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Lily Faust

April 7, 2016

The Colour Problem: Eugenic Anxieties of Intellectual and Social Decline in Britain: 1945-1979

by

Lily Faust

Kathryn Amdur  
Adviser

History

Kathryn Amdur  
Adviser

Sander Gilman  
Committee Member

Deborah Lipstadt  
Committee Member

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By

Lily Faust

Amdur

Adviser

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## Abstract

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This project involves an examination of the persistence of scientific racism in Britain from 1945 to 1979. To this end, I examine the ways in which the language of race was used to articulate deeply-rooted societal anxieties, by examination of what I term a “eugenic framework.” I do so through a dual structure: in the first part, an analysis of the debates surrounding “New Commonwealth” immigration, and in the second, an examination of the activities of the eugenicists and psychometricians in analyzing IQ within the context of the changing demographics of the British population. In the end, I argue that biological conceptions of race persisted in both public sphere conceptions of race and amongst a minority of hereditarian thinkers within the scientific sphere.

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## Introduction

Conducting a study involving questions of race, inequality, and eugenics could not occur at a more pertinent time. As I write these words, the increase in refugees from the Middle East and Africa seeking asylum within the European Union is swelling, in what pundits and policy makers alike have deemed an international migrant crisis.<sup>1</sup> Tabloid newspapers, in particular, have been quick to demonize the refugees. Last April, controversial journalist Katie Hopkins wrote a much reviled piece describing asylum seekers as cockroaches. As the UN High Commissioner rightly responded, such language harkens back to the genocidal language of the interwar period, when Nazi propagandists painted the pornographically reviled Jewish population as bacilli, rodents, and cockroaches.<sup>2</sup>

To the ears of a daughter of the twenty-first century, the contemporary circulation of such dehumanizing language is shocking and raises cause for concern that our world has ignored the lessons of history. Firstly, how can such discriminatory strains of thought continue to exist without receiving universal censure? Secondly, if biologically-derived racism has proved useful as a legitimizing mechanism for societal hierarchies, can such power structures ever be broken?<sup>3</sup> And finally, exactly how long of a shadow does the legacy of twentieth-century genocide cast, especially if the racial ideas implicit to Nazi ideology appear in present-day discourses? As we look around the globe, to what extent did the tides of racial thought after 1945 recede?

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<sup>1</sup> "Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in graphics," BBC News, November 9, 2015, accessed November 30, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>.

<sup>2</sup> Jon Stone, "Katie Hopkins Migrant Cockroaches Column," *The Independent*, April 24, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended" (lecture, College de France, Paris, 1975-1976).



Six million Jews were exterminated by inheritors of European civilization; it appears a self-evident truth that the world should have imbibed the consequences of vilifying a group as subhuman. Or so it would seem. Racial thought is an elusive idea to grasp, yet it appears wherever people judge others based upon misperceptions of human difference.<sup>4</sup> In fact, it is not yet clear whether race, as a biological construct, is reviving from hibernation, or whether it has remained a constant entity.

Discursively, then, this research project seeks to develop an understanding of the lingering influence of racial and eugenic thought in the period after the revelations of the Holocaust. Existing scholarship has already succeeded in linking the intellectual influences of British eugenics to other eugenic movements around the globe, and, in particular, to the reductive matrix of racial and eugenic thought in Nazi Germany.<sup>5</sup> However, there is a dearth of literature on the opposite angle; namely, on examining the lingering impact of biological racialism upon post-war Britain.

Scholarship on the waxing and waning of race skeptically suggests that the idea of the withering of race after the Holocaust is something of a liberal myth; this implicitly suggests that attempts to combat racial thinking in the post-war era, including social science deconstructions of the myth of race, did not correct the problems that biological conceptions of race generate.<sup>67</sup>

Despite the assurances of the dominant voices of social science and policymaking that race, as a

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<sup>4</sup> George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), 235.

<sup>5</sup> Jeremy Baron, *The Anglo-American Biomedical Antecedents of Nazi Crimes: An Historical Analysis of Racism, Nationalism, Eugenics, and Genocide* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 2007), 195.

<sup>6</sup> Jefferson Fish, *Race and Intelligence: Separating Science from Myth* (Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum, 2002), 169.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Yudell, *Race Unmasked: Biology and Race in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2014), 5.

biological construct, is meaningless, it has been reified as such time and time again.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it is of particular importance to develop an understanding of the changes in racial thought over time, to come to terms with the potential for a reviving racial paradigm.

My research project reflects upon a variety of disciplines, primarily involving the literature surrounding race and eugenics. Race, as a concept that compartmentalizes human variation based upon physical and intellectual characteristics, integrates itself into fields as diverse as eugenics, psychology, and anthropology.<sup>9</sup> For the purposes of this project, I will utilize secondary literature primarily concerning the development of race and eugenics. As will soon be made manifest, the two are linked at various periods of time; a complete analysis of the literature could not consider the one without the other.

The modern incarnation of eugenics evolved from the time of Francis Galton, who in 1865 coined the term, and described it as “the science of improving the human stock,” by allowing “the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable.”<sup>10</sup><sup>11</sup> The eugenics movement in Britain developed around the turn of the century, fostered by British intellectuals who were increasingly preoccupied with the genetic “fitness” of the British population and the degeneration corroding British society.<sup>12</sup><sup>13</sup> Eugenics expanded as both a movement and an ideology focused upon social and political change, by advocating for positive measures to improve the reproductive rates of the political and economic

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<sup>8</sup> Marek Kohn, *The Race Gallery: The Return of Racial Science* (London, UK: Jonathan Cape, 1995), 11.

<sup>9</sup> Yudell, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1985), ix.

<sup>11</sup> Nicholas Gillham, *A Life of Sir Francis Galton: From African Exploration to the Birth of Eugenics* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Mathew Thomson, *The Problem of Mental Deficiency: Eugenics, Democracy, and Social Policy in Britain, 1870-1959* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1998), 20-21.

<sup>13</sup> Not an identical usage to Lankester, who defined biological degeneration as “suppression of form”

elite and negative measures to curtail the undesirable residuum, or “unproductive” lower classes.<sup>14</sup> Proponents of the movement approached the goal of societal advancement from a variety of political and intellectual backgrounds—including the occasional errant Marxist, avidly denouncing the dysgenic effects of private property— yet each in turn embracing the aim of establishing a science to improve the national stock.<sup>1516</sup>

The concept of race, on the other hand, precedes eugenics, but was not constructed in the biological sphere until the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Peculiarly, though race has charted a scientific foundation for over a century, the relationship of race to eugenics has been diagnosed only in the past two decades. The original historians of eugenics argued that British eugenics was linked to social class exclusively.<sup>18</sup> In particular, G.R. Searle adamantly argued that eugenics espoused social, not racial, considerations.<sup>19</sup> This seems curious, given Galton’s own treatment of the subject: “Eugenics is the science of improving stock... which is by no means confined to judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognizance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give the more suitable races or strains of blood a better

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<sup>14</sup> Lyndsey Farrall, Lyndsey. “The Growth of the English Eugenics Movement” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 1970), 203.

<sup>15</sup> Stefan Kuhl, *For the Betterment of the Race: The Rise and Fall of the International Movement for Eugenics and Racial Hygiene* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1.

<sup>16</sup> Lucy Bland and Lesley Hall, “Eugenics in Britain: The View from the Metropole,” In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 222.; John Glad, *Jewish Eugenics* (Washington D.C., US: Wooden Shore, L.L. C., 2011), 64.

<sup>17</sup> Yudell, 2.

<sup>18</sup> Pauline Mazumdar, *Eugenics, Human Genetics, and Human Failings: the Eugenics Society, its sources and its critics in Britain* (London, UK: Routledge, 1992), 3.

<sup>19</sup> G.R. Searle, “Eugenics and Politics in Britain in the 1930’s,” *Annals of Science* 36, no. 2 (March 1979): accessed October 18, 2015, <https://web-a-ebSCOhost-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=85eb8c7e-f128-4c35-8d5a-fd6fd285690b%40sessionmgr4004&vid=1&hid=4107>.

chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable.”<sup>20</sup> However, only in the past few years has a new generation of historians begun to do justice to the matter, by articulating the role of race as inextricably bound up with class in British eugenic thought.<sup>2122</sup>

The revisionists orient this research, by providing a eugenic framework from which to examine the persistence of biological determinism, or the theory that human behavioral differences between groups are governed by innate characteristics, in the post-war period.<sup>2324</sup> Working from their correlation of eugenics and race, I seek to unearth the mechanisms through which eugenic strivings for societal improvement, articulated through the language of scientific racism, underpinned both public and scientific discourses about the construction of human physical and mental difference from the end of the Second World War to the rise of Thatcherism in Britain. By scientific racism, I refer to “the language, concepts, methods, and authority of science were used to support the belief that certain human groups were intrinsically inferior to others, as measured by some socially defined criterion, such as intelligence.”<sup>25</sup>

This project exploits a unique temporal opportunity, because historians tend to link eugenics and race only through the interwar period. Much of the secondary literature dismisses eugenics as an epochal phenomenon that was discredited by the end of the Second World War and fails to account for the continuing influence of eugenics, especially, of biologically

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<sup>20</sup> Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* (London, UK: Macmillan, 1883), 25.

<sup>21</sup> I might term the new school the revisionists; therein lies a historiography lesson just waiting to be written.

<sup>22</sup> Dan Stone, “Race in British Eugenics,” *European History Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (July 2001): 397, accessed September 17, 2015, <http://ehq.sagepub.com/content/31/3/397.short?rss=1&ssource=mfr>.

<sup>23</sup> Gavin Evans, *Black Brain, White Brain: Race, Racism, and Racial Science* (Johannesburg, ZA: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2014), 70-71.

<sup>24</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York, NY: Norton, 1996), 20.

<sup>25</sup> Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1982), ix.

determined human variation.<sup>26</sup> By this token, existing scholarship on eugenics in the post-1945 period is extremely narrow. Richard Soloway articulates the problem well, noting: “It is not clear to what extent the unsavory association of eugenics with Nazism, racism, and anti-socialist, procapitalistic class prejudices made [eugenics] an unattractive subject after the war for scholarly inquiry by historians of science as well as of the social and intellectual history of modern Britain.”<sup>27</sup>

To the extent that scholars address eugenics after 1945 at all, they tend to argue that the intellectual foundations of eugenics receded, resulting in a flight of eugenicists transitioning into other fields.<sup>28,29</sup> Such theorists argue that eugenics was invalidated both by its linkages to Nazi racial policy and by the development of the modern evolutionary synthesis, which resuscitated Mendelian genetics and provided a new understanding for the mechanisms of human hereditary transmission.<sup>30,31</sup> Even C.P. Blacker, secretary of the Eugenics Society, spoke along similar lines: “Theoretically interpreted in terms of racialism and practically applied by authoritarian or fascist methods, [eugenics] has revealed itself as perhaps the most repellent and dangerous manifestation of German National Socialism.” Thereafter, he made the argument that Nazi eugenics profoundly altered eugenic thought in Britain, leaving behind a shell of the former Eugenics Society.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Alison Bashford, “Epilogue: Where did Eugenics Go?” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 539.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Chappell Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), xvi.

<sup>28</sup> Mazumdar, 6.

<sup>29</sup> Carolyn Burdett, “Post Darwin: social Darwinism, degeneration, eugenics.” accessed October 18, 2015, <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/post-darwin-social-darwinism-degeneration-eugenics>.

<sup>30</sup> Kevles, 251.

<sup>31</sup> Jefferson Fish, *Race and Intelligence: Separating Science from Myth* (Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum, 2002), 12.

<sup>32</sup> C.P. Blacker, “Eugenics in Retrospect and Prospect,” (The Galton Lecture, London, 1945).

It is a grave error that historians take for granted the decline of eugenics as a part and parcel of a post-war backlash against hereditarian orthodoxy, deterministic science, and racism.<sup>33</sup> Though Daniel Kevles attempted to correct this problem in his eugenics study, he noted that most works addressed eugenics only in one country or only through the early 1930's.<sup>34</sup><sup>35</sup> For example, Elazar Barkan's central study, aptly titled, The Retreat of Scientific Racism, is confined to the interwar period.<sup>36</sup>

Critically, despite the extent to which the international political climate turned against the evils associated with Nazi Germany, biological conceptualizations of race proved resurgent. Contrary to public belief, such egalitarian campaigns did not occur for quite some time until after the end of the war.<sup>37</sup> Thereby, backlash against eugenics as an authoritarian ideology linked to Nazi Germany was unexpectedly delayed.<sup>38</sup> When they did emerge, campaigns by both biologists and non-scientists against biological racism failed to deconstruct the biological fabric of race, which, in effect, preserved hereditarianism in elements of both the public and scientific spheres.<sup>39</sup><sup>40</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Hereditarianism assigns genetics the bulk of responsibility for human development

<sup>34</sup> Incidentally, he leapfrogs over the immediate post-war years without providing an assessment of hereditarian thought.

