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article

³This is not a surprising
Military History

After the Heinkel medium bombers exhausted their reserves of incendiary bombs, the civilians of Guernica once again believed they were safe. They ventured out to assist the dead and dying. Once again, the Germans had set a trap. Dust kicked up around the Spaniards as German fighters staffed the streets with machine guns and pilots dropped grenades on clusters of defenseless people on the ground. After the attack, in the words of one reporter who was an eyewitness

⁸The concept of attacking a civilian population with such unflinching ferocity was so unheard of that people around the world had difficulty accepting that such an event had even occurred. Only days after the attack, **The Sun** in Baltimore published a story by G.L. Steer confirming reports of a German air attack on the Spanish city. Steer felt the need to strike down claims that no such attack had ever occurred. He did so by recounting his harrowing experience on the day of the attack. He spoke of being machine-gunned and detailed the planes with unmistakably German markings attacking the city. The day after the attack, Steer went into the town to find evidence. He discovered

their inverted gull wings filled the sky over a target, they suddenly turned and literally screamed into action. As the bombers pushed their noses down into an almost ninety angle, civilians on the ground heard a siren that started at a low rumble and slowly escalated into an unrelenting shriek followed by striking explosions as whistling bombs impacted buildings and streets populated by civilians who could not get themselves to shelter in time.¹⁴ The siren, combined with deceptively simplistic cardboard fins attached to the bombs which created the descending whistle sound popularly associated with all bombs announced destruction falling terminally towards helpless targets on the ground. These features, in aircrews, were so

iconic that almost every allied propaganda film from the era featured their harpy assaults whenever showing a German aircraft, regardless of whether or not the plane was actually a Stuka.

The Stuka did not always scream. Technical history does not indicate an operational bias to Junkers Flugzeug und Motorenwerke AG (JFM), the production company responsible for the Stuka and other German bombers, wrote operational manuals, called *Betriebsanleitungen*, which were much like those a car company would produce today. The manuals for the early war model of the Stuka, the *Stuka I*, featured many diagrams of the aircraft and its various subsections, such as figure 2, informing its pilots and mechanics about the important systems equipped on the aircraft and recommendations on how to get the best performance from the machine in flight.¹⁵ The most important detail, however, was missing from all of those plans: the siren. No portion of the *Rumpfwerk* (fuselage) *Fahrwerk* (undercarriage), where the siren was mounted on the Stuka, mentioned the siren.¹⁶ A *Critical Past* video also shows a Stuka attacking a Polish target in 1939. It too features no siren sound.¹⁷ William Green, a 20th century military aviation historian, documents in an albeit slightly outdated but nevertheless comprehensive reference, the various versions of the Stuka. His diagrams feature the siren on the aircraft and a short description identifying its only purpose as to spread terror among those on the targeted grounds.¹⁸

This thread is common among historians who study the Stuka. No purpose existed for the siren apart from striking fear into the hearts of its targets. In fact, it created an additional drag on the airframe, meaning the plane itself performed more poorly with the siren than without. Despite this, the *Luftwaffe* continued to use the siren throughout the war, although the

In an attack on his region. In the words of Elie Poulard,

Conversely, Winston Churchill gave Germany an identical threat in **Associated Press** article from only months **Luftwaffe** sorties over London ended, Churchill stated that the hrown upon Germany about half the tonnage of bombs thrown by the

During the Second World War, Germany held a vested interest in dispersing among the subject peoples of British colonial territories. One focus was on aiding the Arab national in the Middle East, who rejected Jewish Zionism. Miner claims that even under the extreme pressure of the Anglo-American-Soviet alliance in the later years of the war, the Nazi regime still genuinely considered sending detachments of a **Luftwaffe**

²⁷In a

made any actual reservations he may have had about the benefits of terror bombing irrelevant. Richard Overy, an esteemed military aviation historian, in the management of the Luftwaffe in an article from the *Journal of Contemporary Military History*. In classic fashion for a micromanaging leader, the decision should have been taken by Hitler at his Supreme Headquarters without Luftwaffe commander in-³¹Overy goes on to explain that while most of the popular blame was placed on Göring for the failures of the Luftwaffe, Hitler was actually to blame for the majority of the late war operational failures experienced by the German air force.

