

# **Topic : Ideas of Race in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

What were the consequences when pseudo-scientific ideas of Race became integral to government policies and legislation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries?

# Key Terms used in Topic 3

- **Pseudo-Scientific Racism**
- **Eugenics**
- **Race**
- **Human Genome Project**
- **Ideology**
- **Holocaust**
- **Anthropologist**

# Key Terms used in Topic 3

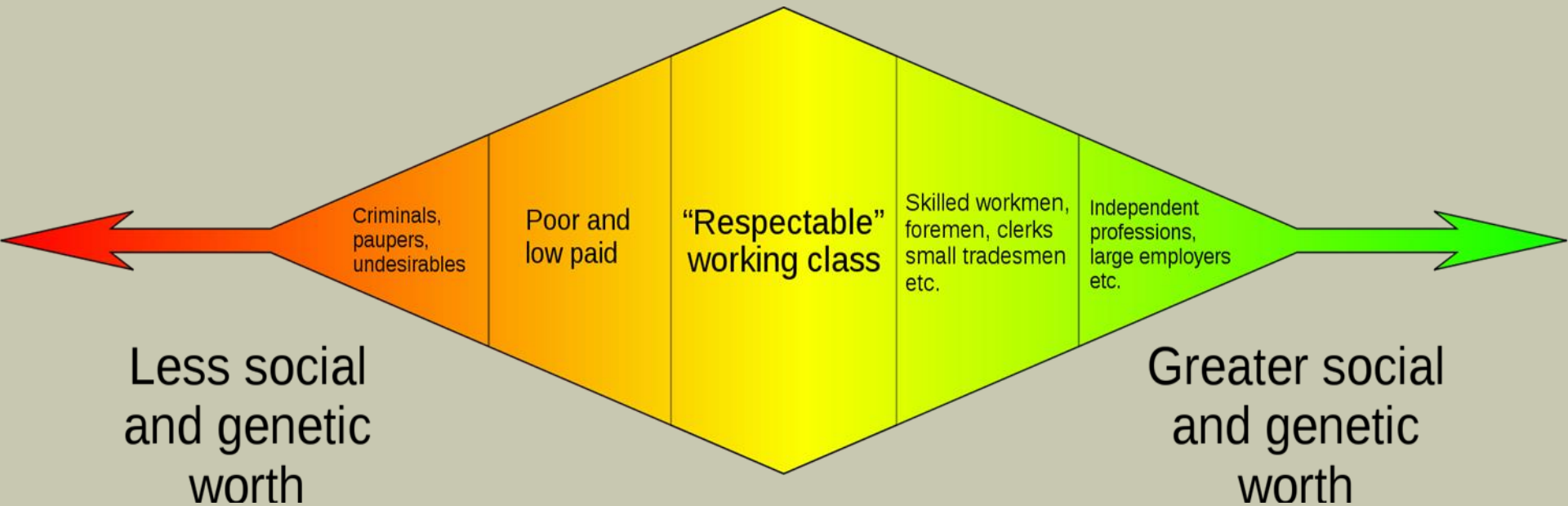
- **Persecution**
- **The Final Solution**
- **Extermination**
- **Social construct**
- **Racial hierarchy**
- **Stereotype**

# Topic Overview

During the **19<sup>th</sup> Century** many people in Europe and the USA believed that a person's character or intelligence was decided by the colour their skin, or the religion they practised. Many Europeans believed that people with pale skin were superior to people with dark skin and that Christians were superior to those who practised different religions (eg: Jews, Muslims or Hindus). These 'racist' beliefs are not based on any scientific evidence – they are 'pseudo' or false science.

This topic looks at what happened in **Australia and Nazi Germany** when racist ideas were turned into government policy and law.

# An Explanation of Eugenics



# Theories and Practice



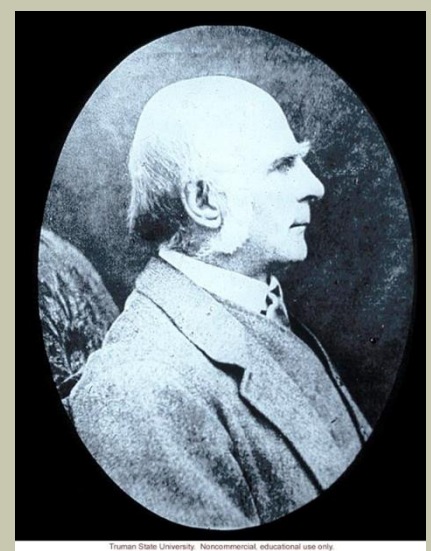
"Healthy Parents have Healthy Children."

