *Land*) welfare authorities.

3 If, in the case of any community-alien persons, a stricter degree of custody is required than is possible within the institutions of the *Gau* (or *Land*) welfare authorities, the police shall place them in a police camp.

This projected law crystallised once again the National Socialists' design of abolishing the most basic principles of constitutionality: the principles that definitions of offences should be unambiguous; that conviction should be based on crimes committed, not on imputed 'inclinations'; that legal proceedings should be clear and subject to scrutiny. Instead, elastic terminology gave the police unlimited powers of discretion and degraded the judicial and welfare authorities into mere police tools. A penal code based on acts was transformed into one based on mentality; constitutionality had given way to a police state.

Superficially, the elastic terminology used to define 'community

Racialism as social policy

aliens' was directed against a limited group of drinkers, vagrants or work-shy people on whom a series of different projected laws and drafts for 'looking after' the incorrigibly delinquent had set their sights since 1920.²³ In practice, the criteria defining 'community aliens' could take in anyone who offended against the norms of everyday social behaviour. Himmler's proposed law would thus have been a perpetual latent threat to practically everyone. Draconian penalties against those whom the police singled out and termed outsiders served to reinforce all other 'national comrades' in their readiness to discipline themselves and fall into line.

Discriminatory, and ultimately racist, approaches to nonconformist social behaviour did not begin in 1933. From the turn of the century there had been a marked increase in theoretical schemes designed to bring about a sweeping 'scientific' improvement and reconstitution of the 'social body'.²⁴ Endemic infectious diseases like tuberculosis and cholera had been successfully dealt with by a combination of medical intervention, hygienic discipline, technological innovation and social isolation; in the same way, it was asserted, eugenic measures could be used to eradicate hereditary diseases. Furthermore, crime and anti-social behaviour could be curbed by a combination of environmental improvement, social reform, aid to individuals via welfare relief and education, while the biologically inferior 'residue' could be separated out and eliminated.

The belief that social problems could be finally and scientifically solved by a joint application of educational and social reforms and measures of racial hygiene and improvement of the hereditary stock was especially widely canvassed in the popular-scientific literature and was by no means restricted to extreme right-wing circles. The prominent biologist Ernst Haeckel, for example, whose popular-science bestseller *The Riddle of the Universe* was widely read in the labour movement (where it helped to shape the scientific *Weltanschauung* of a whole generation of Social Democrats), wrote in 1915, in *Eternity: Wartime Thoughts on Life and Death, Religion and Evolution*:²⁵

One single cultivated German warrior – and they are now falling in their masses – has a higher intellectual and moral life-value than hundreds of the raw primitives whom England and France, Russia and Italy are pitting against them.

246 The social Darwinism of the National Socialists, then, not only had roots in relatively offbeat nineteenth-century racial theories (Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain etc.), but could claim support from

well-established academic schools of thought in psychology, medicine, criminology and social welfare. These scholarly disciplines were by no means 'fascist' in character, but they were receptive to arguments, modes of perception and schemes for action which entailed the separation of people into groups according to their social usefulness, defined in terms not only of environmental but of notionally hereditary factors. Wherever health, welfare or educational practitioners came up against limits to their work's effectiveness, academic theorists and practitioners alike were inclined to hold immutable hereditary factors responsible. The implication lay ready to hand: for the sake of future generations, these limits to social and medical intervention should be clearly drawn, and such intervention should be complemented by eugenic measures and selection from the genetic stock on the basis of social usefulness. This optimistic view, that scientific and industrial progress in principle removed the restrictions on the possible application of planning, education and social reform in everyday life, lost its last shreds of innocence when the National Socialists set about engineering their 'brave new world' with compulsory sterilisation, concentration camps and gas chambers.