to his insistence on maintaining the autonomy within the hierarchy of the military

³²A large portion of the blame for the failures of the Luftwaffe however, lies in the doctrinal adherence to terror bombing as a method to win the war rather than simply to beat civilian populations into fearful submission. As the war progressed and prospects of a Nazi victory became dimmer, Hitler turned more and more towards this backwards methodology. Göring certainly supported it at the outset of hostilities, often stood silently as his resources were mismanaged toward the end of the war.

Overy does, however, admit the fault of the Luftwaffe

and the shock of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had not yet worn off in the East. Nonetheless, military doctrine outlining the intention to bomb urban civilian centers with the sole purpose of spreading terror across the populous of enemy nations. Göring committed intentional violations of the Geneva Conventions. His judgement ties him directly to the processes of the Holocaust commonly seen as enacted by the Waffen SS but few other portions of the German military.

War always brings horrors with its onset and often, in times of desperation or under the guise of defending the survival of a civilization, civilians will come under the crosshairs of retaliatory strikes. Terror is often a weapon wielded by those who have no other choice. In this case, however, the Luftwaffe built into its basic doctrine the use of terror bombings as part of the standard toolset of air operations. The German air force, headed by Hermann Göring and controlled

Appendix

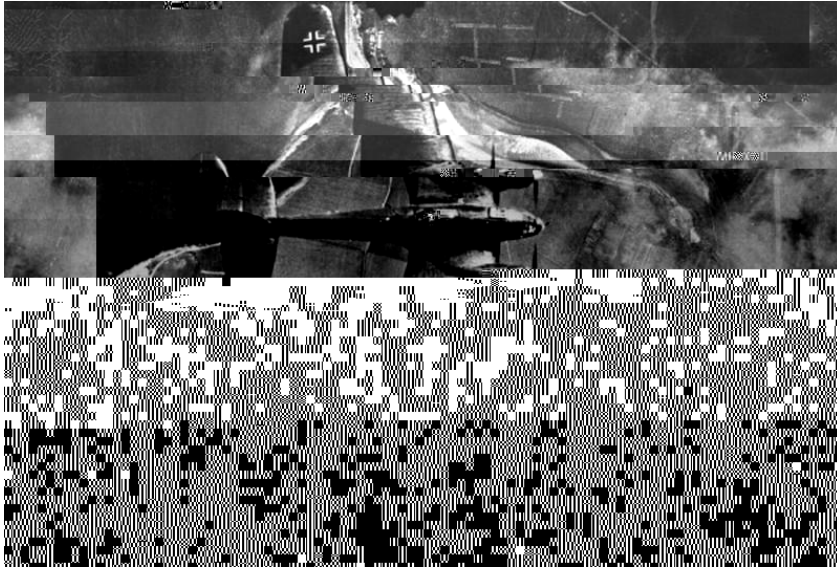


Figure 1: A lone Heinkel 111 bomber flying over England. WWII/Heinkel bomber over England. Encyclopedia Britannica ImageQuest, photograph.