<sup>35</sup> Kevles, x.

<sup>36</sup> Elazar Barkan, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States Between the World Wars* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 10.

<sup>37</sup> Barkan, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Bland and Hall, 64.

<sup>39</sup> UNESCO, *The Race Question in Modern Science* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1969), 497.

<sup>40</sup> Vincent Sarich and Frank Miele, *Race: The Reality of Human Differences* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), 92.

Instead of disappearing, eugenics evolved after the Second World War.<sup>41</sup> As I will argue, eugenics, like earlier promulgations of race science, is best understood not in terms of changing stages but in terms of underlying continuity.<sup>42</sup> On the one hand, the formal eugenics movement produced policy outputs via the British Eugenics Society, including journals, propaganda materials, and the annual Galton Lecture, for the duration of the period under scrutiny.<sup>43</sup> Equally importantly, eugenic strands were active beyond the Society, wherever there was an impulse for the genetic improvement of mankind. Hereditarian beliefs underpinning social inequalities found expression through the activities of the Eugenics Society, as well as through the promotion of mental testing by psychometricians.

My project will transcend existing scholarship by examining the ways in which Britain's scientists and policymakers reified race as an expression of human physical and mental difference. Specifically, I will examine how immigration debates amongst policy makers in the public sphere as well as hereditarian preoccupations with race and intelligence testing within the scientific sphere reflected eugenic concerns about the degeneration of British society. Through this study, I will do two things: I will challenge the orthodoxy about the retreat of scientific racism and will develop a new framework for understanding public and scientific concerns about race, mental variation, and degeneration. I will do so by dividing the work into two chapters, or case studies; the first will focus upon the politics of immigration and the second on intelligence testing. Together, the cases will highlight eugenic concerns about the genetic inferiority of peoples deemed physically and mentally variant. In both cases, race is the primary construct for

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<sup>41</sup> Richard Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 353.

<sup>42</sup> Stepan, xx.

<sup>43</sup> Julian Huxley, "Eugenics in Evolutionary Perspective," (The Galton Lecture, London, 1962).

conceptualizing this variation, and the concerns about race in each case evince both a hereditarian intellectual strain and a deeply rooted anxiety about the decline of the British nation.

The examination to follow involves delving into several sets of primary sources, including government reports, parliamentary records, eugenic publications, and psychological education journals. In particular, the UK Parliament was the arena in which the social problems concerning New Commonwealth immigration were aired and debated, as well as the source for racialized immigration restrictions.<sup>44</sup> Thus, we begin with an examination of parliamentary debates and legislation on the immigration question, amply complemented by Eugenic Society sources. In the second part, we will examine the activities of the Eugenics Society and the psychometricians through the cornerstone texts of British eugenics and educational psychology: the *Eugenics Review* and the *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, respectively. I will analyze the results from my own framework: a conceptual apparatus derived from eugenics.

Lastly, if, by this stage, the more inquisitive amongst my audience feels the need to ask one prescient question: “Why Britain?” I riposte that, simply put, the roots of both eugenics and many of the theories examining the study of race commenced in Britain.<sup>45</sup> It seems fitting to bring the literature full circle, so that scholars can examine the rise and “fall”<sup>46</sup> of British eugenics. But I also have another motive, namely, to examine the richly textured fabric of the British post-war moment. The period under my examination is bounded by the end of the Second World War and the nullification of the work of Cyril Burt, Britain’s leading intelligence researcher.<sup>47</sup> In the intervening thirty-four years, a fascinating set of variables, including the decline of Britain’s empire, an influx of immigration, a eugenic framework supporting race and

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<sup>44</sup> New Commonwealth refers to recently decolonized countries, contrasted to the Dominions

<sup>45</sup> Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1982), xix.

<sup>46</sup> Or endurance, as the case may be

<sup>47</sup> Clare Hanson, *Eugenics, Literature, and Culture in Post-war Britain* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 15.



national superiority, and a theory of demographic degeneration all overlaid. This matrix provides fruitful ground for the intellectual historian and new insights about how the language of race and science can be used to express anxiety about social decline.

#### Chapter 1: The UNESCO Statement(s): The Rejection of Egalitarianism

In the years following the Second World War, various organizations, including, most prominently, the United Nations, produced statements to condemn the scientific racism that had characterized the Third Reich. Yet the very nature and ambiguity of the UNESCO statement, as well as the process of developing it, merits examination as a means of understanding the superficial claim that anti-racism pronouncements laid scientific conceptions of race to rest. My examination also sets the stage for the work of the Eugenics Society by ultimately reinforcing the biological tenets of race which would feed hereditarianism in the years to come.

Principally, the UNESCO campaign of anti-racism attempted to de-legitimize both social and scientific racism. Under director Julian Huxley, himself an evolutionary biologist and leading member of the British Eugenics Society, the framework for the campaign was to consider the possibilities for eugenics in pursuit of “scientific humanism.”<sup>48</sup> This vision rejected the radical racist eugenics of Nazi Germany, in favor of a progressive, non-racist eugenics. The statement, theoretically, should have set the trend for a progressive era in the interpretation of race, racial differences, and human rights. However, it did the opposite.

The first version of the statement, initially produced in July 1950, proudly declared that race was a social construct, not biological fact, and that there was no acceptable scientific justification for discrimination based upon race. The statement asserted that the intellectual capacities of all existing ethnic groups were the same, thereby rejecting the notion that genetic

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<sup>48</sup> Julian Huxley, *UNESCO: Its Purpose and Its Philosophy* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1946).

differences were responsible for producing differences in achievement between groups of people.<sup>49</sup> Further, UNESCO rejected concerns of degeneration resulting from race mixture and substituted the term “ethnic group” for “race.”<sup>50</sup>

Significantly, this type of anti-racist statement appears, at least superficially, to reject the entire framework for racialized thought. At first stroke, it evokes the type of progressive sentiments much desired after years of war and racial oppression. However, developments to follow show otherwise.

The first statement on race purported to be a bulwark against racial thinking within the scientific sphere. However, the committee that produced the statement involved no scientists; a group of sociologists and cultural anthropologists presided.<sup>51</sup> The UNESCO statement thus dismissed physical, including mental, racial differences between human populations from the standpoint of social scientists, not biologists.<sup>52</sup>

Further, when the document was opened up to comment from a body of over one hundred scientists, the scientific community demolished the anti-racist components. “The more the revelations about National Socialist crimes receded into the past and the more intense the discussion of the race question among scientists, the more did the originally clear rejection of the concept of race by UNESCO unravel.”<sup>53</sup> The statement was rapidly criticized by a range of scholars, including anthropologists and geneticists, who made it quite clear that there was no consensus on the scientific accuracy of the race question. Meanwhile, members of the Eugenics Society criticized the resolution for distorting scientific understanding and misrepresenting the

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<sup>49</sup> Four Statements on the Race Question (Paris, France: UNESCO, 1969), 32.

<sup>50</sup> Four Statements on the Race Question (Paris, France: UNESCO, 1969), 33.

<sup>51</sup> Incidentally, Huxley was not on the drafting committee

<sup>52</sup> Gavin Schaffer, *Racial Science and British Society* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 121.

<sup>53</sup> Kuhl, 142.

notion that “subtle but nonetheless important inborn differences between the races could exist with relation to their intellectual capacity.”<sup>54</sup> Even Huxley criticized the statement, asserting that the non-racial explanation of human difference was misrepresented, and insisting that “the major races of man will have genetic differences in mental and temperamental characters as well as in physical characters.”<sup>55</sup> Finally, even British anthropologists, the original champions of doctrinaire egalitarianism, critiqued the inadequate scientific foundations of the UNESCO doctrine.<sup>56</sup> Subsequently, they demanded that UNESCO reformulate the statement with the participation of geneticists. In this reworking, they supported the preservation of the scientific concept of race. Thus, the original moral outrage of a generation of scholars witnessing the fallout from National Socialist policies rapidly transformed into discussion of the scientific justification for differences between races.

The UNESCO statement was revised and republished in June 1951, in a version that reaffirmed a biological definition of race. The revised edition was the product of a group of geneticists and physical anthropologists who primarily shared an anti-racist worldview, including the biologist J.B. S. Haldane and the stridently anti-racist anthropologist Ashley Montagu, so the document did retain elements of the original: namely, the explanation that race was a dynamic category, difficult to define, and changing in composition.<sup>57</sup>

However, the revision deviated from the original in fundamental ways. In the new document, the scientists refrained from replacing the term “race” with “ethnic group,” thereby conserving the term and concept of race.<sup>58</sup> The influence of certain biological conceptions

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<sup>54</sup> Cedric Dover, “UNESCO on Race,” *The Eugenics Review* 42, no. 3 (October 1950): 177-179, accessed November 3, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973137/>.

<sup>55</sup> Schaffer, 124.

<sup>56</sup> Environmentalism as the inverse of hereditarianism in the nature-nurture debate.

<sup>57</sup> Ashley Montagu wrote of race as man’s most dangerous myth

<sup>58</sup> Kuhl, 142.

became clear in a subtle affirmation of the validity of “race,” beyond its existence as a categorical term interchangeable with “ethnic group.” The idea of mental differences between races was affixed to the text, in the fateful statement, “Most anthropologists do not include mental characteristics in their classification of human races.”<sup>59</sup> Most, the statement announced, not all.

By introducing ambiguity about the role of heredity in the mental life of human groupings, the statement—affirmed by the scientific community—opened a space for scientists and social scientists to undertake studies of racial mental difference.<sup>60</sup> By failing to resolve the relative weight of hereditarian versus environmental determinants of human physical variation, the statement enshrined biological races and their ensuing intellectual asymmetries.<sup>61</sup> While some of the social scientists involved in producing the statement proclaimed progressive ideas about race as a social construct, the scientific community was itself divided.<sup>62</sup> Ultimately, though the project attempted to differentiate between the biological fact of race and the myth of race, the statement failed to fulfill its purpose of presenting a unanimous rejection of biological racism by the scientific community.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, the post-war moment included a failed attempt by the international community to combat the biological undercurrents of racial thought. However, it is important to note that this is not to the exclusion of social forms of racism. For, though the seminal scholar on human rights, Elazar Barkan, delineated the process of opening up a social critique of racism as being firstly dependent upon challenging the scientific validity of the race concept, as the following

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<sup>59</sup> Four Statements on the Race Question, 40.

<sup>60</sup> Or preserved that space—it is certainly debatable about whether that space ever closed.

<sup>61</sup> Stepan, 172.

<sup>62</sup> Schaffer, 156-7.

<sup>63</sup> Kuhl, 145.

section will demonstrate, social and biological racism can, and, in post-war Britain did, exist concurrently.<sup>64</sup>

## Chapter 2: Immigration and the Imagined Community

Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the racist writer, admirer of Hitler, and self-aggrandizing German of British extraction, once wrote that history and geography contribute to the rise and fall of races; as a result, there is a limited capacity for any nation to absorb foreign blood.<sup>65</sup> To him, the inequality of talent between the races was natural, evident, and probably even desirable. To Chamberlain's eyes, the immigration of "coloured" immigrants, as primary labor migrants, would have appeared, as a contemporary author describes it, an act of "race suicide."<sup>66</sup> In other words, to a nineteenth-century racist writer, fixated on notions of societal decline, regressive trends would naturally result from the importation of a foreign race composed of "inferior stock."

Chamberlain did not live long enough to witness the immigration debates, nor did he overhear discussion about the relative positions of biological and cultural racism. But Chamberlain did articulate what decades later parliamentary committees and members of the public would express less explicitly: a disproportionate concern with race, or ethnic composition, tied to the destiny of the nation.

Examining the history and politics of immigration to Britain is essential to understanding the context in which eugenics intertwined with race. This narrative illustrates biological prejudice, predicated upon both the pseudo-scientific language employed by policy makers and

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<sup>64</sup> Barkan, 3.

<sup>65</sup> H.S. Chamberlain, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (New York, NY: H. Fertig, 1968), 290.

