

SURVIVAL OF THE

FITTEST 2

From Darwin to Hitler; Evolution to Eugenics.



DESIRABLE (RICH) VS UNDESIRABLE (POOR)

- People began to link the social, economic and scientific theories of Darwin, Malthus and Spencer together and forming a theory that human society was composed of those who were fit and unfit.
- Desirable qualities included; the ability to gain wealth, industriousness (work ethic), intelligence, morality and frugality (ability to control one's finances)
- Undesirable qualities were associated with poverty: Laziness, violence, criminality, promiscuity, perceived lack of intelligence or any sort of physical disability.
- Ethnic minorities, such as Roma Travellers, were also included in this "Undesirable" category.

EUGENICS

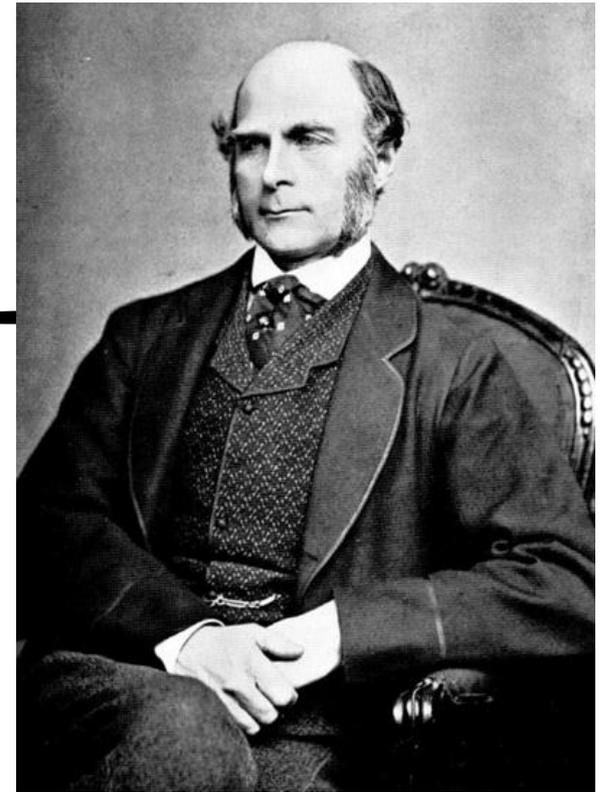
Breeding better Humans ?

In the late 1800's, British scholar Sir Francis Galton (a half-cousin of Darwin) launched a new "Science" aimed at improving the human race by ridding society of its undesirables.

He called it EUGENICS.

Galton believed that through selective reproduction the human race could be strengthened. Galton wanted to produce more of the British elite, and get rid of social institutions which helped poor people.

Galton argued that social institutions such as welfare and mental asylums allowed inferior humans to survive and reproduce at higher levels than their superior counterparts in Britain's wealthy class.



EUGENICS IN AMERICA

Genics became a popular social movement in America that peaked in the 1920's and 1930's.



Books and films promoted eugenics, while local fairs and exhibitions held "fitter family" and "better baby" competitions.