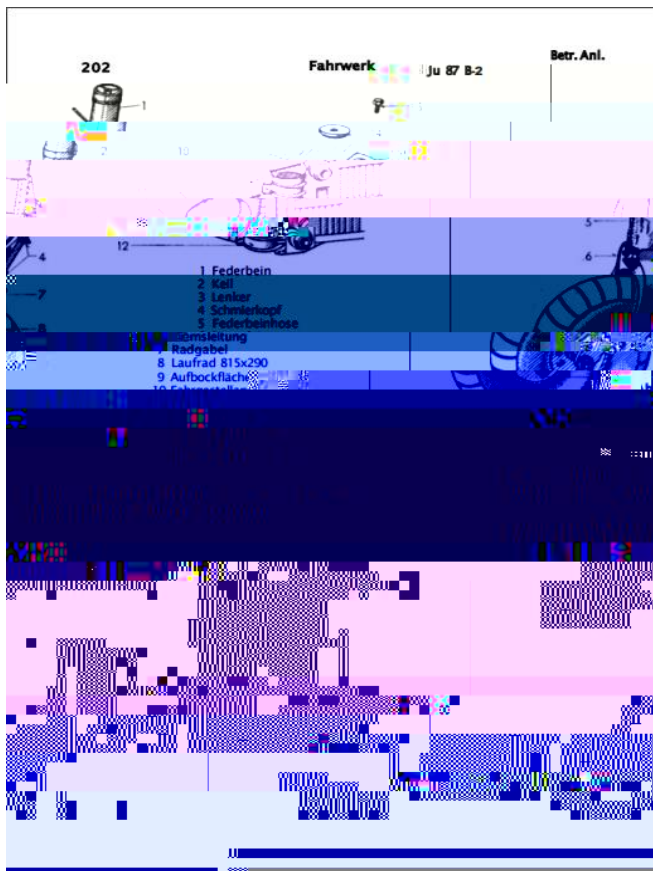


Figure 2: A diagram from the Ju 87 B-2 Betriebsanleitung showing the gear legs and, notably, no siren installation. Betriebsanleitung, April 1939. Dessau: Junkers Flugzeug und Motorenwerke Aktiengesellschaft 1940. <https://stephentaylorhistorian.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/ju87b2.pdf>

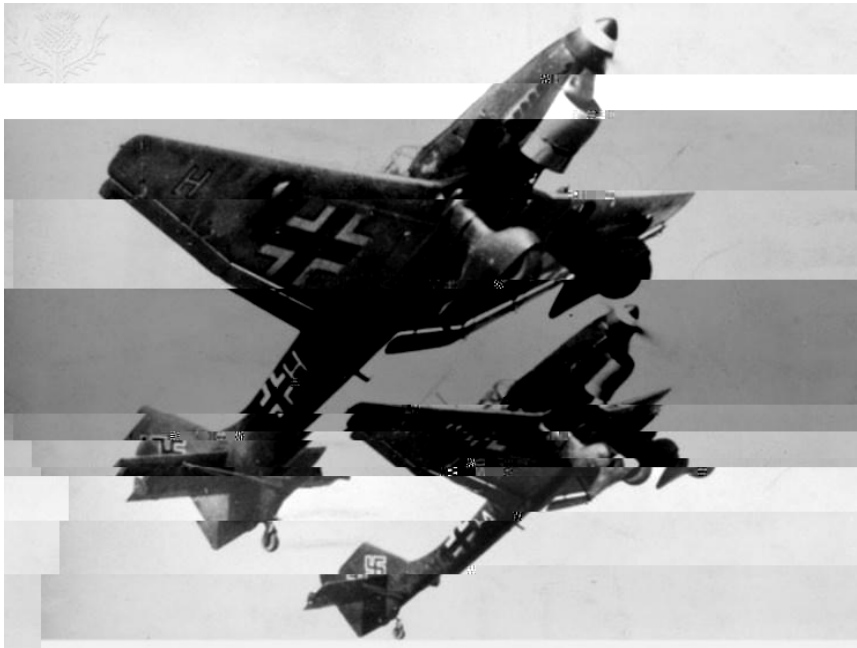


Figure 3: Two Stukas with their iconic air sirens. The sirens were mounted on the gear legs just below the wings. German Stuka dive bombers photographed, c1942, during World War II. Encyclopedia Britannica ImageQuest, photograph.