<sup>66</sup> Diane Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity, 1865 to the Present* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995), 100.

upon the more difficult to articulate anxieties about the degeneration of the imagined [ethnic] community.<sup>67</sup>

The years after 1945 were, simply put, a time of social and political adjustment which fundamentally changed the demographic patterns, economic structures, and social relations of modern Britain. By the end of the British Empire, Britain had a long tradition of viewing its colonized people as inferiors. This period coincided with the migrations of a non-white population and increased economic competition for resources.<sup>68</sup> But these concerns were also embedded with more widespread unease about the national destiny of Britain, informed by a changing compositional structure. Only through an examination of that change and the tensions it reveals can we begin to understand the framework which post-war eugenics inhabited, which involved complementary social and biological conceptions of race.

#### Part1: The Post-war Context

The history of immigration to Britain does not date to 1945; in fact, it evolved over centuries. Historians understand the composition of modern Britain, even the so-called “ethnically English,” as forged from waves of migration throughout different stages of economic development.<sup>69</sup> In fact, the main source of immigration for the past two centuries was economically motivated immigration from Ireland. Though this trend created social and religious tensions between the poor Catholic immigrants and predominantly Protestant Britons, the government of the United Kingdom made no attempts to legislate Irish immigration. The need for cheap labor overcame cultural, religious, and even racial tensions. By the mid-twentieth

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<sup>67</sup> Benedict Anderson as the first to articulate the imagined community.

<sup>68</sup> Shamit Sagar, *Race and Politics in Britain* (New York, NY: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 33.

<sup>69</sup> David Mason, *Race and Ethnicity in Modern Britain* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995), 23.

century, the Irish were no longer seen as a foreign race; instead, they passed the unwritten test for white skin color.<sup>70</sup>

Nor was the precedent for controlling immigration set by the mere presence of a non-white group. The black population of Britain dated to the sixteenth century, to port cities where black seamen were employed and eventually settled.<sup>71</sup> However, such populations were too small to generate much public backlash.

In fact, the first attempts to control immigration involved Jews who were fleeing pogroms in Eastern Europe and settled in the east end of London, from about 1870 to 1914. Their arrival was viewed as a threat, due to some combination of racial sensitivities and the scale of immigration.<sup>72</sup> They were blamed for the social evils of poverty, overcrowding, and crime. Conservative politicians, in particular, fanned the flames of popular resentment and facilitated the passage of an Aliens Act in 1905, which introduced the first set of immigration controls in British history.<sup>73</sup>

Consequently, the trend for controlling immigration was always selective. During the Second World War, an equivalent number of Poles settled in Britain as Jews had done a generation prior, and the Poles were warmly welcomed. Parliament passed a resettlement act to facilitate Polish entry into the work force and assist in social assimilation.<sup>74</sup> The Poles, therefore, were viewed as aliens, but their settlement did not create racial tension. However, so-called “coloured immigration,” from the New Commonwealth would, due to the combination of race and the scale of immigration.

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<sup>70</sup> Paul, 90.

<sup>71</sup> Mason, 21.

<sup>72</sup> Involving about 100,000 people, compared to a few thousand black immigrants

<sup>73</sup> Zig Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration: Immigration, “Race,” and “Race,” Relations in Post-war Britain* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 5-6.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

Fundamentally, the war catalyzed post-war immigration. In 1942, restrictions on colonial subjects lacking proof of British nationality were lifted in the name of wartime expediency; concerns about which particular groups were attempting to enter Britain proved secondary to the needs of the war machine.<sup>75</sup>

Yet imperial attitudes of racial superiority did not disappear from the scene, even as the demands of war required the contribution of the full citizenry in addition to the recruitment of Irish and colonial workers, including West Indians, Africans, and Asians to work in munitions factories, in service sector jobs, and as members of the Allied forces. Even so, the army retained a color bar and the arrival of black American allied troops raised a public outcry about miscegenation.<sup>76</sup>

The wartime demand for labor not only created the impetus for colonial immigration, but also expanded the opportunities available to immigrants. Through the process of migration, people experienced new lands, cultivated new ideas, and sought fresh employment opportunities. At the end of the war, colonial men were eligible for repatriation, but many chose to remain in Britain. To illustrate the pattern, up to a fifth of the West Indians repatriated to Jamaica returned to Britain to seek employment.<sup>77</sup>

Colonial immigration, as well as changing demography, generated concern among policymakers, even during the war. Historically, emigration had been a more significant demographic trend than immigration, as the flow of Britons to the colonies fostered administration of the empire. The reversing trend meant that immigration outpaced emigration to fill the labor shortage. The new demographic fortunes raised such a concern that the wartime

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>77</sup> Cabinet Papers, "Coloured People from the British Colonial Territories" memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, (50) 113, 18 May 1950, Public Record Office.



coalition government established the Royal Commission on Population to research population trends, which confirmed eugenic disquiet about deteriorating population statistics. The report linked falling population to declining fertility, which would affect economic growth and erode Britain's geopolitical influence. It also manifested concerns about the declining ability of Britons to emigrate to the Commonwealth and the US, which would consequently reduce Britain's economic and political linkages with the rising economic powers.

Specifically, the report reflected a decisively eugenic concern for the future of Britain. "The rate of increase of the peoples of Western civilisation has markedly declined while that of Oriental peoples has markedly accelerated.... This question is not merely one of military strength and security; it merges into more fundamental issues of the maintenance and extension of Western values and culture. The effective force of this wider commonalty depends on the vitality of its constituent parts, which in turn is affected by their trends of population." This language juxtaposes the decline of Britain, or the diminishing vitality of the UK as the nucleus of the Commonwealth, with an influx of non-Western peoples. The report goes on to cite the economic impulses related to a declining British population size and specifically mentions the economic pressures to import immigrants. The Commission considered immigration as a solution but found that not enough suitable immigrants could be had, as: "The sources of supply of suitable immigrants are meagre and the capacity of a fully established society like ours to absorb immigrants of alien race and religion is limited."<sup>78</sup> The Commission concluded that immigration "could only be welcomed without reserve if the immigrants were of good human stock."

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<sup>78</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on Population, Cmnd 7695, HMSO, 1949, p. 124.

Patterns of immigration from the commonwealth, then, matched the demand in the labor market. The shortage was especially acute in unskilled jobs and service industries and was exacerbated by the need to rebuild industry destroyed during the war. The shortage also reflected structural changes in the economy, such that the growing demand for skilled workers created a vacuum of unskilled jobs, known as “a residue of unskilled and routine semi-skilled jobs at the lower levels of the labour market” for immigration to fill.<sup>79</sup> Spontaneous economic immigration from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent thereby gave rise to a new ethnic profile for Britain. The situation constituted a reversal of historical colonial immigration, whereby white Britons moved into upper-class positions in the colonies; now, non-white immigrants moved to Britain, into poorly paid working-class jobs which set the stage for resentment and racial tension.<sup>80</sup>

#### Part 2: Onset of New Commonwealth Immigration: Administrative Anxieties (1948-1958)

The British historical principle concerning labor promoted free trade and free movement within the empire. This principle was reaffirmed in the Nationality Act of 1948. The Act drew an initial distinction between British citizens and Commonwealth citizens, but granted both the right to live and work in Britain.<sup>81</sup><sup>82</sup> The Act represented a last vestige of colonial policy, providing for the free movement of members of the Commonwealth. It granted British nationality to citizens of all of the self-governing countries within the Commonwealth. The UK and its colonies were thereby constructed as indivisible as a unit of citizenship. However, as Layton-Henry argues, the policy makers who fomented the Act assumed that emigration from

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<sup>79</sup> Mason, 27.

<sup>80</sup> Kenneth Little, *Negroes in Britain: A Study of Racial Relations in English Society* (London, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1948), ix.

<sup>81</sup> John Solomos, *Race and Racism in Britain* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1993), 56.

<sup>82</sup> The Act simultaneously gave India independence

Britain would be the dominant trend and did not account for immigration from the Commonwealth.<sup>83</sup>

Nonetheless, in the immediate post-war years, working groups within government began to reevaluate the potential hazards of the open door policy. In October 1948 in parliament the Working Party on the Employment in the UK of Surplus Colonial Labour wrote in preference of European workers, supposedly for reasons of labor controls, but in practice for racial reasons.<sup>84</sup> The group wrote expressly about the worry that “coloured” workers might usurp the benefits of the welfare state.<sup>85</sup> The group was particularly concerned about assimilating non-white workers and recommended that large-scale immigration of black male workers should be avoided, but spoke too late as by the summer of 1948 immigrant ships were already arriving from the West Indies.<sup>86</sup>

The debate about immigration accelerated in tandem with the arrival of Jamaicans in May 1948. Though it triggered governmental concern, migration only accelerated, as workers sent for their families and employers developed new recruitment practices; for example, the London Transport executive loaned Barbadian workers the cost of their fare to Britain.<sup>87</sup>

Thus far, we have seen that “coloured” immigration raised some degree of concern amongst policymakers, even as it fulfilled a crucial economic role beneficial to government. But how does this fit within the eugenic framework?

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<sup>83</sup> Layton-Henry, 10.

<sup>84</sup> They make the claim that labor controls have more weight with European immigrants, who can be more easily deported if they break the terms of their labor contract. This seems to be a specious argument.

<sup>85</sup> Report of the Working Party on the Employment in the United Kingdom of Surplus Colonial Labour, Ministry of Labour Papers 26/226/7503, Public Record Office

<sup>86</sup> Sheila Patterson, *Dark Strangers: A Sociological Study of the Absorption of a Recent West Indian Migrant Group in Brixton, South London* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1964), 40.

<sup>87</sup> Layton-Henry, 13.

Black immigration, which for the purposes of this study, refers to people of African, Caribbean, and South Asian origin, was not welcomed by members of government or policy makers, as it posed problems of both assimilation and scale.<sup>88</sup> Assimilation refers to the difficulties in socially integrating cultural foreigners as well as the more difficult to quantify, irrational preoccupations with ethnic composition, while scale refers to the size of the migration. Such an analysis is supplemented by an understanding of the biological concerns that “coloured” immigration raised in parallel to primitive displays of prejudice.

In the political arena, “coloured” immigration rose as a policy issue to the backbenches of parliament in the 1950’s, shortly after its onset. In June 1950, the Cabinet discussed the matter, highlighting the fear that “coloured” people would form themselves into “residential colonies.” The initial policy of “dispersal and assimilation” of “coloured” immigrants was deemed insufficient. And: “The Cabinet’s discussion turned mainly on the means of preventing any further increase in the coloured population of this country.”<sup>89</sup> At that stage, however, though non-white immigration was deemed a policy problem, it numbered only four thousand souls, so the Labour government did not undertake official action.<sup>90</sup>

Indeed, what is fascinating is that in the early post-war years, only a few thousand “coloured” people roused a high degree of concern. Following the previously described cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister appointed a committee to review the problems created by “coloured” immigration and to determine the implications of establishing control legislation. The committee found that, since 1945, approximately five thousand non-white immigrants had arrived, and, though, “unemployment and destitution among these coloured people of all types are not so

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<sup>88</sup> As it was discussed by the policy makers at the time, who referred to South Asians as black.

<sup>89</sup> Cabinet Papers, “Immigration of British Subjects in the United Kingdom,” 129/44, February 1951, Public Record Office, 79, <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D7656207#imageViewerLink>.

<sup>90</sup> Layton-Henry, 30.

widespread as to have any effect on our economy,” the committee went forward with recommending controlling immigration. The committee distinguished clearly between “coloured” and “non-coloured” immigration, as: “There would be few, if any, Irish workers whom we should wish to exclude.”<sup>91</sup> The concern, therefore, was not based upon economic effects, but purely based upon racial considerations.

Further, racial prejudice did not divide cleanly along political lines, nor did policy prescriptions. The committee commissioned by the Labour Prime Minister Clement Atlee concluded that: “Any solutions depending on an apparent or concealed colour test would be so invidious as to make it impossible of adoption.” Such restrictions were deemed desirable, but were feared to strike too much resentment into the hearts of the Commonwealth nations, which held to the principle of the indivisibility of citizenship espoused in the 1948 parameters. Nevertheless, “The use of any powers taken to restrict the free entry of British subjects to this country would, as a general rule, be more or less confined to coloured persons.” The result of the committee was to conclude that though current numbers of immigration were not substantial, future increases in migration would make control essential.<sup>92</sup>

Such concerns were raised at a time when exact statistics were unknown, which exposes the irrational nature of the eugenic anxiety. In October 1950, Cyril Osborne asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department for specific numbers of both white and “coloured” immigrants and the department admitted that such statistics had never been calculated.<sup>93</sup> In a rough conjecture in 1954, a parliamentary committee estimated that there were sixty thousand immigrants of “negroid” origin living in Britain, including black British citizens, and claimed:

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<sup>91</sup> Cabinet Papers, “Immigration of British Subjects in the United Kingdom,” 129/44, February 1951, Public Record Office, 3.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 478 (19 October 1958) HMSO, cols. 259W.

