

Nazi Race Science

The Nazis used pseudo-race science as a means to legitimize antisemitic policies and prove the superiority of the German Aryan master race. As written in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler believed the “state must set race in the center of all life. It must take care to keep it pure.” The state “must see to it that only the healthy beget children.”

Race science was doctrine in Nazi Germany and became a tool to teach racism and hatred to the German people. Theories of racial hygiene led to programs such as sterilization and euthanasia, in order to dispose of so called “undesirables” within the population.

In 1939, Hitler authorized the death of those “suffering from illnesses judged to be incurable,” which included the physically and mentally disabled and the emotionally disturbed. In late 1941, the Roman Catholic Church protested these killings and they stopped. However, after a short time, the killing began again in secret and, ultimately, close to 250,000 people died in the T-4 Euthanasia Program.

Vocabulary

Aryan: a person descended from the prehistoric Indo-Europeans; perverted under the Nazis to describe people with blond hair and blue eyes.

Pseudoscience: false science

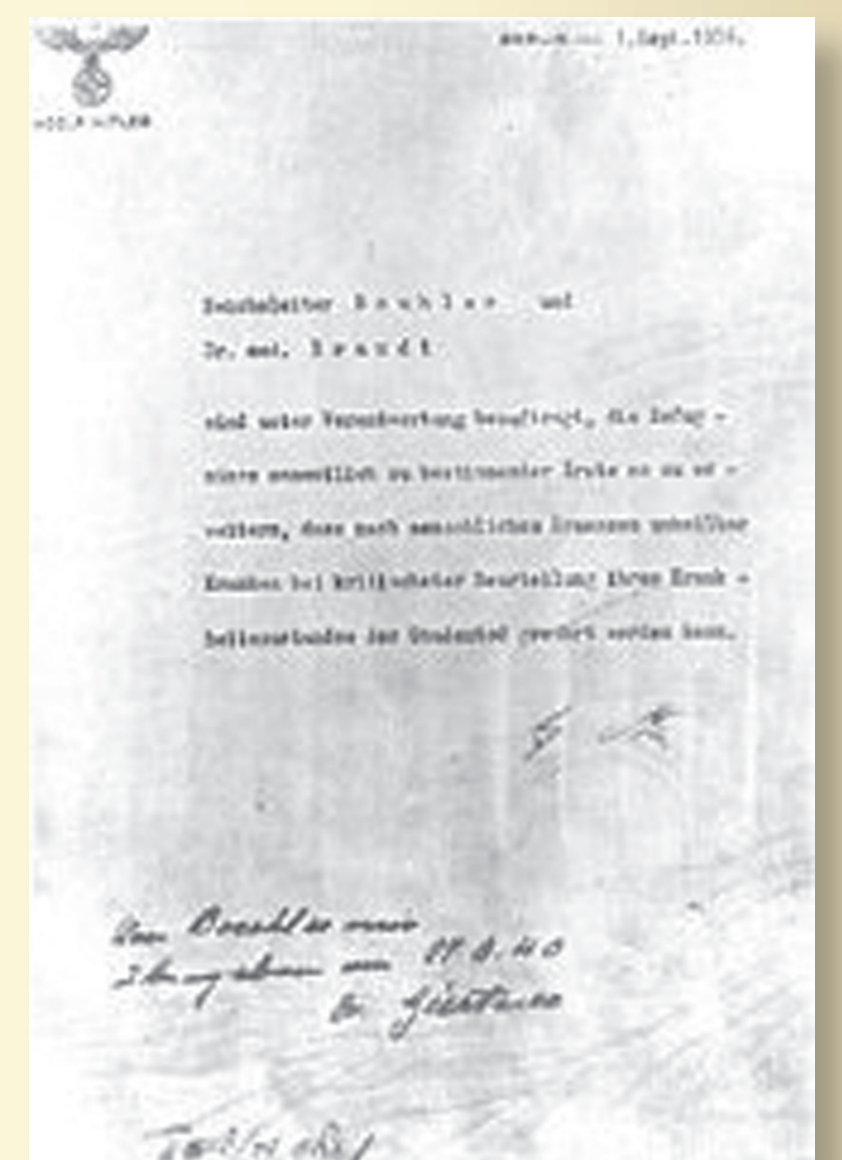
Euthanasia: the act of causing death painlessly, so as to end suffering; under the Nazis, it meant the killing of “inferior” people.



Examination to determine eye color.
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Examination of a young woman's face.
© Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin. 1937. Fritz Carl



Copy of an original letter signed by Adolf Hitler authorizing the T4 (Euthanasia) program. The text of the letter states that “Reichsleiter [Philipp] Bouhler and Dr. med. [Karl] Brandt are charged with responsibility to broaden the authority of certain doctors to the extent that [persons] suffering from illnesses judged to be incurable may, after a humane, most careful assessment of their condition, be granted a mercy death. [signed] Adolf Hitler.”
USHMM



Hadamar Institute: one of six hospitals in Germany and Austria in which the Nazi euthanasia program was carried out. April 7, 1945.
USHMM, courtesy of Rosanne Bass Fulton

“Never under any circumstances may a human being kill an innocent person apart from war and legitimate self-defense. If you establish and apply the principle that you can kill ‘unproductive’ fellow human beings then woe betide us all when we become old and frail!...If it is once accepted that people have the right kill ‘unproductive’ fellow humans – and even if it only initially affects the poor defenseless mentally ill – then as a matter of principle murder is permitted for all unproductive people...”

Protest of the euthanasia program by the Bishop of Münster.
The Racial State: Germany, 1933- 1945
Burleigh and Wipperman