We understate the racialism of the Third Reich if we limit our attention to the pornographic smears of *Der Stürmer*, the grotesque cranium measurements performed by the anthropologists, and the sadism of the myrmidons of the concentration camps. These phenomena are blatant enough. Surely more dangerous, because subtler and more intimately connected with everyday behaviour and discourse, was the ostensibly mild racialism which purported to be helpful and constructive yet which moved, almost apologetically and in passing, to advocating the eradication of those of 'inferior value'. The document which follows exemplifies the kind of almost unsensational racialism that was typical of academic publications of the period. It is reprinted here unabridged, so that the reader can see how a scientific discussion which is filled with sympathy and concern for people (or at least certain categories of people), which appeals to research findings and rational methods of formal argument, and which repeatedly invokes common sense and its audience's practical experience can nevertheless be imbued with the insanity of racist thinking and the terrorism of the 'final solution'. The document is an address by the Stuttgart Land Youth Medical Officer Dr Eyrich, delivered to the Württemberg Conference of Welfare Institutions on 8th November 1938 (as chance had it, the eve of the *Reichskristallnacht*); it was originally published in the well-established *Zeitschrift für Kinderforschung*.²⁶ It is only one instance of a host of comparable scientific and popular publications.

Children and the Welfare Institutions: a Genetic Approach

It is appropriate that a medical speaker, addressing a conference on welfare institutions, should place at the centre of his discussion the people who are brought up in these institutions. Young people in institutions have proved to be the most stable element within the shifting patterns of institutional life in recent years. Regulations and procedures within institutions can be changed; the people who inhabit them are the work of nature.

The reputation of these inmates is not a good one. People are thankful if they need have nothing to do with them. The old notion of a corrective education is still a widespread one. The common conception is of those cases where the only remedy is strict severity appearing in the guise of welfare education [*Fürsorgeerziehung*]. Even today such instances are far from extinct: after painting a youngster's misdeeds in the blackest colours, a court will decide that education in a welfare institution is the only answer. — Such confidence in the limitless capabilities of welfare education does us honour. But we should prefer to dispense with the honour and point out that such cases are being referred to us too late in the day. We very much hope that they will not come to us in this way in the future.

When people speak of institutional education, they are thinking of children who have been trouble-makers at school. But in addition to them we find quite different kinds of young people within institutions: the deaf and hard of hearing, the blind and weak-sighted, crippled children, the feeble-minded, children with retarded and inhibited physical and mental development. They cannot be educated in normal schools, and because of their infirmity they need special schooling and training in order to be able to lead at least partially useful and productive lives.

Such cases shall not be the primary topic of this discussion, nor shall the particular medical tasks which arise from the special nature of institutional upbringing or which affect delinquent children in institutional care. These tasks are difficult to solve, while also being of considerable significance for public health. (It can, incidentally, be mentioned in this context that the introduction in Württemberg three years ago of thorough clinical examinations of all delinquent girls who have left school has immediately raised the number of young girls known to be infected with venereal diseases to three times the previous figure. This indicates the enormous scale of the infectious contacts involved.)

The underlying concept common to all welfare education is that of neglect [*Verwahrlosung*]*. Those subject to the risk of, or to actual, neglect are taken into educational care. The law assumes that neglect is an occurrence which affects the young person from outside, through the negligence of those responsible for his upbringing or through some other inadequacy in his education. The upbringing required by the courts in such cases is a substitute

upbringing. It is based, correctly, on the assumption that the deficiencies of upbringing that have been established must first be rectified and eliminated. And in every case which is brought promptly enough to our attention, we are able to eliminate that element in the young person's faulty social development which is due to neglect. But it is well known that the elimination of neglect and the transfer of a young person into properly regulated education is in many cases not enough. Not even the best educator is spared the frequent experience of seeing that his goal of returning a fully useful national comrade to the national community simply cannot be attained, and that he has come up against limits to his efforts which plainly have been set by nature: limits of disposition and heredity. He is also forced to recognise that these boundaries are much more tightly drawn with these young people than they are with others, whose physical and mental adaptiveness and hereditary scope offer him far wider opportunities. Lofty plans are therefore out of place as far as the upbringing of young delinquents is concerned. It is often only after the effects of neglect have been dealt with that the young person's true nature emerges, about which education can do nothing.