“Whatever the figures it is certain that the numbers are growing and that grave social problems are arising as a result.” In other words, despite a lack of official machinery calculating exact statistics, parliamentarians identified a problem. If the nature of the problem were only a matter of social integration, the exact number of immigrants, and thereby their housing and education needs, would have to be calculated. The statement “whatever the figure,” suggests that “coloured” immigrants were viewed as problematic to the nation in multiple ways.

Fundamentally, small numbers of “black” immigrants triggered disproportionate discussion but were not enough to prompt policy changes. Larger numbers, beyond a perceived threshold capacity, aroused the imagination, enmity, and fear about the future of the ethnic community.<sup>94</sup>

Concerns about immigration increased, meriting discussion in the Commons by the mid-1950’s.<sup>95</sup> The first post-war debate on immigration, on November 5, 1954, engaged concerns about “coloured” immigrants pouring in, debated the social problems to follow, and drew from the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs the concession that immigration controls might be needed if such trends continued.<sup>96</sup>

Publically, Prime Minister Eden in 1955 disavowed any action being taken to control immigration, but behind the scenes the civil service working party was discussing the matter and the concerns about black workers, their lack of abilities, and the problems they caused.<sup>97</sup> Most notably, parliamentary working groups outlined the scale of the “coloured” immigration problem, consisting of two issues: that non-white immigrants were scoundrels coming to take advantage of British social welfare and that they would create social and biological problems.

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<sup>94</sup> As well as arousing social concerns. There was also discussion about immigrants vis-à-vis the housing shortage, the school system, etc.

<sup>95</sup> Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 545 (10 November 1955) HMSO, cols. 2005-6.

<sup>96</sup> Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 532 (1953-1954) HMSO, cols. 821-826.

<sup>97</sup> Report of the Working Party on Coloured People Seeking Employment in the UK, DO35/5216, para 26, (December 1953), Public Record Office.

The first issue was primarily economic, tinged with racial overtones. The economic fear was that colonial immigrants would be attracted by economic prospects, fail to secure or lose their jobs, and remain in Britain as a lingering presence, siphoning off the benefits of British society. “So long as the antiquated rule obtains that any British subject can come into this country without any limitation at all, these people [negroes] will pour in to take advantage of our social services and other amenities, and we shall have no protection at all. But it is for me not merely a question of whether criminal negroes should be allowed in or not, it is a question whether great quantities of negroes, criminal or no, should be allowed to come.”<sup>98</sup>

The second issue is more complex, speaking to the deep-seated concerns about assimilation and scale, which tie directly into eugenic anxieties. In the first instance, assimilation was a matter of policy for addressing all immigrants, “coloured” or otherwise. However, in the early-1950’s, the parliamentary working group discussed the importance of preventing the growth of a “colour problem,” which, they felt, could be best done by preventing immigration in the first place. Sociologists who testified before the committee argued that assimilation policies fail in the case of “coloured” immigrants because the majority of British society withholds social acceptance. “A mild disapproval of coloured people is conventional in Great Britain and colour antipathy is a social norm.”<sup>99</sup> Instead of campaigning to enlighten the British people from the burden of racism, the Committee recommended halting the “problem” at its source.

These concerns did not, however, exist in a vacuum; rather, they became activated when the scale of “coloured” immigration reached a discernible threshold. Before the war, the number

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<sup>98</sup> Sgd. Bobbety, Report of the Working Party on Coloured People Seeking Employment in the UK, CWP (March 20, 1954), Public Record Office, 29.

<sup>99</sup> University of Edinburgh Report, “The Economic and Social Position of Negro Immigrants in Britain,” Report of the Working Party on Coloured People Seeking Employment in the UK, (December 1953), Public Record Office.

of non-white people in Britain was a mere trickle and did not arouse concern. However, with the post-war improvements in transportation and incentives to immigration, the potential for the movement of peoples rapidly expanded.<sup>100</sup> New Commonwealth immigration rose from three thousand in 1953 to ten times that figure in 1955 and in September 1955, the Cabinet discussed drafting a bill to control colonial immigration. However, the cabinet was divided about the legislation and concerned that it might open up a political opportunity for the Labour Party to pronounce allegations of racism, as well as affect relations with the West Indies.<sup>101</sup> The Committee, therefore, decided to take no action at the time, though Lord Salisbury, the Lord Chancellor, dissented in favor of immediate action.<sup>102</sup>

Beyond that threshold, where immigration became a political issue, the language used to describe immigration fed into narratives of genetic decline. The Committee examined controlling the immigration of criminals, as well as physical and mental defectives, and in doing so, took care to highlight the correlation of immigration with both physical and mental defectiveness. Meanwhile, the Conservative Commonwealth Association in January 1954 warned that immigrants, upon entry, would, “Enter into unions, legal or illicit, with white women, generally of very low social standing” and produce degenerate children which would have to be supported by welfare organizations.<sup>103</sup>

Additionally, eugenicists mirrored the discussions of parliamentarians. In October 1955, the *Eugenics Review*, the primary publication of the British Eugenics Society, published a discussion of the eugenic implications of immigration. “The main issue at fault is why policy makers should regard the increasing ‘coloured’ presence in Britain as a social problem, as

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>101</sup> Layton-Henry, 34.

<sup>102</sup> Cabinet Papers, “Colonial Immigrants Report,” Committee of Ministers, CAB 129/81 (22 June 1956).

<sup>103</sup> Cabinet Papers, Working Party on Coloured People (12 March, 1954).



opposed to a concern for the future of the national character. And are not moral and intellectual traits subject to the laws of heredity, just as are the physical? What then will become of our national character, good workmanship, etc., in the course of a few generations if this immigration of negroes and negroids continues unchecked?"<sup>104</sup>

Lastly, members of the working party noted the starkly racial and discriminatory nature of proposing immigration restrictions at the time. "If we legislate on immigration we cannot conceal the obvious fact that the object is to keep out coloured people."<sup>105</sup> In the early 1950's, Irish immigration constituted about sixty thousand immigrants per annum, yet controls were discussed to prevent a mere three thousand blacks per annum. This early period, then, in the immigration discussion reflected some conflation of biological and social concerns about non-white immigration which were disproportionate to the scope of immigration. The working party desired Irish immigration to continue as the Irish were deemed genetically fit and "are not a different race from the ordinary inhabitants of Great Britain."<sup>106</sup> Their opinion on West Indian and South Asian immigration, however, was very different. If the immigrants were European, they would have been seen as a positive asset; instead, black immigrants were seen as problematic, in much the same way as the Jews were in their time.

Overall, there was fear among the political elite in Britain, who viewed the new immigrants not as an asset to the labor force, but as a biologically-unassimilable horde. The position, then, of colonial immigrants was fundamentally different from that of their Irish and Polish

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<sup>104</sup> C. W. Armstrong, "Immigration of Coloured Peoples," *The Eugenics Review* 47, no. 3 (October 1955): 201, accessed December 12, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973606/>.

<sup>105</sup> Commonwealth Relations Office, Working Party at Kew (15 March 1954), 27.

<sup>106</sup> Report of the Committee on the Social and Economic Problems arising from the Growing Influx into the UK of Coloured Workers from Other Commonwealth Countries, Appendix 2, draft statement on colonial immigrants, para 3, 3 August 1955, CAB 129/77).

predecessors, though the governmental and public response to them was similar to the reception that Jewish immigrants received in the early twentieth century.

### Part 3: The Publicization of Immigration (1958-1962)

A senior fellow of the Eugenics Society indignantly wrote: “Let it be noted that it is not colour that matters, but the characteristics which, on the average, accompany colour.... We lost very much of our eugenically most valuable stock in two world wars, and are losing more now through emigration; does it not matter what comes to fill the gap?” He was not the only individual to express such sentiment.<sup>107</sup>

The growth of the “coloured problem” was followed by an era in which immigration became a central issue in British politics at the same time as the visible effects of immigration remade the image and identity of the British nation. Most importantly, the race riots in the autumn of 1958 shone a spotlight on immigration, raising the public profile of immigration as well as arousing the attention of the British Eugenics Society, which published research and propaganda materials for public dissemination.

Shamit Saggat characterizes the race riots of 1958 as shifting public debate from the economics of immigration to its impact upon the social order.<sup>108</sup> While the latter half is true, in that, debate certainly did center upon the impact of immigration on the social order, debate concerning immigration always related to this effect; specifically, both social relations and biological constructs. The exact catalyst for immigration controls was precisely this eruption of violence in Nottingham and Notting Hill in the autumn of 1958, which was televised and described in newspapers. It subsequently became a national issue and one of public debate,

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<sup>107</sup> C. W. Armstrong, “Immigration of Coloured Peoples,” *The Eugenics Review* 47, no. 3 (October 1955): 201, accessed December 12, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973606/>.

<sup>108</sup> Saggat, 100.

leading to opinion polls asking the general public about their attitudes towards immigrants. A Gallup poll found that a majority of the population favored controlling immigration, while over seventy percent were opposed to mixed marriages.<sup>109</sup> Meanwhile, in the Commons, the discussion of the race riots turned into discussion of preserving the “national character” and “affecting the future of our own race and breed.”<sup>110</sup>

The major political parties produced split responses. The Labour Party condemned the violence as the result of hooliganism, as the party, at this stage, officially opposed immigration controls. Meanwhile, the Conservative Party passed a resolution favoring controls as increasing numbers of ministers spoke out on the subject. However, individuals did not necessarily split along party lines. George Rogers, Labour MP for North Kensington, proclaimed to the tabloid paper, the *Daily Sketch*, that immigration must be ended to control the violence.<sup>111</sup>

Meanwhile, the Eugenics Society provided its own interpretation of the events. The Society described immigration as a social, genetic, and moral problem of an unprecedented scale.<sup>112</sup> It produced a report assessing the consequences of a developing “coloured” population of around two hundred thousand individuals, including one hundred thousand from the West Indies.<sup>113</sup> The report found that demographic pressures and access to the higher material standards of British life provided unfortunate incentives to immigration, which resulted in the social problems of housing and employment, alongside the biological ill of race-mixing.<sup>114</sup> The report acknowledged that the goal of eugenics was to produce the next generation of people born

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<sup>109</sup> Layton-Henry, 40.

<sup>110</sup> Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 596 (5 December 1958) HMSO, col. 1564.

<sup>111</sup> *Daily Sketch*, September 2, 1958.

<sup>112</sup> G.C. L. Bertram, *West Indian Immigration* (London, UK: Eugenics Society, 1958), 6.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

possessing the full complement of potential ability.<sup>115</sup> In accord with this vision, the report recommended barring the door to foreign-born criminals and conducting further research to determine the effects of racial-mixing, which, it hinted, would create, “the problem of the residue,” of mixed-race offspring.<sup>116</sup>

The rhetoric employed by the Eugenics Society was more extreme, and, more genetically focused, than that utilized in public parliamentary debates; however, the content differed little. A second parliamentary debate was held on constructing immigration restrictions in 1958, and, in its course, various MP’s reinforced views of race, culture, and hierarchy. Conservative MP Cyril Osborne highlighted concerns about the increasing “coloured” population and the desirability of keeping “coloured” criminal and unfit immigrants from entering the country.<sup>117</sup> A contemporary of Osborne put his beliefs succinctly: “It is not illiberal... for people to be concerned with preserving their own national character and continuity. A question which affects the future of our race and breed is not one that we should leave merely to chance.” Further, “The Motion uses the words: irrespective of race, colour, or creed, but we cannot discuss this matter in such a general context. We all know perfectly well that the whole core of the problem of immigration is coloured immigration. We would do much better to face that and to discuss it realistically in that context.”<sup>118</sup>

#### Part 4: Stopping the Flood: Legislating Immigration (1962-1968)

Until the eve of the passage of immigration legislation, black immigration was bemoaned as a growing problem, in terms of social service competition, the degree to which skin color prevented assimilation, and the extent to which the scale of immigration represented a threat to

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>117</sup> Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 596 (1958-9) HMSO, col. 1552.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 1561-3.

the national character and the future of the race. As a result, whether of deeply held belief or political opportunism, the period in which parliament legislated immigration was also one of political consensus to limit the future of immigration.