GALTON

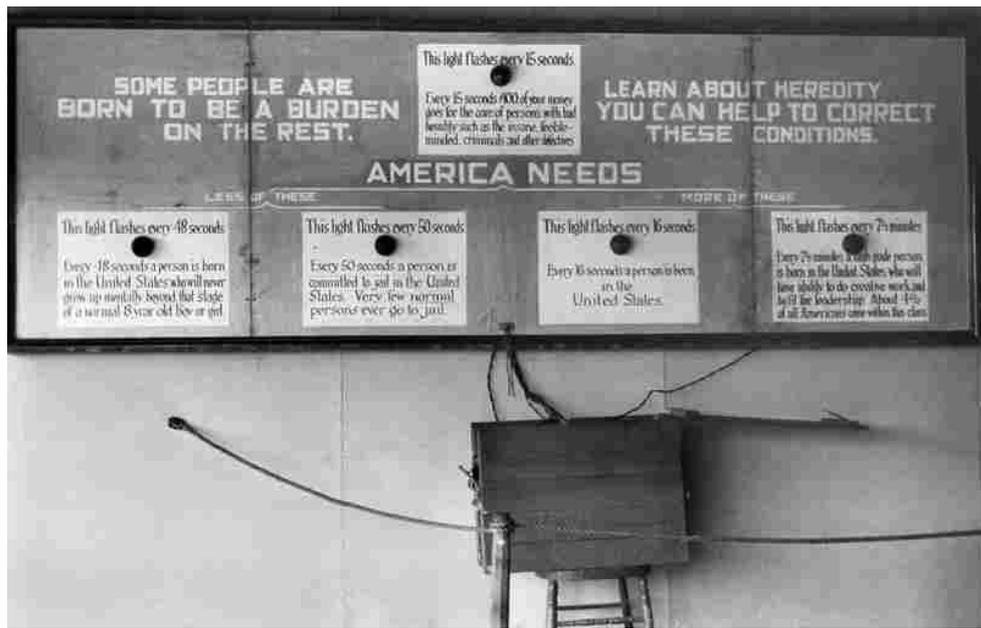
- Although Darwin had ONLY borrowed the phrases "Survival of the fittest" and "struggle for existence" to help people understand his scientific ideas; to those who followed Spencer and Malthus, Darwin appeared to confirm with science what they already believed to be true about human society... That the fit inherited qualities such as industriousness and the ability to get rich, while the unfit were just lazy and stupid !



EUGENICS IN AMERICA



- People who believed in Eugenics thought the best way to ensure survival of the fittest was to prevent "undesirables" from having children.
- In the first part of the 20th century, 32 U.S. States passed laws that resulted in the forced sterilisation of more than 64'000 Americans - including immigrants, people of colour, unmarried mothers and the mentally ill.



An advertising campaign promoting Eugenics in America reads "Some people are born to be a burden on the rest"

UNFIT HUMAN TRAITS
 SUCH AS FEEBLEMINDEDNESS
 EPILEPSY, CRIMINALITY,
 INSANITY, ALCOHOLISM,
 PAUPERISM AND MANY OTHERS,
 RUN IN FAMILIES AND ARE
 INHERITED IN EXACTLY THE
 SAME WAY AS COLOR IN
 GUINEA-PIGS. IF **ALL**
MARRIAGES WERE EUGENIC
 WE COULD **BREED OUT**
 MOST OF THIS UNFITNESS
 IN **THREE GENERATIONS.**

THE TRIANGLE OF LIFE

YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR EDUCATION,
 AND EVEN CHANGE YOUR ENVIRONMENT;
 BUT WHAT YOU REALLY **ARE** WAS ALL
 SETTLED WHEN YOUR PARENTS WERE
BORN.
 SELECTED PARENTS WILL HAVE
 BETTER CHILDREN **THIS**
 IS THE GREAT AIM OF EUGENICS

A poster suggests unfit human traits can be bred out in three generations, comparing humans to Guinea Pigs.

NAZI GERMANY



- Hitler drew inspiration from the American Eugenics movement when designing Nazi Germany's racially based policies.
- Hitler adopted the Social Darwinist Policy of "Survival of the fittest"
- Hitler believed that the survival of the German "Aryan" race depended on its ability to maintain purity of its gene pool.
- The Nazi's targeted certain groups or races that they considered biologically inferior: these included People of colour, Jews, Polish People, Roma (Travellers / "Gypsies"), Soviets, People with disabilities and homosexuals.

NATURAL SELECTION VS NAZI-SELECTION

- By the end of World War 2, Social Darwinist and Eugenic theories had fallen out of favour in the U.S and much of Europe - partly due to their association with Nazi programs and propaganda, and partly because these theories were scientifically unfounded.



WHAT DO YOU
THINK?

Which traits do you think "a perfect human" would have?

What would a perfect world look like to you?