It is well known that our ideas concerning the significance of heredity in human mental and social development have been enormously extended and deepened during the past ten to fifteen years. It is now known for certain that forces rooted in the genetic make-up give outward shape to the essential internal features of the life of each individual, be it the life of a genius or a criminal. Nearly ten years ago the psychiatrist Johannes Lange, who has recently died so young, published a book whose title expresses this new understanding. It is called *Crime as Destiny* [*Verbrechen als Schicksal*] (Leipzig, 1928). We can say now that it is a classic; it is a milestone in the development of the human sciences. The book is not a weighty scientific tome. It describes in masterly fashion the life-histories of pairs of criminal identical twins. The impression left by this work is utterly compelling. Presented here before our eyes are the careers of genetically identical people. Their lives differ in many respects, but in essentials they are staggeringly uniform. The separate pairs of twins show many differences as regards externals, but in each case they are a pair of violent criminals, or of confidence tricksters, or of prostitutes, or of homosexuals, or whatever. The effect of a book of this sort is stimulating and exciting. Since it was written, the number of pairs of criminal identical twins known to us has increased considerably. Lange's findings have not been challenged in any essentials.

What sorts of cases do we find in educational institutions? The external manifestations of delinquency are uniform. It starts with truancy, loitering and dissolute behaviour, and generally the police are soon involved. With girls, three-quarters of delinquency cases involve sexual depravity. But anyone looking deeper will see that this uniformity is superficial and that there can be very different underlying roots. The task, therefore, is to separate these apparently similar phenomena into groups that are intrinsically different. It is a difficult and awkward task in many respects, but today it is, in fundamentals and in practical terms, soluble. This

*[The word *Verwahrlosung* also refers by extension to the effects of neglect, thereby taking on rather different connotations. In these cases it has been translated as 'delinquency'. (Transl.)]

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assertion is not refuted by the fact that we still encounter individual cases which at the outset cannot be assessed for certain. Medical diagnosis faces similar difficulties in other spheres.

Viewing large numbers of institutionalised pupils, one cannot but be struck by the fact that in many instances a disturbance within the family unit is the original factor in delinquency. That is to say, we find illegitimate children, semi-orphans, full orphans, an astonishing number of step-children, and a host of children of divorced parents or of marriages that have broken down in other ways. These are external circumstances which have led to a form of defective development which takes the form of delinquency. It is not necessary in the first instance to attribute the delinquency to faults on the children's part or to genealogical inferiority.

In addition to these groups, we find those young people who have committed minor criminal offences, among which a large proportion of the sexual offences must also be reckoned. From the perspective of a lifetime such episodes are insignificant, provided that inappropriate treatment does not endow them with a significance that will dog the youngsters for ever. These, then, are typical offences of puberty, sometimes more a sign of youthful thoughtlessness or of overbrimming and above-average vitality than of criminal mentality.

From time to time – on the whole, infrequently – we also encounter young people in welfare educational institutions whose difficulties are the first warning signs, or indeed the first clear symptoms, of approaching mental illness. Under this heading fall cases of incipient dementia praecox and manic-depressive dementia, diseases of the central nervous system caused by syphilis acquired while in the womb, the onset of epilepsy, brain diseases caused by encephalitis, and so forth.

According to a survey by the Reich Ministry of Justice, in the year 1937 in Germany a total of 3,258 men and women were being held in preventive detention as dangerous habitual offenders. Of these, the following had committed punishable offences:

before completing their 18th year	1,356 = 41.6 per cent
between 18 and 21	1,020 = 31 per cent

i.e. 72.6 per cent had committed offences before the age of 21. There can be no doubt that a considerable proportion of this 72.6 per cent will have undergone education by the welfare authorities and, having left school, will have come back before the courts unreformed. It is to these elements, above all, that welfare education owes its public reputation – and unjustly so. For those former pupils who win through in later life have no reason – thanks to this very reputation – for drawing special attention to the fact that they too are 'former pupils of welfare institutions'. If we were to examine other groups of asocials in a comparable way, e.g. vagabonds or prostitutes, we should undoubtedly find similar patterns. Yet we must recognise, at all events, that as far as a certain proportion of our children and young people in welfare education are concerned, the phenomenon of delinquency needs to be interpreted in a quite different way from that appropriate to cases of damage done by conditions in the social environment and from cases of