Political pressure mounted and there was intense debate about immigration in the period leading up to the passage of the first restriction, which revolved around two issues: the scale of immigration and the extent to which black immigrants were marginalized— living in urban slums— and how this led to the deterioration of neighborhoods in Britain.<sup>119</sup> The bill restricting immigration ultimately passed as the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962. The act created a voucher system which broke with the principle of treating all members of the Commonwealth as British subjects.<sup>120</sup>

In the next few years, immigration restrictions gained further political currency and the Labour Party changed positions from earlier opposition to restrictions, instead growing increasingly supportive of restrictions. As early as October 1963, Labour leader Harold Wilson said he accepted the need for immigration control. However, an even more important impetus for the change of the party's stance was the politicization of racist sentiment during the election campaign of 1964. In what came to be known as the "Smethwick incident," explicitly racist conservative Peter Griffiths fought on the slogan, "If you want a nigger for a neighbor vote Labour" and won, unseating the shadow Foreign Secretary and visibly placing race on the political agenda.<sup>121</sup>

In the aftermath of the election, Labour held a narrow majority but faced a climate in which anti-immigrant candidates did well. Shrewdly, the Labour Party sought a policy to appease

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<sup>119</sup> Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 649 (16 November, 1961), col. 723.

<sup>120</sup> Saggar, 76.

<sup>121</sup> Solomos, 65.

conservatives on the immigration issue by tightening restrictions on immigration.<sup>122</sup> In fact, while the Labour administration in power committed to taking on discrimination and fostering better integration of immigrants, it actively promoted immigration restrictions, effectively shutting the door behind newcomers.<sup>123</sup> The combination of assimilation and restriction dictated policy for the rest of the period under investigation. For example, in 1965, the government simultaneously passed a race relations act to improve circumstances for much maligned immigrants—the act provided a mere window dressing for racial equality— and, in the same year, published a white paper proposing tightening immigration restrictions.<sup>124</sup>

Racial concerns reared in the public consciousness, as well as in the forefront of British politics, with the onset of the 1967 Kenyan crisis. In that year, “Asians,” from Kenya, who held British nationality, were forced out of jobs and began to flee to Britain. Populist politicians, including Enoch Powell and Duncan Sandys, promoted hysteria about their arrival; they advocated strengthening immigration legislation, and in response, more East African Asians rapidly migrated to beat the controls.<sup>125</sup> With this incident, the government shifted focus from concerns about mitigating domestic racism to further legislating “black” immigration. And, proponents of restriction increasingly employed pseudo-scientific language, as in 1967, when Sandys described the negative consequences of producing mixed-race children.<sup>126</sup>

#### Part 5: The Enemy Within: Populism, Powellism, and Public Racism (1968-1979)

The effects of immigration reached a populist fever pitch with the rise of Enoch Powell, who was cast in the political limelight in the course of 1968. By February 1968 the bulk of

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<sup>122</sup> Layton-Henry, 78.

<sup>123</sup> Saggar, 78.

<sup>124</sup> Saggar, 82.

<sup>125</sup> Layton-Henry, 79.

<sup>126</sup> Saggar, 111.

Conservative MP's, alongside a handful of Labour MP's, called for new immigration legislation. The proponents in the debate for new restrictions once again addressed the "coloured problem" in a mixture of social and eugenic tones. This was characteristic of utilizing increasing amounts of alarming rhetoric to promote a, "Britain for Britons."<sup>127</sup> Immigrants were blamed for introducing "alien cultures" into Britain, leaving a trail of dislocation behind them, and raising fears "of domination by a community" of "coloured" people amongst "native" Britons.<sup>128</sup> "People from European stock are not so easily identifiable... compared with those who come from Asia and the West Indies. This tends to become impressed on people's minds, who then say that they are strangers in their midst."<sup>129</sup>

Meanwhile, the threat of immigration was directly connected to Britain's future through discussion of education. Labour MP Moyle spoke of the number of immigrant children in schools distorting British education: "There are schools in my constituency where the number of immigrant children is rapidly approaching a very high proportion. When it reaches a certain proportion there is no doubt that the character of the education begins to change. No longer is one trying to produce British children for the British way of life. The whole system of education is becoming distorted."<sup>130</sup>

Unsurprisingly, parliament passed the Kenyan Asians Bill, which pandered to populist agitation and established conditionality on rights to entry. This bill was enthroned as the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968, which established the principle of partiality, effectively creating two castes of citizens— those subject to immigration controls and those free from restriction. This was a step towards narrowing the definition of citizenship to people with an

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<sup>127</sup> Ian Grosvenor, *Assimilating Identities* (London, UK: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997), 31.

<sup>128</sup> Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 759 (1967-1968) HMSO, cols. 1344-8.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 1317-21.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1308.

ethnic connection to the territory and race of the UK and was equally a step towards redefining the envisioned demographics of Britain. The grandfather clause explicitly set a color bar on immigration, specified that even for UK passports, which immigrating East African Asians held, newcomers would be subject to controls unless they or parent or grandparent had been born or naturalized in the UK.<sup>131</sup> Both parties cooperated in setting the precedent that controlling immigration was a salient issue and could dictate the political agenda in an extreme fashion, to the extent of using racially-exclusive legislation to create color criteria for the British nation. Meanwhile, Enoch Powell merged eugenic language with popular racism. Two days before Labour's second race relations bill was to be introduced, on April 20, 1968, Powell made his infamous "Rivers of Blood" speech. Using alarmist language, Powell emphasized that the scale of immigration was so great, immigrants would dominate the national destiny, so that: "As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding; like the Roman, I seem to see the River Tiber foaming with much blood."<sup>132</sup>

Evocatively, Powell conjured up colorful images of decline, including mischievous black immigrants cracking whips over white Britain and a horde of foreigners setting the nation's destiny aflame. The flavor of the rhetoric connected to allegations of the genetic decay taking root at the heart of Britain. In one anecdote, Powell recounted a conversation with a constituent who feared for the country's future due to the flood of non-white immigrants, which conjured up images of the country being overwhelmed. Powell described a racial overload; a Britain swamped by immigrants. The element of invasion that he portrayed was compounded by his description of the supposedly licentious newcomers, swarming in to Britain to breed. "It is like

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<sup>131</sup> Grosvenor, 67-68.

<sup>132</sup> Enoch Powell, "Rivers of Blood," (Speech, Birmingham Conservative Association, Birmingham, UK, April 20, 1968).



watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre.”<sup>133</sup> And in his mention of the supposedly high immigrant birthrate, Powell connected overt racial tones to biologically-based considerations about relative reproductive rates.

The speech became highly politicized, due to both extensive media coverage and a resonance with popular frustration. Opinion polls recorded support varying from 67-82 percent in his favor, and expressed a popular fatigue with the process of legislating immigration. The speech effectively stoked the flames of popular racism by igniting fears about the nation’s future. Simultaneously, it transformed economic crisis into identity crisis, such that [it] “Enabled economic decline and the crises of postwar settlement to be thematised through race.”<sup>134</sup>

Powell played upon the tenor of public fears, while increasingly deploying biological language. In his follow-up Eastbourne speech, Powell steered the conversation about the future of Britain to the relative rates of fertility among races. Dismissing the popular literature which suggested that immigrant birthrates decline in a few generations, he warned of immigrant “aliens” transforming Britain through differential fertility.<sup>135</sup>

Eminently, then, Powell captured the issue of black immigration within a framework that reveals great insecurities about social and economic changes “disclosing the broader emotional culture of postwar Britain.” “Powell was reflecting the frustrations not only of those who felt threatened by New Commonwealth immigration, but also of those angered by Britain’s imperial decline.”<sup>136</sup> Powell’s language, though extreme, legitimized the expression of racial prejudice

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 20.

<sup>135</sup> Enoch Powell, “Speech to London Rotary Club,” (Speech, Eastbourne, UK, November 16, 1968).

<sup>136</sup> Schofield, 8.

which could be deemed unethical and even illegal, under the previous race relations acts. This only dramatized his effect.

Powell's impact rippled. It produced eighty constituency resolutions on immigration at the annual Conservative Party conference and consequently, Prime Minister Edward Heath announced in September that he would introduce tougher immigration controls. Despite Heath's condemnation of Powell's populism, including condemning the Eastbourne speech, Powell's popularity remained high and in a survey the Conservative Political Centre found that more than three quarters of constituency groups wanted all immigration stopped. As a result, the 1970 Conservative Party manifesto promised new immigration restrictions.<sup>137</sup>

Powellism, and the eugenic fears it embodied, continued to influence policy makers to discuss immigration in terms of alarmist decline. In the debate over the next set of promised immigration restrictions, Conservative MP John Hunt employed similar language: "Whether we use the words 'new Commonwealth' or 'non-patrial' what we mean is those born with black or brown faces. It is necessary to offer reassurance to those who feel themselves in danger of being swamped."<sup>138</sup> The Immigration Act of 1971 came into effect in January 1973, replacing vouchers with work permits lacking the right of permanent residence. The 1971 act altered British citizenship by differentiating between those with rights of abode and those without, made those with vouchers now subject to stay only on work permits, and reduced the status of many immigrants to short-term contract workers.<sup>139</sup>

Though Powell was eventually forced out of the Conservative Party, neither eugenic discourses nor immigration concerns ended with him. On August 4, 1972, Idi Amin announced

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<sup>137</sup> Layton-Henry, 83.

<sup>138</sup> Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 813 (8 March, 1971) HMSO, col. 91.

<sup>139</sup> Solomos, 69.

the expulsion of fifty thousand Ugandan Asians, most of whom held British passports. This triggered new calls for restriction, which the Labour government, in power from 1974 to 1979, consolidated.<sup>140</sup>

At this time, eugenic rhetoric about the dominance of nature over nurture continued to inform popular political discourses. In October 1974, Sir Keith Joseph, future Secretary of State for Education under Thatcher, gave a speech on race, intelligence, and degeneration to the Conservative Association in Birmingham. In flamboyant rhetoric, evocative of Powell, the speech argued that the nation was degenerating due to the high proportion of children born to mothers of low social value. He spoke of the differential birthrate between the degenerate, black and white, mothers who outpaced the rest in reproducing. Fatally, he pronounced that, “The balance of our population, our human stock, is threatened.”<sup>141</sup> This warning, of the reproduction of the least fit, tied concerns about race to those of low intelligence. It also illustrated a subtle concern over “coloured” births.

Many Britons evidently felt a sense of dislocation caused by the necessity of reconstructing identity and national destiny in a period of economic, political, and cultural redefinition. After 1945, with the end of empire, the onset of globalization, and a revolutionary movement of peoples, the cultural community of Great Britain faced a transformation. Unlike earlier periods of immigration, post-war immigration involved “coloured” immigrants from the Commonwealth. They represented a problem in the mind’s eye of policymakers, politicians, and certain members of the public, specifically, a conceptual threat of cultural, racial, and biological difference, as well as a material threat that put at risk the employment, housing, and well-being of white Britons. In some cases, this problem found expression in distinctly pseudo-scientific

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>141</sup> Keith Joseph, “Our Human Stock is Threatened,” (Speech, Grand Hotel, Birmingham, October 19, 1974).

phrasing, and where it did not, the ideas expressed about the biological difficulties of assimilation and the problem of scale often held eugenic roots. In this context, private citizens as well as the men and women shaping the nation's political discourses and immigration policy fell back upon certain ethnic definitions of Britishness, in accord with the argument by Conservative MP and immigration critic Sir Cyril Osborne: "It is time someone spoke out for the white man in this country."<sup>142</sup> Our loathsome nineteenth century racial theorist would have certainly been in accord.

### Chapter 3: The "Scientific" Sphere: Eugenics and Psychometrics

While the previous section oriented British policy making, vis-à-vis New Commonwealth immigration, into the eugenic framework, this section will examine the activities of hereditarian scientists, including the eugenicists and the psychometricians. Fundamentally, eugenics, and the hereditarian thought underpinning eugenics, exercised a pronounced influence through two mechanisms: the work of the British Eugenics Society, the mouthpiece and primary research organ of eugenics in Britain, and the work of psychometricians and eugenicists in measuring intelligence, particularly, the intelligence of the increasing "coloured" population. These mechanisms operated through the optic of biological determinism, which can be defined as the belief that all human behavior is innate and which blamed social problems on the heredity of the unfit.<sup>143</sup>

#### Part 1: History of the Eugenics Society

The antecedents of eugenics trace to Darwinian theory. After the publication of The Origin of Species, some followers of Darwin used Darwinian natural selection to rationalize the innate superiority of specific human groups. Darwinian principles were used to justify a number of

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<sup>142</sup> Saggar, 70.