Figure 4: Hermann Göring on the witness stand at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal. Nuremberg Trials, Hermann Goering. Encyclopedia Britannica ImageQuest, photograph

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0:37 <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/VLVAADFJO6XS7FTJOLQPWMA1FIO9S>
[RUINS-OF-GUERNICA -AFTER -AIR -RAID/](#)

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German Ju87 Stuka dive bombers attack Westerplatte in Gdansk, Poland, during

however, she made sure her children had what they needed spiritual beliefs helped keep her life composed

close to people never left me completely
inclined to hold back a little of myself, reserving it for myself. This distance would plague the
president in his later years
would struggle to see their father care so deeply for others while not receiving it themselves
However, those who he did become close to would be held dear to his heart

AIDS virus in 1985. This moment was the breaking point for the president when he finally
decided that those infected with the AIDS virus needed his help

Nel . She encouraged his
talent during his early years because she herself was a bit of an introvert.
As John McCallister
reported **The Saturday Evening Post**

when Richard Nixon ran for the California state

to support Nixon instead. As his friends were Republican Democrat¹⁴

When Reagan was elected president of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) in 1947, with whom he had been a member for years, he was tasked with addressing the growing communist problem in Hollywood. This experience would be the basis for his extreme stance in his presidency,

lies, deceit, violence, or any other tactic that suited them to advance the cause of expansion

Communism.¹⁵ Despite originally supporting some Communist causes in Hollywood and joining others in resistance of American nuclear bombs, Reagan eventually began searching for loyal allies to help build what became known as the Hollywood blacklist during the Cold War.¹⁶

His time as the SAG president left Reagan bitter against the unions, whom he viewed as a gateway to Communism, as weak against the Russians in the Cold War, and unable to look

became more successful, now seeing taxes as a system designed to punish those who worked. The real workers in the country were no longer being used to help the less fortunate, but a means to fund a country that would be doing just fine without their extra dollars. At this point that Reagan began voting publicly for conservative. For example, he voted for Eisenhower in both presidential elections and advocated once again for Richard he ran for president

helpful by appearing to cross party lines with his support¹⁸

When Nixon ran for Governor of California in 1962, Reagan officially switched his affiliation to the Republican Party. Although his film career began to decline after taking on more political responsibility, he now found himself in the spotlight. As most of his friends had been conservatives for years, his influence spread quickly. Audiences came in droves to hear him speak about problems they themselves faced, such as high taxes. At this point, California had a powerful economy, but the richest often complained how the state could thrive even more if they were allowed to spend their money freely

¹⁴ Diggins, Ronald Reagan, 37.

¹⁵ Diggins, Ronald Reagan, 100.

¹⁶

¹⁷ Collins, Transforming America, 37.

¹⁸ Ibid, 37.

personal leadership was cheerful, credible, and courageous, and it carried the day

The AIDS Crisis

In 1979, gay men began arriving in clinics in San Francisco, fearful of swollen glands they were starting to develop. Due to a lack of knowledge about gay health, many doctors just advised them to abstain from sexual contact for a bit and see if that helped, and soon many of these patients began to die from unusual diseases; diseases that were usually seen in much older people. This was followed by an official CDC report to doctors across the country to look out for a cancer seen only in homosexuals. The CDC reported those most at risk of getting the disease were gay men, drug addicts, and people who received multiple blood transfusions. By 1984, almost 5,000 people would be diagnosed with the AIDS virus.³¹

This issue was not helped by the conservative majority in the religious right that had long proof that they were justified. Richard Nixon, an advisor to presidents Nixon, Ford, and then Ronald Reagan, did not agree with this sentiment, but he did not go out of his way to help those who were slowly dying of the disease. In direct contrast to this, Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at the time, decided to take the fight upon herself and the government. Not encouraged by religious base to the degree that Reagan was, Thatcher had the government directly focus on AIDS research. The government funded what Thatcher deemed necessary to help, and her direct

may have evolved their medical treatment, they were still some time away from true acceptance.

Since its first arrival, it has killed hundreds of thousands of people. An unfortunate reality is that the AIDS crisis was but another step on the ladder of gay oppression. In the gay community, it felt as if AIDS was just the next thing to kill them, and the catalyst to end their suffering in America. Ben Schatz would describe his experience as:

and every minute or so you can look over at the man just in time to see him let go and drop. But up on top of the roof, the rest of the country is having a cocktail party and except for those people who are walking around stepping on your fingers, man after man lets go and falls, and

above you hear ice tinkling in the glasses, the pile of bodies down below is just

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To sum it up in one word: ignorance. Schatz saw people who knew he needed help, yet all they did

to implement a federal response to the crisis. He advocated for government funding for sex education programs and wanted to spread awareness for condoms as a deterrent to AIDS.

odds with his religious beliefs. He was a conservative, anti-gay, anti-marital sex, and by most accounts was very accepting of gay people. However, it is possible this faded as he aged.