youth crime. The former phenomenon indicates the start of a purposive and unalterable tendency towards criminality or pernicious anti-social behaviour. We also know that the vast majority of cases here are born criminals or asocials by hereditary disposition. We cannot say at present how large a share this group represents within the total number of pupils in welfare education, but what is certain is that this share is a very small one within the overall total and that it would be quite unjustified, on the basis of what we know of this group, to lump all institutional pupils together with born criminals. The latter are the group with lowest genetic value among our institutional population. Their mental make-up has been studied in detail quite recently (Stumpfl, *Ursprünge des Verbrechens* [Origins of Crime], Leipzig, 1936). In many instances we are fully able to pick out, even in their early years, future incorrigible criminals and candidates for preventive detention; and it is our duty to translate this knowledge into action.

It is noticeable how many of the ineducable pupils among those in welfare institutions belong to the 'travelling' people. This observation brings up a problem which is as important as it is unfamiliar, both to practitioners within institutional education and to the NSV [National Socialist Public Welfare]. We must therefore give a brief account of it here. For most of us, the 'travelling' people, the 'wayfarers' [*Vaganten*], the '*Vagi*' or the '*Jenischen*' are figures of romantic description, figures who have found frequent expression in stories, songs and in the theatre. In reality, the romantic nature of this life is highly debatable. The problem is one of demographic biology and of sociology. In the society of the middle ages, those who were not 'honest folk' – that is, the rabble, 'rogues', '*Gauner*' or '*Janner*' – were a familiar phenomenon. Such people, forming a strand of the population clearly marked off from society in the proper sense, survive all the way through from the middle ages to the modern era, when they gradually, owing to the dominance of ideas of human equality, disappear from popular consciousness though not from biological fact. They themselves are well aware of their own distinctiveness, and even speak their own language, the '*jenisch*' argot. Attempts to demarcate the '*Jenischen*' on a racial or national [*völkisch*] basis have not so far been successful, nor do they seem likely to be. The origins of the 'rabble' can therefore only be a matter of conjecture. What unifies them is their way of life, language and social inferiority – the latter, perhaps, the result of centuries of cultivation of inferior stock in the sense of socially negative characteristics and of the inbreeding resultant upon their situation. Individual members of the 'honest' community may also have been added to their numbers, after forfeiting their respectability by committing some misdemeanour. The wayfarers lived, and still live, by trading and peddling – which can easily cross the dividing line into begging and swindling – and they engage as individuals and in bands in theft, mountebankery, fortune-telling and all sorts of other 'dishonest' activities. The unsettled existence and the urge to move on are in their blood. They have a dread of settled work. So it was always, and so it remains today.

In all ages the travelling people have been regarded as a nuisance, and each

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age has tried to combat the nuisance in its own way: through ruthless legal measures or strict segregation, or by attempting to incorporate the people into the national community through settlement. Others dealt with the phenomenon by simply accepting the wayfarers – as even the weeds in a garden are the work of God.

No less than the monasteries and feudal overlords, wayfarers form part of the characteristic picture of the middle ages, and continue thus into the nineteenth century. The significance they retained in Upper Swabia, for example, split as it was into the tiniest sovereign domains, is vividly depicted in the memoirs of the Biberach painter J. B. Pflug (ed. M. Gester, Ulm, Hohnverlag, 1937), to whom we also owe excellent pictorial representations of groups of rogues.

Today only a proportion of the wayfarers are genuine travellers. Many – especially in the eighteenth century – became settled. In Württemberg, and no doubt elsewhere in the Reich, we have a number of compact settlements of so-called 'free folk'. In other places they became immigrants into existing local communities. In their closed communities they have remained astonishingly pure amidst the adjoining peasantry. Farming does not suit them, and the farmers reject them. Even today they live by trading and often by begging. Their social value is in inverse relation to their fertility. Many amongst their excess numbers are forced to migrate – and we encounter them again in the shanty settlements on the outskirts of the industrial cities, where they augment the lowest ranks of the proletariat.