<sup>143</sup> Fish, 164.

political views, from socialists to right-wing thinkers devoted to the idea that natural selection could produce a new race of superior beings. However, it was chiefly Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton, who provided the "scientific" justification for the theory of eugenics, in order to improve the genetic condition of the human race.<sup>144</sup> To sum up the hereditarian view, then, espoused by eugenics: "Man is biological material, and, as such, is inherently variable and mutable. All men are not born equal and never will be."<sup>145</sup>

With Galton's vision in mind, the Eugenics Education Society was founded in 1907 to "further eugenic teaching and understanding in the home, in the schools and elsewhere." From the initial purpose of studying and creating policy to combat social evils, the Society transitioned into the study of genetics and renamed itself the Eugenics Society in 1926.<sup>146</sup> The eugenics movement in Britain centered on the Eugenics Society and the research combination of human biology and social problems.<sup>147</sup> Specifically, the Society aimed "to study the influences that may modify inborn human qualities; to formulate and support policies for developing these qualities to the utmost advantage; to promote research on eugenic problems; to foster a responsible attitude to parenthood; to guide public opinion in these matters."<sup>148</sup> The Society enjoyed an outsized influence beyond its membership, which in the first part of the twentieth century primarily focused upon propagandizing about the overpopulation of the working class and the deterioration in national health.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Chitty Clyde, *Eugenics, Race, and Intelligence in Education* (London, UK: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), 27.

<sup>145</sup> A. S. Parkes, "The Primrose Path: Some Aspects of the Population Problem," *The Eugenics Review* 42, no. 1 (April 1950): 8-15, accessed October 25, 2015 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973040/>.

<sup>146</sup> F. Schenck and A. S. Parkes, "The Activities of the Eugenics Society," *The Eugenics Review* 60, no. 3 (September 1968): 142-161, accessed February 3, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2906074/>.

<sup>147</sup> Mazumdar, 1.

<sup>148</sup> "The Eugenics Society and Social Research," *The Eugenics Review* 55, no. 4 (January 1964): 207-209, accessed January 22, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2982427/>.

<sup>149</sup> Clyde, 2.

However, eugenics, as both movement and policy, was also irreparably linked to the genocidal policies of Nazi Germany. As a consequence, even before the war the British Eugenics Society undertook measures to distance itself from that connection. In particular, the Society commenced reforms under the prescient leadership of C.P. Blacker in the 1930's and 1940's, and, after the war, escalated rebranding activities.<sup>150</sup> As historian Diane Paul has described it, reform eugenicists wanted to preserve the viability of the eugenic movement by ridding it of social prejudice.<sup>151</sup> And indeed, while there were some avowed eugenicists who certainly held egalitarian beliefs, egalitarian views did not characterize the entirety, or even the majority, of the movement's enterprises.<sup>152</sup>

The proponents of reform eugenics viewed their work, inclusive of research on race, as valid concepts that Hitler had perverted.<sup>153</sup> Secretary Blacker distanced the movement from Nazi ideology, proclaiming: "Some people relate the Nazi doctrines about race to eugenics.... Galton, as you will remember, declared, that eugenics was, in essence, a merciful creed.... It is therefore both unjust and deplorable that the word eugenics should be connected with Nazi racialist practices."<sup>154</sup>

Even progressives within the Eugenics Society underlined ideas of racial mental differences. According to Schaffer, there has been "as subtle continuation of racial understandings of difference, mitigated by a heightened emphasis on environmental influence and accompanied by a strong hostility towards racial oppression."<sup>155</sup> This is well illustrated by the responses to

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<sup>150</sup> Schaffer, 40.

<sup>151</sup> Paul, 119.

<sup>152</sup> Including Julian Huxley, of UNESCO

<sup>153</sup> C.P. Blacker, "Eugenics in Retrospect and Prospect," (The Galton Lecture, London, 1945).

<sup>154</sup> C.P. Blacker, "'Eugenic' Experiments Conducted by the Nazis on Human Subjects," *The Eugenics Review* 44, no. 1 (April 1952): 10, accessed November 22, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2975316/>.

<sup>155</sup> Schaffer, 108.

Nazism promulgated in the Geneticists Manifesto and the UNESCO statement, whereby progressive eugenicists, and other members of the scientific community, contested explicit expressions of race while upholding the race construct. In 1939, Hermann Muller and six other scientists promulgated the Geneticists Manifesto at the Seventh International Congress on Genetics as a progressive assault upon Nazism. While the sentiment discredited the political conditions which fostered antagonisms between nations and races, it did not refute race as a scientific concept. Like the UNESCO statement, it upheld the hereditarian factors as complementary to environmentalism; thereby, it safeguarded the principles which underlay eugenics.<sup>156</sup> Further, it argued that no set of genes was the monopoly of one group of people, so nature and nurture both played a role, but also argued that intellectual differences between the races existed.<sup>157</sup>

Within the eugenics movement itself, changes were afoot to provide the Society with a non-racist veneer without fundamentally abolishing racial conceptions. To this end, reform eugenicists emphasized the importance of regaining respectability for the field in scientific circles. Julian Huxley described the science as “a form of applied human genetics.” Meanwhile, eugenicists transitioned into complementary scientific disciplines. “The artificial division of eugenics as a political program from eugenics as a scientific area for research demanded from eugenics organizations a readiness to accept other scientific societies in the area of human heredity research, psychiatry, and population science.” For example, many members of the British Eugenics Society were involved in the organization of the 1956 international congress for human genetics in Copenhagen, as representatives of British genetics.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> H.J. Muller, *Studies in Genetics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1962), 545-548.

<sup>157</sup> Kuhl, 143.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

The research projects previously attributed to eugenics divided into a number of disciplines, but this merely camouflaged burgeoning hereditarian ideas. What Stefan Kuhl terms the “descientizing” of eugenics could better be understood as an exterior cleansing of the discipline’s image. The explicit role for eugenics, as C.P. Blacker described, became “crypto-eugenics,” or fulfilling the historical role of eugenics without using the word “eugenics.” As part of this process, the Eugenics Society ended the *Eugenics Review* in 1968 and replaced it with the *Journal of Biosocial Science*. Additionally, eugenic modernization spelled some promotion of voluntary measures of population control from below.<sup>159</sup> Fundamentally, though, this spelled a change in method, not content, as both the Eugenics Society and other scientific disciplines anchored by the principles of biological determinism persisted.

## Part 2: Demography: Eugenics Research

Even as names changed and foci shifted, the interests of formerly named eugenicists continued to focus upon “hereditary patrimony” and conserving the future genetic material of Britain. To this end, the Eugenics Society fixated upon demography study in the late 1930’s and 1940’s. Within the population question, eugenics, psychology, and demography converged, sharing a vision of preserving racial quality while simultaneously expressing paranoia about genetic degeneration.

In the immediate post-war years, both the Eugenics Society and the British government expressed concerns about the declining British birth rate. As a consequence, the Eugenics Society established its own Population Investigation Committee as early as 1936 to research the issue.<sup>160</sup> The Committee reported a negative correlation between family size and measured

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<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-9.

<sup>160</sup> F. Schenck and A. S. Parkes, “The Activities of the Eugenics Society,” *The Eugenics Review* 60, no. 3 (September 1968): 142-161, accessed February 3, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2906074/>.



intelligence in children, which suggested a decline in the national intelligence.<sup>161</sup> Meanwhile, the government appointed the aforementioned Royal Commission on Population in 1944 to undertake its own survey. However, C.P. Blacker, secretary of the Eugenics Society, was keen to steer the Commission towards the policy of the Eugenics Society and to receive official endorsement of eugenic projections. Not by coincidence, several members of the Commission had close ties to the Eugenics Society and their members gave oral evidence before the commission.<sup>162</sup> The ensuing 1949 report expressed the eugenicists' fears of differential fertility between classes, and, increasingly, races, as well as perceptions of declining intelligence. In particular, the Commission raised awareness that a failure of the upper classes to reproduce, at or above replacement rate, could lead to a "national extinction."<sup>163</sup>

The report emphasized the need for maintaining the quality, as well as the size, of the British population, stating the aim of maintaining or improving the general intelligence level of the population.<sup>164</sup> To the ends of promoting a eugenically "desirable" population, Blacker described the essential traits: "We advanced five standards: (a) Sound physical and mental health and good physique; (b) Intelligence; (c) Social usefulness; (d) Freedom from genetic taints; (e) Philoprogenitiveness. Of these five traits only the second, intelligence, is quantitatively measurable."<sup>165</sup> Since eugenics was focused upon improving the qualities of human beings, as well as preventing the decline of their faculties, the most eugenically desirable people could be characterized as those in possession of measurable traits—primarily, high intelligence.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Population Investigation Committee Report, LSE (August 1946–November 1947)

<sup>162</sup> F. Schenck and A. S. Parkes, "The Activities of the Eugenics Society," *The Eugenics Review* 60, no. 3 (September 1968): 142–161, accessed February 3, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2906074/>.

<sup>163</sup> "Report of the Royal Commission on Population," *The Lancet* 253 (June 25, 1949): 1110–1113.

<sup>164</sup> *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 20 (1950): 35.

<sup>165</sup> C. P. Blacker, "The Royal Commission on Population and the Society's Aims," *The Eugenics Review* 41, no. 3 (October 1949): 122–126, accessed January 15, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2974239/>.

<sup>166</sup> "Eugenically Desirable Types: A Symposium," *The Eugenics Review* 38, no. 3 (October 1946): 133–141, accessed December 22, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2986352/>.

In effect, measured intelligence replaced social class as an indicator of degeneration, related to the differential birthrate. Whereas, in an earlier era, eugenicists had been expressly concerned with the higher fertility of the lower classes compared to the middle and upper classes, in the post-war years, differential intelligence spelled fears that the less intelligent were outpacing the reproduction of the rest.<sup>167</sup> And, while articulating abstract notions of civic worth and the deterioration of societal stocks might prove valuable grounds for debate within the Eugenics Society, such discussion did not pinpoint specific social trends in a quantitative manner. Thus, eugenicists and psychometricians substituted intelligence for an amorphous concept of “civic worth,” and used it as a measure of societal decline.<sup>168</sup> As a result, from the outset, eugenic anxieties about declining intelligence were central to the impetus for measuring intelligence.<sup>169</sup>

The report was further textured by eugenic conceptions of race as non-white immigrants entered Britain. C.P. Blacker addressed the matter to the Commission, citing the unequal abilities of the races.<sup>170</sup> As the Commission described the matter: “The rate of increase of the peoples of Western civilisation has markedly declined while that of Oriental peoples has markedly accelerated.... This question is not merely one of military strength and security; it merges into more fundamental issues of the maintenance and extension of Western values and culture. The effective force of this wider commonalty depends on the vitality of its constituent parts, which in turn is affected by their trends of population.”<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 20 (1950): 36.

<sup>168</sup> Brian Evans and Bernard Waites, *IQ and Mental Testing: an Unnatural Science and its Social History* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981), 62.

<sup>169</sup> Soloway, 342.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 339.

<sup>171</sup> “Report of the Royal Commission on Population,” *The Lancet* 253 (June 25, 1949): 1110-1113.

Discussion about degeneration concerned decline within Britain, yet the Society also situated the unease about decline within an international context. The trend was exacerbated by growing concerns with global demography and the underperformance of Britain in reproduction. C.P. Blacker spoke of third world population growth as a “population problem,” when contrasted to declining population in industrialized states. Colleague and German eugenicist Hans Nachtshiem gave a lecture in the same vein entitled “Overpopulation Problem and the Race Profile of Future Humanity” which argued that different fertility rates between nations would lead to “an increase in the colored races and the disappearance of the white race.” Thus, eugenicists engaged on international questions of population growth, which included them in a discussion accepted in broader circles of demography.<sup>172</sup>

Interestingly, these eugenic concerns failed to reflect demographic reality. The declining birthrate was reversed by a baby boom in the post-war years, and, though it declined again in the 1950’s, the focus of population studies in those years shifted to the population explosion internationally. Fertility actually reached a high in 1964 and did not begin to decline again until the 1970’s.<sup>173</sup> Nonetheless, eugenic concerns about the British birth rate ventured into the public arena in the immediate postwar period and had an impact upon state policy discussions. Though these ideas became increasingly out of touch with real trends, the Eugenics Society’s population research still managed to articulate anxieties about British national decline and set the stage for an examination of the race question.

### Part 3: Active Propaganda: The Eugenics Society on Immigration

Eugenics Society research on race coincided with the changing composition of British society. Throughout the history of New Commonwealth immigration, the Eugenics Society was

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<sup>172</sup> Kuhl, 152.