He knew he needed them to win reelection in 1984, so he sympathized with the thousands

successful television actor who had enjoyed relative popularity since the 1950s point, Reagan had been actively blocking his surgeon general from discussing the federal role until he learned of the illness of his friend

resources to fight it affecting gay strangers. Now, cultural icons were dying, cultural icons that were in fact actively hiding their sexuality wrong it had been. For Reagan in particular, this experience was difficult because Hudson had been a friend of his from his acting years. For a man who already struggled with connecting people on a personal level, losing a true friend became too much.

It was 1986 when the president finally mentioned the AIDS virus by name. By this time, over 21,000 American citizens had died. Reagan finally discussed federal funding to help combat the virus and assured those suffering that they were not alone. This is a thought and late response to one of the most devastating diseases in history when the president was nearing the end of his second term, and throughout both terms

to make him acknowledge the couples that were suffering. Though not an ignorant man, . He could have at any

would have known that work was being done against the disease that took their lives reluctance to compromise the support of his religious base and step away from his neoconservative values in order to take action against a deadly virus staple of

In the early 1900s, as Darwinists were seeking scientific justification for their theories and would often use fairs and zoos to promote their racist ideologies from various ethnic thropology

⁸ These anthropological villages were intended to justify the dominant racial hierarchy in which Blacks and other minorities were at the bottom. ⁹ Beota was lured to St. Louis under the assumption that freedom and opportunity awaited him. ¹⁰ However, when he arrived, he was put

Both Black and white scholars embraced eugenic ideology; however, they were motivated for different reasons. It seems relatively obvious that desperate and relentless white supremacist scholars would attempt to use science to justify their racial hierarchy. However, the fact that Black scholars also adopted eugenics seems far less obvious. The various ways Black and white

belief that they would soon be able to manipulate the laws of human heredity to benefit the racist agenda.³⁶

As ideas about evolution and race circulated in the scientific community, Herbert Spencer to as social Darwinism.³⁷ Although Spencer was British, social Darwinism became popular in the United States because it supported already established white supremacy.³⁸ Spencer

groups who are struggling economically, socially, or politically, believed that if one race or group of people were in a disadvantaged position in society, it was a result of inherent inferiority and they should not have the opportunity to compete with the superior races.³⁹ Spencer, conflict between races was necessary for social progress because it was part of the natural order of things for the Anglo race to dominate other races.⁴⁰ He was analyzing world history from an exclusively white lens, not considering a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, or multi-cultural perspective. Spencer ignored the fact that American society was built on racism. As a result, certain groups of people are severely disadvantaged not because of their genetics, but because white Europeans established the United States through the abuse, exploitation, and discrimination of other races.⁴¹

Graham Sumner. Sumner strongly believed that everyone is born into the world on an equal playing field with the same access to opportunities and ability to gain status, regardless of race. According to Sumner, personal motivation and natural ability determined whether or not an individual would be successful. However, he failed to consider the reality that if you are not white in the United States, you are automatically at a disadvantage. Sumner can slavery in an attempt to justify his beliefs. He argued that the white American business class was able to thrive economically, culturally, socially, and politically because whites were inherently superior to all other races.⁴²

White People in the U.S. During the Early 20th Century

Ideas about white supremacy and imperialism can be seen in European and American history of the 19th and 20th centuries. However, as scientific racism gained popularity, these ideas received more attention. In 1899, William Z. Ripley published *Races of Europe*, a text in which he distinguished a tripartite racial hierarchy of European white races. According to Ripley, the superior race was Teutonic, otherwise known as Nordic or Aryan, followed by the Alpine, and then

36

History of Political Economy, 35, no. 4 (Winter 2002):

37

38

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Ibid.*

43

Mediterranean⁴⁴ Belief in a superior Teutonic race came to be known as Nordic⁴⁵ according