It is a noteworthy fact that the entire travelling population, and the inhabitants of the wayfarers' colonies, are Catholic, and that in our Catholic educational institutions the children of these wayfarers and from the wayfarers' villages account for a sizeable and scarcely gratifying proportion of the numbers. We intend no criticism here of our national comrades of the Catholic faith. The facts are offered merely for their genetic significance.

Ritter (cf. *Ein Menschenschlag* [A Breed of Men], Leipzig, Thieme, 1936), after conducting exhaustive investigations of Swabian travellers' kinship groups, has been able to trace the direct descent of an asocial genealogical group settled in Tübingen for several generations from such 'rogues' from the late middle ages. We should repeatedly stress that such cases are not rarities. Anyone who keeps his eyes open can observe them everywhere, and in all such cases comparable research would yield genealogical proof. For some years, under commission from the Reich Public Health Office, Ritter has been working on a full genetic survey of all the German travellers' kinship groups, and the highest practical importance has been attached to this work.

Ritter has introduced the term 'disguised feeble-mindedness' to characterise the asocial descendants of the rogues he has investigated. He thus includes them among the congenitally feeble-minded, which in my view is to stretch the concept of congenital feeble-mindedness too far. I believe it makes for greater conceptual clarity to call '*Vaganten*' by their right name, i.e. 'wayfarers', and not to over-burden even further the concept of feeble-mindedness, which is already put to such varied use. Not a few

wayfarers, in addition to being wayfarers, are also feeble-minded; the great majority of them, however, are not. This is also the view reflected in the sentencing practice of the Genetic Health Courts.

I pass on now to the question of congenital feeble-mindedness in welfare education. The severest instances of congenital feeble-mindedness are placed in the idiot asylums. Their mental capacities are such that welfare education is out of the question. It must be pointed out, as far as these severest cases of feeble-mindedness are concerned, that a not inconsiderable proportion of them (one-third, say) are not hereditary. We must therefore be wary of concluding, on the basis of the incidence of individual instances of feeble-mindedness in a family, that the genealogical group is genetically inferior as a whole. Each individual case here calls for careful and expert examination. Indeed, one specific form of severe congenital feeble-mindedness, mongoloid idiocy, often and typically occurs at the conclusion of a long sequence of otherwise normal children.

In welfare education, on the other hand, there are considerable numbers of cases of the mild and moderate forms of congenital feeble-mindedness, and here the proportion of hereditary cases increases markedly and directly with their mildness, i.e. as we approach the border line with normality. The educable feeble-minded pose special requirements as far as therapeutic pedagogy is concerned. They are therefore placed together in special schools and schools for the feeble-minded, and in this way, to a very respectable degree, they are at least made useful and productive enough to be able to work efficiently and earn their own living. The present shortage of agricultural labour makes it a matter of pressing urgency, within the framework of the Four-Year Plan, that their modest abilities too should be available on the labour market and that, if at all possible, they should not be kept in asylums. As regards the schooling of these categories of feeble-minded, which is conducted in exemplary fashion in the various institutions in Württemberg, the aim is not to burden these children with quantities of book-learning. Rather, they are taught discipline and self-discipline, moderation and the independent performance of such work tasks as are suited to their abilities. By virtue of this approach they are thus also able to assume a modest place within the national community. Proof that this method of education for the feeble-minded is the correct one is given by the readiness of the agricultural labour market to employ them. Many more jobs are available for the educated feeble-minded than there are people to fill them. In the past, of course, departure from the institution also created the possibility of pointless and unregulated further reproduction. It goes without saying that no feeble-minded person leaves an institution today unless sterilisation has been undertaken. Bringing together the deficient feeble-minded in special homes and schools hence also provides a practical way of meeting the provisions of the Genetic Health Laws.