<sup>173</sup> Soloway, 357.

active in propagandizing and analyzing the effects for the future of Britain. In particular, as a part of Blacker's attempt to address the Society's transition to crypto-eugenics, in 1957 he pronounced: "That the Society should concentrate on the eugenic aspects of current problems and should campaign for the control of immigration."<sup>174</sup>

At the onset of "coloured" immigration, the society called for eugenically fit workers to fill the labor shortage. "Suitable workers," in this conception, was coded to mean European workers, as opposed to non-white workers from the Commonwealth.<sup>175</sup> Likewise, on immigration "The Royal Commission [on population] is pessimistic about the 'capacity of a fully established society like ours to absorb immigrants of alien race and religion.'"<sup>176</sup>

As "coloured" immigration progressed, the Society, under the leadership of G.C.L. Bertram, attempted to alert the public to dysgenic trends. Following up on earlier studies undertaken on population pressure in Jamaica, Bertram wrote a pamphlet examining the genetic quality of the New Commonwealth immigrants to be sent to parliament.<sup>177</sup> The inquiry described the problematic aspects stemming from "coloured" immigration, including the differential fertility rates of immigrants, their alleged mental inferiority, and the risk of miscegenation. Noting the new data on ethnicities in Britain provided by the 1961 census, the Society undertook to measure fertility by ethnic group.<sup>178</sup> It concluded that "coloured" immigrant women had higher fertility

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<sup>174</sup> F. Schenck and A. S. Parkes, "The Activities of the Eugenics Society," *The Eugenics Review* 60, no. 3 (September 1968): 142-161, accessed February 3, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2906074/>.

<sup>175</sup> Brinley Thomas, "Migration and the British Commonwealth," *The Eugenics Review* 40, no. 3 (October 1948): 127-136, accessed December 4, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2986538/>.

<sup>176</sup> Richard Rubold, "The Royal Commission on Population and PEP," *The Eugenics Review* 41, no. 3 (October 1949): 122-126, accessed January 13, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2974239/>.

<sup>177</sup> Gertrude Willoughby, "The Population of Jamaica: An Analysis of its Structure and Growth," *The Eugenics Review* 49, no. 3 (October 1957): 143-144, accessed February 2, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973695/>.

<sup>178</sup> J. A. H. Waterhouse and Diana Brabban, "Inquiry into Fertility of Immigrants," *The Eugenics Review* 56, no. 1 (April 1964): 7-18, accessed January 23, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2982610/>

than British-born women.<sup>179</sup> It also found higher rates of mental illness among non-white immigrants than in the general population, though Bertram accepted that selective immigration of the less “fit” might partially explain the matter.<sup>180</sup> Nonetheless, the consequences for Britain meant the immigration of mental “degenerates.”

The assumptions underpinning this propaganda included assigning an inferior and, at times, dangerous quality to the “black” immigrants. At its essence, Bertram used concepts from evolutionary theory to underline eugenic arguments about biological racial inferiority. He argued that geographical evolutionary separation partitioned breeding populations, thereby giving an evolutionary impetus to the genetic barriers between groups.<sup>181</sup> And, though he acknowledged that the effects of racial mixing were not fully documented, he asserted that, when “black” male immigrants mate with native (white) British women, who—he claimed—tended to be of low social standing, the offspring of the union were genetically disadvantaged. He seamlessly blurred racial and class considerations, suggesting that miscegenation combined the genetic sin of crossing an evolutionary separation between groups with the social sin of expanding the profligate lower classes. To determine the level of ensuing degeneration, he suggested imposing mental tests on all immigrants entering the UK as well as enacting immigration quotas to prevent further deterioration.<sup>182</sup>

Though the focus of the study was upon the racial profile of immigration, class considerations reinforced race. The Society noted that educated immigrants might create less of a social drain. In practice, the economic inducements to immigration produced working-class

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<sup>179</sup> P.R. Cox, “The Demographic Characteristics of Britain Today and their Implications,” *The Eugenics Review* 59, no. 4 (December 1967):222-231, accessed January 28, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2906013>.

<sup>180</sup> *Journal of Biosocial Science* 3, no. 4 (October 1971), 440.

<sup>181</sup> Bertram, 18.

<sup>182</sup> Bertram, 23.

“coloured” immigration, which resulted in more detrimental effects on British society, including a larger proportion of the infiltration of inferior mental qualities. However, the Society did not delineate the extent of this effect.<sup>183</sup>

All told, the concern of demographic decline, coupled with the onset of New Commonwealth immigration, became an object of scrutiny for the racial concerns it aroused. As this entire section illustrates, contrary to the dismal attention paid to the Eugenics Society in this piece of the historiography of the post-war period, the Society actively researched and campaigned in favor of hereditarian principles. The idea of race never disappeared from British biology, or British eugenics, on either progressive or conservative sides.<sup>184</sup> Reformers publically shed the skin of association to earlier, more explicitly racial thought in attempts to preserve the legitimacy of eugenics, but they also undertook research and fear-mongering on the implications of race in British society, through the lens of measuring intelligence.

#### Part 4: IQ and Psychometrics

As the American eugenicist Frederick Osborn wrote: “Eugenics is not concerned with color of skin or facial or bodily characteristics unless it is shown that these features of man are related to his genetic capacity for socially valuable qualities such as intelligence or character.”<sup>185</sup> His words were equally evocative on the other side of the Atlantic, as eugenicists, as well as psychometricians, education policy makers, and elements of the public, became concerned with the genetic capacity for intelligence. At the same time, the Society decided to reorient its focus. “The main activity of the Society should be devoted to the common ground between the biological and social sciences and to bring together for the mutual exchange of ideas and

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<sup>183</sup> “West Indian Immigration,” *The Eugenics Review* 50, no. 4 (January 1959): 251-257, accessed December 22, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973402/>.

<sup>184</sup> Schaffer, 166.

<sup>185</sup> Frederick Osborn, “Eugenics and the Races of Man,” *Eugenics Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (September 1963): 103-109.

information those interested in genetic as contrasted with environmental influence.” To this end, in 1967 the council of the Eugenics Society decided to discontinue the *Eugenics Review* and instead launch a *Journal of Biosocial Science*, which was “more carefully crafted to contemporary research purposes.”<sup>186</sup>

### Part 5: History of IQ

The belief that certain races are genetically inferior to others traces at least as far back as Victorian thought, to the time that Darwin explained national differences in terms of natural selection. However, Darwinian logic, extended to its natural conclusion, would explain that certain groups or races lose out in the evolutionary struggle and become extinct. Consequently, it was not until the age of Galton, when, as Diane Paul so appropriately describes it, eugenics became a movement by attaching to ideas about evolutionary progress and decline, and genetic differences between races came to signify a fixed and measurable hierarchy.<sup>187</sup>

Galton’s interest in heredity was associated with fears of the decline of the Anglo-Saxon race.<sup>188</sup> In his book, Hereditary Genius, he set out to prove that genius was inborn. He was also the first to propose an innate, general intellectual capacity capable of being measured; from Galtonian origins, eugenics and intelligence were twinned.<sup>189</sup> Galton also made another contribution, by crafting the intellectual heritage for psychometrics, which was the offshoot of psychology concerned with the “science” of individual mental differences. The principle behind psychometrics was that differences in intelligence were both hereditary and based upon the

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<sup>186</sup> F. Schenck and A. S. Parkes, “The Activities of the Eugenics Society,” *The Eugenics Review* 60, no. 3 (September 1968): 142-161, accessed February 3, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2906074/>.

<sup>187</sup> Paul, 36.

<sup>188</sup> Hanson, 2.

<sup>189</sup> C. B. Cox and A. E. Dyson, *Black Paper Two: The Crisis in Education* (London, UK: Critical Quarterly Society, 1969), 17.

tenets of natural law as the rationalizing force for hierarchy.<sup>190</sup> The natural order thereby legitimated hierarchies of human racial groupings. And, given that the aim of eugenics was to improve the human stock by encouraging reproduction of the genetically superior and discouraging reproduction of the genetically inferior, intelligence testing provided the measurements that could identify physical and psychological differences between individuals and races.<sup>191</sup>

#### Part 6: Cyril Burt and the Hereditarian School

Over time, two scientific schools took shape, namely, the hereditary and the environmental, which concerned themselves with the relative weight accorded to nature and nurture in influencing the development of human characteristics. Though the debate continues today, the choice is primarily one of degree. Only the most adamant hereditarians assert that the environment plays no role in shaping the individual's personal, moral, or intellectual characteristics. The divergence in the period under scrutiny was not, however, one of purely disinterested inquiry; as Nancy Stepan points out, racial tensions informed the hereditarian-environmentalist debate, particularly in the discussion over the work of Cyril Burt's psychometrics.<sup>192</sup> But they also had a wider influence, as we have seen, to the extent that deep-seated, racialized hereditarianism conditioned some of the activities of the Eugenics Society.

Evidently, this academic dispute did not occur in a vacuum; it reflected the politics of society at large. To listen to certain uncritical historians describe it, post-war liberalism set the scene for the rise of environmentalism and glossed over possibilities of intellectual differences between

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<sup>190</sup> Evans and Waites, 4.

<sup>191</sup> H.J. Eysenck and Leon Kamin, *The Intelligence Controversy* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1981), 91.

<sup>192</sup> Stepan, 186.



groups. Then, in light of increasing racial tensions, hereditary arguments about race proved resurgent, mounting an “authoritarian backlash.”<sup>193</sup>

While this account appears tempting, the historical record indicates that environmentalism never triumphed over hereditarian thinking and that a faction, though at times, a minority, remained to defend hereditarian orthodoxy. In fact, the scientific foundations of eugenics had been under growing assault since the 1930’s, long before notions of fixed heredity were cast under the shadow of authoritarianism. In the developing non-racial view of human diversity, geneticists understood human groups to possess different combinations of genes, which interacted to produce continuous characteristics, like intelligence.<sup>194</sup> Thus, as a polygenetic trait, intelligence would not be directly passed down between generations; instead, the genes responsible, even under identical environmental conditions, would recombine in unpredictable ways during the process of reproduction.<sup>195</sup> Due to an increasingly nuanced view of understanding polygenic inheritance, gene-gene inheritance, and the lessons of modern genetics, the pure hereditarian basis of eugenics became increasingly untenable.<sup>196</sup> Yet, throughout the period under scrutiny, there was still, “a minority of educationists and politicians putting forward ideas about education and society which had profound eugenic and racist implications.” These ideas, though often based on flawed data and a set of ideologically-charged assumptions, soon exerted a powerful influence on policy makers and scientists.<sup>197</sup>

Characteristic of this viewpoint was Cyril Burt, the educational psychologist, statistician, and fervent disciple of Francis Galton. In Hereditary Genius, Galton wrote that the idea of studying

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<sup>193</sup> Ken Richardson, *Race, Culture, and Intelligence* (Middlesex, England : Penguin Books Ltd., 1972), 14.

<sup>194</sup> C. P. Blacker, “J.B.S. Haldane on Eugenics,” *The Eugenics Review* 44, no. 3 (October 1952): 146-151, accessed December 21, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973346/>.

<sup>195</sup> Kevles, 146.

<sup>196</sup> Soloway, 353.

<sup>197</sup> Clyde, 97.

hereditary genius occurred to him in an enquiry into the “mental peculiarities of different races.” In an expansion upon Darwin’s explanation of the origin of species, Galton attempted to discover the origin of their different social and intellectual roles.<sup>198</sup> Burt and the hereditarians continued this tradition, with a decidedly racial component. While working for the London County Council, Burt became concerned with measuring intelligence. In line with Galton’s intellectual vision, Burt developed a passion for measurement and “an anxiety to prevent the deterioration of the race by ensuring that the able and the gifted were given the positions of authority in society that their intelligence merited.”<sup>199</sup> It was, therefore, a eugenic concern regarding mental deficiency that led to Burt’s developing interest in the field of intelligence testing.

Burt’s psychological measurements stemmed from the task of identifying children in need of special education. While conducting this task, Burt designed a scale of tasks children should perform, calculated against their actual age to produce IQ. Burt was not, however, the first to design mental testing. His predecessor, Spearman, used a complex method of factor analysis to relate the results of various mental tests. To this end, Spearman was uniquely influential in arguing that general intelligence existed, as a reified entity, *g*, which was heritable and useful for ranking people on a scale of intellectual ability. Spearman argued that *g* was inherited and from this, he developed IQ as a measure of *g*. Spearman also argued that blacks performed poorly on tests which had the strongest correlations with *g*.<sup>200</sup> He did not, however, pursue the link between intelligence and heredity, nor did he pursue its political implications; rather, Burt, his

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<sup>198</sup> Francis Galton, “Hereditary Talent and Character,” in *Eugenics Then and Now* (Stroudsburg, PA: Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross Inc., 1976), 25.

<sup>199</sup> Clyde, 68.