In the early 20th century, most Black Americans were struggling to find their place in white Americans society and many were stuck in impoverished living situations also difficult

Darwinism, and scientific racism. He eventually combined those ideologies into one concept called eugenics.⁶⁶

the social control of human breeding, based on the assumption that differences in human intelligence.⁶⁷ The basic ideology of eugenics was that people with good attributes should reproduce and people with bad attributes should not.⁶⁸ Galton believed that the racial hierarchy placed white people at the top.⁶⁹

In the first half of the 20th century, nearly every modern society embraced eugenics in some way, although not all eugenic programs were designed with racism in mind. For example, some countries had prenatal care practices that, because they were designed to control breeding, have been considered eugenics but were not directly motivated by eugenics.⁷⁰ In the United States, initially focused on the study of lower-class white families who were considered to be degenerate, passing down qualities such as alcoholism, criminality, and prostitution.⁷¹ However, during the Progressive Era, racism became a primary feature of U.S. eugenics.⁷²

The complex racial climate of the United States made it the perfect place for eugenics to flourish.⁷³

The whole institution of American slavery was grounded in the ideology of human breeding.⁷⁴ White Americans, who already viewed themselves as the superior race, attended auctions where they would purchase other human beings depending on various physical and mental capabilities.⁷⁵

The United States had been a racially hostile place for people since its origins, which provided the perfect environment for eugenics to thrive in. The abolition of slavery in the United States in 1865 did not have a harmonious outcome. Black Americans were still seen as inferior and were forced to live under the cruelty of white power and discrimination. Other groups also suffered at the hands of white Americans. Native Americans experienced the brutality of white supremacy and power since the first Europeans stepped foot on the continent. Mexicans in western and southwestern America were victimized after the Mexican American War. In addition, immigration was seen as a threat to white racial purity, resulting in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. There was even extreme discrimination against southern European immigrants, who were not seen as fully white.⁷⁶

⁶⁶Black, *War Against the Weak*, 4-15.

⁶⁷More Merciful and Not Less Effect

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⁶⁹Ibid, 68.

⁷⁰Ibid, 72.

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⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Black, *War Against the Weak*, 22.

⁷⁴Ibid, 21.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid, 22.

In the early 1900s, American biologist Charles Davenport became obsessed with Francis Galton's theory of eugenics. ⁷⁷Eugenics was appealing to Davenport because, in addition to being a scientist, he wanted to create a superior race. ⁷⁸By advocating his racist rhetoric, Davenport gained the support of some of the wealthiest men in America, including Alexander Graham Bell, Andrew Carnegie, Woodrow Wilson, and Dr. John Harvey Kellogg. ⁷⁹They provided Davenport with the money and tools he needed to establish the Eugenics Record Office and a biological laboratory for experimental evolution in Cold Spring Harbor, New York. ⁸⁰Davenport started collecting information from various sources, such as city records, mental health facilities, schools and homes for the deaf and blind, prisons, hospitals, and almshouses. ⁸¹Several other racist American scholars, such as Harry H. Laughlin and Madison Grant, joined Davenport on his mission to breed a superior race.

decision.⁹² conclusions that would support their argument. These were used by eugenicists to validate their beliefs about white superiority and strengthen their argument that Black Americans, and other minorities, were inadequate members of society because of their genetic makeup.⁹³

Eugenicists also sought to eliminate the reproductive rights of those they deemed degenerate and defective.⁹⁴ Sterilization became eugenicists' preferred method to achieve this goal; however, like segregation, restrictive marriage, and euthanasia were also considered appropriate birth control methods.⁹⁵ Eugenicists believed that inferior people should not be allowed to reproduce because they would pass down their undesirable traits to their children. Whites and minorities, particularly Black Americans, were targeted by sterilization efforts. By 1935, the majority of states in the U.S. had legalized sterilization. Each state possessed a specific criteria to determine if someone should be sterilized.⁹⁶

someone in Oregon could be sterilized if they were considered feeble-minded, insane, an epileptic, a habitual criminal, a moral degenerate, or a sexual pervert.⁹⁷ The vagueness of these qualifications meant that eugenicists could sterilize anyone who they believed was a threat to white racial purity.¹⁰⁰