Even after that proportion of institutionalised youth which is severely mentally handicapped has been filtered out, it remains the case that a large number of the remainder must be termed low in aptitude and stunted in character, even though we are not in a position to draw sharp boundaries

system has in its charge a significant proportion of those German young people who are socially at risk, and it has them at a vital age. It has to decide on likely outcomes, but at this age a great number of these young people are still malleable enough not to be lost to the community.

We infer from this fact the clear obligation to neglect nothing that brings us closer to this goal.

Welfare education, however, as befits its dual character, also serves as a genetic filter of these young people. It is likely to collect a good-sized share of the dregs of the youth population, and it is therefore under an obligation to filter out those elements whose behaviour is unacceptable to the community and who are genetically unbeneficial for future generations. The laws are there to enable us to put our knowledge into practice. We should be guilty of irreparable disservice to our nation's future if we were to neglect to apply these laws with care, as and where appropriate. On this point, the files of the youth offices and welfare authorities and, especially the observational material gathered by the educational institutions are of particular importance. Training of teaching staff and careful record-keeping are therefore more pressing obligations than ever. It is not only the terms of the Law for the Prevention of Progeny of the Genetically Unhealthy that are involved here. As is known, the application of this law calls for very considerable restraint and careful checking of criteria. The law also deals only with the absolutely clear and extreme cases of disease. Furthermore, within our genetic legislation the Law for the Prevention of Progeny of the Genetically Unhealthy represents only the final stage of an extensive system of measures ranging from the long-term promotion of high-value groups to sterilisation. There is one particularly important law in this system, the Marital Health Law of 18th October 1935, §1 Para. 1(c) of which forbids marriage, among other circumstances, 'if one of the betrothed is suffering from a mental disorder which renders the marriage detrimental to the national community'. Whereas application of the Law for the Prevention of Progeny of the Genetically Unhealthy requires proof of the presence of one of the nine hereditary diseases, the Marital Health Law employs the immeasurably wider concept of mental disorder. It makes it possible for the great unwelcome host of psychopaths and criminals to be excluded at least from contracting marriages – and thus to a large extent from reproduction as well.

The implementation of these laws is the task of the State Public Health Offices. They are entitled to expect to be kept closely informed about the results of institutional education. The aim must therefore be to provide, upon completion of what may be several years of welfare education, a summary and final assessment of individual cases. In most instances, after several years of welfare education, it is possible to make a precise judgement

as to likely outcomes, or at the least to say if prognosis is uncertain. The Health Office must be briefed with regard to these assessments.

In those cases, happily not many, where we are forced to conclude that welfare education will not succeed in its aims and that the pupil will not

become an acceptable member of the community, administrative and legislative procedures remain to be devised for coming to terms with the current unsatisfactory situation. Today, when such persons come to the end of their compulsory welfare education, they commonly have to be set free, against our better judgement, despite the fact that liberty is quite unsuitable for them, and despite the clear prospect that they will cause nothing but harm and mischief before being rapidly entangled once again in some other part of the legal network. There is therefore a need for a clear legal basis for transferring people who are incapable of life in the community directly from welfare education into custody. (Cf. Villinger, this vol., above, pp. 1–20.)

The reorganisation of institutional education along these lines is necessary in two senses. In a negative sense, it is desirable that it fulfil what the state is entitled to expect of it; in a positive sense, it must cast off its hybrid character as an agency of poor relief and the police, on the one hand, and an institution of therapeutic pedagogy on the other. It will then become the institution to which every national comrade will as confidently entrust his problem child as we entrust ourselves to the sure care of hospitals and German doctors in times of illness.