# Hierarchies of race in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

MAMMALIA.	
ORDER 1. PRIMATES.	
	<i>Fore-teeth cutting; upper 4, parallel; teats 2 pectoral</i>
	1. HOMO.
<i>Sapiens.</i>	Diurnal; varying by education and situation.
	2. Four-footed, mute, hairy. <i>Wild man.</i>
	3. Copper-coloured, choleric, erect. <i>American.</i>
	<i>Hair black, straight, thick; nostrils wide, face harsh; beard scanty; obstinate, content free. Paints himself with fine red lines. Regulated by customs.</i>
	4. Fair, sanguine, brawny. <i>European.</i>
	<i>Hair yellow, brown, flowing; eyes blue; gentle, acute, inventive. Covered with close vestments. Governed by laws.</i>
	5. Sooty, melancholy, rigid. <i>Asiatic.</i>
	<i>Hair black; eyes dark; severe, haughty, covetous. Covered with loose garments. Governed by opinions.</i>
	6. Black, phlegmatic, relaxed. <i>African.</i>
	<i>Hair black, frizzled; skin silky; nose flat; lips tumid; crafty, indolent, negligent. Anoints himself with grease. Governed by caprice.</i>

In 1775 the Swedish botanist, Linnaeus organised human being into different groups. He believed that these different groups of humans had **fixed characteristics**. His system was widely believed by 19<sup>th</sup> Century European scientists and used to 'prove' European superiority. Today, it is known to be untrue. It is **an example of 'pseudo' or false science**.

The word **EUGENICS** (from the Greek *eugenes* or wellborn). In 1904 Francis Galton said:



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“All would agree that it is better to be healthy than sick, vigorous than weak, well fitted than ill fitted for their part in life. In short, that it was better to be good than bad specimens of their kind, whatever that kind may be ...The aim of eugenics is to represent each class or sect by its best specimens, causing them to contribute more than their proportion to the next generation...”



# 'Positive Eugenics' = Family Planning

Eugenicists encouraged the reproduction of the "*best and the brightest*"

They believed that desirable characteristics (such as hard work, intelligence or physical fitness) could be increased by *encouraging reproduction* among those thought to be the most genetically fit.

- This was known as **Positive Eugenics**.

# Negative Eugenics = Selective Breeding

Eugenicists discouraged reproduction of the "*unfit*" (the 'bad' genes) including criminals, alcoholics, psychotics, mentally and physically disabled, paupers, and those in poor physical health.

Eugenicists argued that many social problems could be eliminated by *discouraging or preventing reproduction* of individuals deemed genetically unfit.

- This was known as **negative eugenics**.

# Eugenics supporters holding placards on Wall Street New York in support of selective breeding c.1915

I must drink alcohol to sustain life. Shall I transfer the craving to others?

Would the prisons and asylums be filled if my kind had no children?



I cannot read this sign. By what right have I children?

# Human Genome Project

- Launched in USA in 1990s to map all human genes.
- It confirmed that, scientifically, there is no such thing as 'Race'.
- Revealed that humans are 99.99% the same genetically with greater variation within subgroups (eg: all black skinned people) than between subgroups (eg: black and white).
- Research also supports the theory that all humans originated in Africa.

# Practices of Race and Eugenics

## USA

- Early 20<sup>th</sup> C. various states banned marriage if one partner was alcoholic, 'feeble-minded', mentally or physically disabled, had TB.
- IQ tests devised to test intelligence (which was seen as fixed)
- Immigration policy favoured northern Europeans.
- Some believed that native Americans should be exterminated

## Australia

- Indigenous population had been devastated by European diseases who viewed them as 'unfit' to survive into 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Attempts to assimilate 'mixed-race' children by removing them to white society.
- Aimed to 'breed out' indigenous blood over generations.

# Practices of Race and Eugenics

## Namibia

- 1904 German colonists carried out genocide against the Herero people
- Medical experiments carried out on 'mixed race' children to 'prove' they were inferior to white children.
- Mixed-race marriages banned.
- Hitler was very influenced by Namibian experiments

## South Africa

- Eugenics institution was established in 1920s
- Promoted racial segregation, opposed mixed-marriages and believed in white racial superiority.
- Sterilisation of mentally ill took place.
- Some black women were sterilised without their consent.