Miscegenation, the interbreeding of different racial groups through sex or marriage, was also seen as a significant danger to white racial purity.¹⁰¹ Marriage laws quickly became another way for eugenicists to ensure that white people were only reproducing with other white people. Marriage between the races and encourage stock (ethnic group) purity. The negroes are too different genetically and will always be a source of conflict. Negroes must be resettled in marriages.¹⁰² The present in mixed marriages.¹⁰³ present in a marriage, while in Alabama, Georgia, and Virginia, all mixed marriages were

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⁹³ Ibid, 246.

⁹⁴

illegal.¹⁰⁴Based on the various restrictions eugenicists placed on marriage and reproduction, it is obvious that African Americans were one of their primary targets.

Black Opposition to Eugenics

Black scholars were acutely aware that white supremacy and racism were fundamental to eugenic ideology. Many Black intellectuals such as Kelly Miller, a professor at Howard University, ¹⁰⁵He openly accused white eugenicists of conducting biased and faulty research. ¹⁰⁶Miller pointed out that mainstream white eugenicists were accumulating damaging information about the Black population, such as high crime rates.

impact on racial progress.¹¹⁷ Similarly to Miller, DuBois argued that the social problems within the Black community, such as high crime rates, were not because of genetic inferiority, but because of environmental factors.¹¹⁸ He argued that crime rates could be high in Black communities because of the abundant suffering they had experienced in the United States since its origins.¹¹⁹ Excessive crime in the Black community could be a result of an adverse environment, not genetic inferiority.¹²⁰ DuBois also accused white eugenicists of conducting biased research, ignoring any information that would contradict their racist beliefs.¹²¹

Black Adaptation of Eugenics

Black Americans recognized the various ways white eugenicists were attempting to dehumanize them, and yet, many prominent Black scholars embraced eugenic ideologies in order to promote racial progress.¹²² Eugenics was appealing to the Black intellectuals of the New Negro Movement who were focused on the social, political, and economic uplift of the Black population.¹²³ Shantella Y. Sherman referred to the fusion of the New Negro Movement and

¹²⁴According to Sherman, New Negro Eugenics dictated by environment, and used social engagement and education to transform the marginally fit into useful and progressive.¹²⁵ Black scholars such as W. E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, William Hannibal Thomas, and Kelly Miller all incorporated eugenics into their work. These men, with the exception of Thomas, did not fully endorse mainstream eugenics. Instead, they adapted some of the key components of eugenics, such as racial purity, nationalism, and strategic breeding, in conjunction with the universal movement for Black progress and liberation.

DuBois focused primarily on the social problems that plagued Black people in American cities and argued that it was the responsibility of Black intellectuals to uplift the remainder of the population.¹²⁷ In **The Philadelphia Negro** DuBois divided the Black population into four

-class

¹²⁸According to Sherman,
¹²⁹She observed that

DuBois believed poverty and a lack of motivation were inherited traits; a result of unhealthy and unproductive breeding among Blacks.¹³⁰ DuBois also claimed that white people in the United

117

118 W. E. B. DuBois, **The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study** (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1899), iv.

119

120 *Ibid.*

121 *Ibid.*, 458.

122 Mitchell, **Righteous Propagation** 80.

123 *Ibid.*, 81.

124 Sherman, **In Search of Purity** 4.

125 *Ibid.*

126 *Ibid.*, 910.