This address by Eyrich makes it plain that the National Socialists' project of social selection founded on genetic criteria attributed 'scientifically' to individuals rested on a quite lengthy tradition of psychological and anthropological research. This was the basis of its claim to 'scientific' validity. Certainly, only those who knew how fragmentary are the records of social and family history could see through the impressive historiographical 'proofs' of the genetic determination of 'rogue' kinship groups and point up their arbitrariness and baseless methodology. And by no means all psychologists had a true enough grasp of the limitations of scholarly enquiry to be able to show up the charlatanry of the apparent empirical correlation of data on social behaviour with genotypic assertions.²⁷ Racialism, however, did not present itself in scientific garb alone; it was also a reflection of welfare workers' everyday experience and problems, to which a racialist solution seemed to be the obvious one. It took the form of concern: concern for the reputation and success of welfare work and for the administration of justice. And it was for the sake of this reputation and success that the racialist scheme proposed the segregation of everyone who put them at risk. In order that the scheme should not be exposed as a betrayal of social welfare and as social and moral bankruptcy – as it would be if the 'incurable' character of those deemed 'inferior' were admitted to be due to environmental factors – it was essential to maintain that nonconformist behaviour had a genetic cause. Only in this way could the segregation of 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' welfare cases be legitimised. This, however, then completed the circle: the

between them and the average. No feature, however, is so characteristic of the mental make-up of institutionalised youth as their lack of intellectual aspirations and interests.

It remains to mention a relatively small number of defectively developed, psychopathic youths, often straying 'problem children' from the higher social classes. That, in essentials, completes our survey of the categories of those who, in terms both of genetics and of social prospects, represent the most critical and most markedly inferior cases. We should point out that the hereditary groups displaying the major mental illnesses, dementia praecox and cyclic insanity, are virtually absent from this list. These kinship groups, with which the well-known studies of Kretschmer have now made us more closely acquainted, show little tendency to delinquency. The groups displaying hereditary epilepsy loom somewhat larger, and of congenital feeble-mindedness larger again.

We can now turn to the larger number of children in institutions whose hereditary make-up and social prospects are to be adjudged quite differently. These have already been listed. They are children and young people whose disruptive behaviour in school and manifestations of delinquency are reactions to disturbances within the family unit: illegitimate children, orphans and semi-orphans, children of divorced parents or broken marriages, stepchildren. We have also mentioned youth crime in this connection. We should not ignore the fact that the ability to sustain a marriage, for example, also has its hereditary side and can indicate flaws in the structure of the personality which again in turn point to hereditary factors. In the first instance, however, we must proceed on the assumption that the damage transmitted to children's development and education by a broken marriage is an environmental factor. We must not ignore the point, either, that the hereditary quality of illegitimate children is very much lower than that of legitimate children and that we sometimes find among the former the most severe instances of hereditary degeneracy. This in no sense alters the fact that in the great majority of cases illegitimate birth is not a blemish and has nothing, as such, to do with genetic inferiority.

I should also like to say a few words about the defective development of stepchildren, which is very common and shows typical features. It is almost always a misfortune when a child loses one of its parents. Adaptation to a new father, but especially to a new mother, is not easy, particularly when the child has superior endowments of temperament and character. Certainly, many such relationships are completely successful. But frictions and complications can easily arise and can lead inescapably to tragedy. Many of these children then simply suffer a warping of their emotional development which can affect them for the rest of their lives. Those of a more active temperament go into opposition, often in alliance with incomprehending grandparents, aunts and neighbours, and make their step-parents' lives difficult in grotesque ways, the stepmother's in particular. Without a doubt the 'wicked stepmother', pure and simple, also exists; but that is a decidedly rarer occurrence than these specific cases of defective development on the part of stepchildren.

These children find their way into the educational institutions along with children of broken marriages whose characters have become calculating and untruthful out of the necessity of swinging back and forth between their feuding parents. We also find children where all that is involved is the economic fact that both parents need to be in employment. If such children are left to their own devices after school, day after day, and attach themselves to unsuitable or unruly friends, then unwholesome consequences can by no means be ruled out. A child must be unusually dull and lifeless if it does not get up to mischief under these circumstances. We certainly hope that the NSV, HJ and BDM will succeed in their efforts to cause such cases to disappear in future. For the present these children are in our educational institutions and foster homes and are our responsibility.

This kaleidoscopic array of children and young people of every kind is to be found indiscriminately jumbled together in our institutions at the present day, and there are even teachers in these institutions who would make a virtue of necessity and espouse the surprising view that it is possible to mould these highly disparate elements into one institutional family. These so-called 'institutional practitioners' are also wont to say that this comprehensive form of education will cause the lower elements to be pulled up by the better elements. Our response to that is to cite the simple fact that one rotten apple can infect all the sound ones around it. Cases of the inverse relationship are not known. Until any such are found, we shall assume that the same applies to children in institutions.

The way forward for institutional education is thus clear. A decree by the Württemberg Minister of the Interior which is shortly to come into force will reorganise education in welfare homes so as to bring our findings into practical effect.

We shall first seek to gain a clear picture of pupils' physical and mental condition and disposition, using all methods and evidence from present-day psychiatry, theories of character, and pedagogy. Reception homes with requisite facilities will be charged with this task, and institutions and pupils will then be grouped so that compatible and intrinsically related cases are dealt with together. We shall therefore remove certain cases from the 'blanket' system that institutional education in Württemberg still to some extent represents, viz.:

1. Children of normal hereditary disposition who are not delinquent.
2. The severely handicapped and feeble-minded, as well as those severely psychopathic cases which cannot be dealt with by the standard practices of institutional education.
3. Gypsies and other gypsy-like elements.

Special treatment for the feeble-minded and mentally defective has already been attempted and has been partially successful. In future it will become the rule. The provision of the Reich Compulsory Education Law of 6th July 1938 which establishes obligatory special schooling and schooling for backward children comes in very usefully as far as this goal is concerned.

Naturally, we shall not be content merely with an initial examination and shall keep pupils' further development under review. The welfare education

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'inferior' were irrefutably circumscribed within the circle, and the pedagogic theorists and welfare authorities could balance their case-books.

This basic conviction, that pernicious genetic dispositions must exist, because only they could satisfactorily explain the all-too-common failures of social-welfare practices, finally carried racialist biology into the realms of chiliastic fantasy. The application of meticulous scientific research closely backed up by state power would make possible a eugenic process of selection and elimination whereby poverty, misery, illness and crime would finally be abolished. 'All' that was needed was to realise the dream of total scientific knowledge: to wrap human beings (and their ancestors, no less) in an information network which would yield exact forecasts of every individual's future social behaviour. This in turn called for the total state, which would carry out the scientifically planned programme of sorting people according to their genetically determined social value. This racialist utopia broke down for two reasons: it spawned Kafkaesque bureaucratic processes for gathering the racial-biological data and making the racial policy decisions;²⁸ and it led to the institutionalisation, hitherto unimaginable, of industrialised, multi-millionfold murder, where the nuances of individual cases shrank into statistical 'insignificance' in the face of sheer numbers.

Racial discrimination in the Third Reich has a prehistory; it also has an aftermath. It would be absurd to postulate any sort of unbroken continuity, but, with our senses sharpened by the study of unbroken Socialism, we are forced to pay closer attention to events in contemporary everyday public life that cause disquiet. We must be concerned when Jews are defamed in the GDR and Poland in the name of 'anti-Zionism'; when political dissidents in the Soviet Union are locked up as 'mentally ill'; when intelligence tests in the USA purport to prove the intellectual inferiority of blacks; when a group of well-known professors in the Federal Republic bemoans, in its 'Heidelberg Manifesto',²⁹ the 'infiltration of the German people by the influx of many millions of foreigners and their families, and the spread of foreign influences into our language, our culture and our national traditions'; or when the Chief Medical Officer in the Braunschweig District, Dr Kahnt, writes about people without settled residence:³⁰

Public health officers and practitioners in industrial medicine have considerable experience of dealing with these people. They know that there are research findings which show beyond dispute that there is gypsy blood in their ancestry. All attempts at socialisation break down for this reason.

And it is precisely because National Socialist racialism was in no sense a sudden, inexplicable irruption of 'medieval barbarism' into a

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progressive society, but owed its seductive power to the pathologies of 'progress' itself, that vigilance is still required when a fast-food restaurant in the German industrial town of Wattenscheid can put up a sign which says:³¹

Turks and Arabs are not permitted to stay longer than 20 minutes in the restaurant.