127 W. E. B. DuBois, **The Philadelphia Negro** v-v. 392.

128 DuBois, **The Philadelphia Negro** 311; Sherman, **In Search of Purity** 46.

129 Sherman, **In Search of Purity** 46.

130 *Ibid.*, 56.

possible on their part toward making themselves fit members of the community within a
131 DuBois called on upper class Black Americans to assist the masses
in achieving the desired level of civilization.¹³²

Marcus Garvey was another significant Black scholar who incorporated aspects of eugenics
his doctrine.¹³³ Founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Garvey was heavily
involved in the New Negro Movement and dedicated his life to Black Nationalism, race purity
and race consolidation.¹³⁴
considered a champion of Blackly and independence.¹³⁵ Garvey advocated for the mass
migration of Black people to Africa, arguing that they had the right to reestablish themselves
nation in the place of their origin.¹³⁴

146 While Garvey
advocated for a pure Black African race, Thomas believed that Black people with darker skin
were even farther removed from the civilized humanity.¹⁴⁷ His criticism of his own race is

The American Negro:

The concepts of racial hygiene and eugenics were receiving scientific recognition from prestigious men of various fields. Black scholars acknowledged and rejected the overt racism ingrained in eugenics and adapted aspects of racial hygiene in an effort to further uplift the race.¹⁵⁸ 900.

However, in the early 20th century, ideas about Black Nationalism and racial purity were gaining popularity. The New Negro Movement was thriving, and Black people were determined to establish their strength and independence with a newfound assertiveness.

Racial purity, breeding practices, and nationalism were important concepts for both Black and white eugenicists. Nordicism was a crucial component of white eugenics. White eugenicists believed that the Teutonic race was superior and should prevail over every other race.

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Journal of Black Studies

Research Notes

audience which we simply do not possess. The story begins three generations before the birth of the hero (this is typical) and follows his way through several countries and expects an intimate relationship with most of whom, as I point out in class, are unfortunately

one which I have seen in all the years of teaching this class, although I always recommend that students draw family trees when reading the sagas, and some of them actually do. This major accomplishment certainly will use next time I teach the saga. It makes it clear that the family feud at the heart of the saga was not between two families, but among distantly related branches of the same family. Egill was related to the Norwegian king with whom the family fought off and on since the time of his marriage. Drawing the family tree pictorially in such detail as we see here changes our understanding of the story and makes it clearer why the families fought it out always -laws, particularly when they have more power than you do. I can only admire the impulse which led to such a complete rendering of the family history of the saga and hope that it did lead to a better understanding and appreciation of the medieval histories themselves. I am convinced that it will.

(J L O | Family Tree)

Karen Oslund at Towson University. During this course, the class read four different Viking sagas, family sagas, legendary sagas, etc. Scholars understand the purpose of family sagas as assisting in the telling of stories about Viking families, one of which was . In this saga we are introduced to a very interesting character by the name of Egill Skallagrimsson and his off and on feud with the family of King Harald Finehair, the king of Norway. Reading this saga is quite entertaining and enjoyable; however, trying to follow the family feud was at times difficult because there were several Vikings who had the same name throughout the saga. At this moment, I decided to construct a family tree in order to help myself understand which Viking was which and how related back to Egill Skallagrimsson and his complicated relationship with Harald

While constructing the family tree, I was quickly surprised at how interconnected everybody in the story was. In the saga, Egill Skallagrimsson is related to King Harald Finehair again throughout his life and his family. In the saga, the relationship between these two families, my first thought was that there would be no family connections, but my construction of the family tree revealed many closely related, interconnected relationships more than I would have thought.

Throughout the process of making the family tree, I was asked quite often by other students why I would take the time to do something like that. I would simply respond with a few reasons. First, I found it necessary because while reading, as it was difficult to understand which Viking was being talked about. Second, I found that visual representation was helpful. The family tree made

it easier to understand who everybody was and how they were connected to each other. Ultimately, it helped me to better understand the saga.

By the end of the course, several students mentioned that they were impressed with my family tree and that it actually helped them better understand the saga. Personally, I also found that creating the family tree was a lot of fun because it allowed me to interact more with the story. It was something different than just reading the saga and talking about it. My hope is that future readers of this family tree will be able to use my family tree as a guide and it will help them as it helped me and other students. In the future, I plan to create other family trees from other Viking sagas.

The Saga of the Greenlanders tells the same story of the medieval discovery of North America told from different points of view. It should be interesting to see if the different perspectives affect the construction of the family trees.

To view the family tree, please visit the Towson Journal of Historical Studies Wordpress <http://wp.towson.edu/tuhsd1020>