<sup>200</sup> Stephen J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981), 271.

successor, was the first to focus upon trying to prove that intelligence was hereditarian from a eugenic standpoint.<sup>201</sup>

Burt argued that intelligence, as measured by IQ tests, was inherited, or innate. He based this assertion upon conducting a series of studies on twins, both identical and fraternal, raised apart; his results gave evidence of the heritability of intelligence. In fact, he incorporated this belief within his definition of intelligence, which he described as inborn intellectual ability. He asserted that differences in intelligence, between individuals, were due “largely to the individual’s inherited constitution.”<sup>202</sup>

Further, Burt argued that heredity was essential to explaining differences in mental capacities between groups and that this had a necessarily racial component, with eugenic consequences. He wrote: “It is important to recognize the presence of hereditary mental differences even among the races of civilized Europe.... Mental inheritance, then, not only moulds the character of individuals; it also rules the destiny of nations.”<sup>203</sup>

In light of the new “racial” composition of Britain, the fact that the Eugenics Society, as well as the psychometricians, wrote excitedly about the relationship among intellectual destiny, fertility, and race, was not surprising. Galton had once written, “Hence we would expect, as a corollary of the evolution theory, that human families would differ from one another in hereditary ability. The same principle of variation as applied to human families would hold also of human races.”<sup>204</sup> The worth that Galton assigned different races had to do with deviation from the average: in his view, how many geniuses each group produced. Updated to the

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<sup>201</sup> Stepan, 133.

<sup>202</sup> Cyril Burt, *Intelligence and Fertility: the Effect of the Differential Birthrate on Inborn Mental Characteristics* (London, UK: The Eugenics Society, 1948), 5.

<sup>203</sup> Clyde, 71.

<sup>204</sup> C. P. Blacker, “Galton’s Views on Race,” *The Eugenics Review* 43, no. 1 (April 1951): 19-22, accessed January 21, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973272/>.

twentieth century, eugenicists assigned the idea of worth in ways that could be measured, by affixing a number; in the case of black Britons, that number was generally one standard deviation below the mean of the white British population.<sup>205</sup>

The future of the British nation, then, was uncertain, as the mental endowments of the population were in flux. A concerned member of the public put it bluntly, in his letter to the Eugenics Society: “We are losing brains at the top and opening the door at the bottom to far lower intelligences.”<sup>206</sup> “Coloured” immigration should be halted immediately, the letter continued, as the higher birthrate of immigrants would only cause problems for the native population. The connection was all too clear. Burt had defined race as distant ancestry, and, though he conceded that mental differences in races may have been smaller than predicted, heredity nonetheless explained the differences in mental capacities between races. In weighing the environmental versus genetic causes of difference, he asked: “Are the agencies which determine the capacities of a man or nation predominantly those which arise from the environment and act upon the individual after birth? Or are they rather rooted in tendencies hereditary in the family or the race, which determine irrevocably the dominant lines along which its members shall develop, long before they are born?” In his theory of fixed intelligence, clearly, the answer was the latter.

It is important to note that the assumptions of Burt, and other psychometricians committed to the hereditarian view, were guided by what Stephen Jay Gould has described as fallacy. Biological determinism portrays behavioral, social, and economic differences between groups, or races, which fundamentally misconstrues the differences of “within” and “between” group

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>206</sup> Richard Pilkington, “Immigration,” *The Eugenics Review* 57, no. 3 (September 1965): 152, accessed January 27, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2982288/>.

heritability. Essentially, by conflating variation among individuals within a group to the differences between groups, Burt reified racial differences.<sup>207</sup> By drawing evidence from heritability between children of birth and adoptive parents, all within a single ethnicity, and using this to describe differences between children of different ethnic groupings, Burt and his followers manufactured mental differences.

Additionally, as pertains to demographic concerns, the eugenic obsession with intelligence was not always reflective of social reality. In 1947, the Scottish Council for Research in Education conducted mental testing to determine if measured intelligence in the Scottish population had improved since the 1930's. The results indicated that average intelligence was slightly higher than in 1932.<sup>208</sup> Nonetheless, Richard Soloway is correct in acknowledging that the results failed to dislodge anxiety concerning declining intelligence.<sup>209</sup> Eugenicists explained away the results, which actually indicated rising intelligence, by arguing that there was a natural increase in IQ due to the population's growing familiarity with testing procedures, known as "test sophistication." They also drew very specific lessons from the survey, by focusing upon the finding of a negative association between intelligence and family size, which meant that the larger the family, the lower the average intelligence.<sup>210</sup> Discussion of the results in the *British Journal of Educational Psychology* argued that, in the face of higher reproductive rates for larger families, including immigrant families, in spite of average IQ increases, the trend would be "a galloping plunge towards intellectual bankruptcy."<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Gould, 156.

<sup>208</sup> James Maxwell, "Intelligence, Education, and Fertility: a Comparison Between the 1932 and 1947 Scottish Surveys," *Journal of Biosocial Science* 1, no. 3 (1969): 247-271.

<sup>209</sup> Soloway, 342.

<sup>210</sup> R. C. K. Ensor, "The Trend of Scottish Intelligence: A Comparison of the 1947 and 1932 Surveys of the Intelligence of Eleven-Year-Old Pupils," *The Eugenics Review* 41, no. 4 (January 1950): 196-197, accessed January 25, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/issues/191286/>.

<sup>211</sup> *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 20 (1950): 56.

Ostensibly, the eugenicists, like the psychometricians, were not expressly concerned with evidence that contravened their assumptions.

This trend represents a eugenic paradox. On the one hand, experimental results, which were accepted even by the most determined hereditarians as valid, indicated rising national intelligence. However, concerns about decline, ignited by differential fertility rates between classes and exacerbated by the growth of a non-white, feared-to-be intellectually inferior population: “lead to the concepts that the national intelligence should be declining and that the relaxation of natural selection must be resulting in the decrease of the genetic worth of mankind.”<sup>212</sup> Burt further obfuscated the matter by conducting his own survey, finding a slight decline in the average IQ, by about two points. As a result of conflicting data, the majority opinion of educational psychology acknowledged that the true trend in intelligence was difficult to prove.<sup>213</sup>

#### Part 7: The Ramifications of Testing: Education Policy

The results of hereditarian research had important social implications, particularly for the next generation of the Britons. Children were viewed with particular consideration as a measure of the future intellectual improvement or decline of the nation.<sup>214</sup> As a result, within the field of educational policy, psychometric recommendations became codified as social policy. Indeed, the adoption of a tripartite school system after World War Two was based on theories of fixed intelligence, due in part to the influence of eugenicists and psychometricians. “Conclusions derived from intelligence testing, carried out on a mass scale, provided an apparently scientific

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<sup>212</sup> S. C. Reed, “Toward a New Eugenics: The Importance of Differential Reproduction,” *The Eugenics Review* 57, no. 2 (June 1965): 72-74, accessed December 22, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2982279/>.

<sup>213</sup> *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 17 (1947): 38.

<sup>214</sup> “Eugenically Desirable Types: A Symposium,” *The Eugenics Review* 38, no. 3 (October 1946): 133-141, accessed December 22, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2986352/>.

foundation for social, and in particular, educational policies of an extremely reactionary nature. The rationale—or justification—for the rigid divisions in education, rested fundamentally on assumed laws about the distribution of intelligence derived from psychometry.”<sup>215</sup> The vision was enshrined in the eleven-plus examination, involving mental testing and segregating children into distinct paths to grammar or technical schools.<sup>216</sup>

Intelligence testing had important socio-political implications. After the Second World War, intelligence was held as innate and as a justification, via the eleven-plus exam, for selecting a restricted number of students for grammar schools, on the path to higher education. However, intelligence tests were not objectively scientific, as: “Psychologists produce tests which equate intelligence with, say, the kind of teaching provided in academically-oriented grammar schools for which their tests will serve as a selective instrument.”<sup>217</sup> Nonetheless, proponents believed that by separating children on the basis of intelligence testing, they were, in fact, promoting valid measures of intelligence.<sup>218</sup> “Bad nurture and inadequate education may mask innate intelligence or prevent its full development, but heredity puts a definite limit to what can be achieved in intelligence even with the best of nurture, education and good fortune.”<sup>219</sup>

In effect, the eugenic vision of human intellectual development depicted by the educational psychologists reflected deepening societal divisions of class and race.<sup>220</sup> Burt’s original intention of educating those of born talent, including resuscitating high-scoring members of the lower classes, transformed into codifying separate educational tracks for different social

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<sup>215</sup> Brian Simon, *Intelligence, Psychology, and Education: A Marxist Critique* (London, UK: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 237.

<sup>216</sup> Gould, 293.

<sup>217</sup> Simon, 254.

<sup>218</sup> Validity refers to measuring what you seek to measure

<sup>219</sup> C.P. Blacker, *The Eugenics Review*, 124.

<sup>220</sup> Clyde, 101.

groups.<sup>221</sup> Burt consulted various government education policy committees, including the Hadow Reports and Spens Report, on the psychological benefits to streaming students into different educational tracks from primary school age. Thereby, the new state system of education reinforced Burt's vision in what Lowe describes as a new eugenics, but which, more aptly, is a promulgation of the same biological determinism underpinning the old eugenics.<sup>222</sup>

Via the Education Act of 1944, an earlier patchwork system, providing meritocratic scholarships to higher education for the lower classes was replaced with the eleven plus exam, which allocated pupils to different types of secondary schools based upon proven ability in an entrance examination and in psychological testing. This attempt to modernize and coordinate the education system introduced mental testing to determine "natural endowment," as a criterion for entering the university track in education.<sup>223</sup> Burt defended the newly enshrined elitist system, arguing that the nation's elite should be preserved by concentrating spending on the grammar schools.<sup>224</sup>

Even as education policy shifted away from the influence of the psychometricians, replaced by comprehensive education systems in the mid-1960's, they upheld an ideological line. They continued to write concertedly about the potential for a decline in the national intelligence.<sup>225</sup> Further, they remained united in opposition to policies favoring environmentalism. The Newsom report of 1963 acknowledged that policy and education can shape innate talent and by 1967, the Plowden Report sought to replace mental testing and

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<sup>221</sup> Gould, 295.

<sup>222</sup> Roy Lowe, *Schooling and Social Change, 1964-1990* (London, UK: Routledge, 1997): 110-111.

<sup>223</sup> Cyril Burt, *British Journal of Educational Studies* 7, no. 2 (May 1959): 99-117.

<sup>224</sup> Cyril Burt, *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 13 (1943): 83.

<sup>225</sup> John Nisbet, "Intelligence and Family Size, 1949-1956," *The Eugenics Review* 49, no. 4 (January 1958): 201-202, accessed January 13, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973215/>.



educational tiers with comprehensive education.<sup>226</sup> Yet the psychometricians, including Burt, mounted a counter-offensive by publishing a Black Paper on education in 1969, which criticized current educational trends. The Black Paper was a political act intended to influence legislation, even including in the preface a letter to MP's and distributed accordingly. It also defended the effectiveness of using intelligence tests to allocate children to different types of secondary school. In the report, Burt belittled the suppositions of equality between people and groups advocated in comprehensive education; he went so far as to cite the American Declaration of Independence and to disparage its central tenet that all men are created equal and are equal possessors of intellectual capabilities.<sup>227</sup>

At its heart, then, the hereditarianism promulgated by the psychometricians was centered on establishing a basic inequality, both intellectual and moral. IQ results became seen as evidence of both the capacity and the worth of an individual.<sup>228</sup> As a consequence, the assertion that certain races are fixed at lower levels of intelligence became value judgments as well as assessments of their inferiority. Combined with more amorphous and pathological anxieties about demography, this painted a gloomy picture for the future of Britain.

#### Part 8: Jensenism and Psychometric Invigoration

The previous section is not to suggest that Burt's hereditarianism reigned supreme or uncontested. Burt's hereditarian views were challenged in the 1950's, especially by the British Psychological Society's 1957 report, which argued intelligence was affected by environmental factors. However, though the report accounted for environmental factors, it did not challenge

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<sup>226</sup> Simon, 240.

<sup>227</sup> Cox and Dyson, 16.

<sup>228</sup> Richardson, 15.

assumptions about heredity having the bulk of the impact.<sup>229</sup> And in 1960's the scientific mainstream criticized intelligence tests, hereditarianism, and racial bias.<sup>230</sup>

In opposition to this, there was always an explicitly racist fringe of the movement that was deeply interested in the race question and who felt that the future edifice of the British nation was eroding beneath the trampling feet of degenerate immigrant hordes. In particular, a group of American race researchers were in contact with British eugenicists. Most prominently, anthropologist Ruggles Gates wrote to C.P. Blacker of the anti-race propaganda of moderate eugenics supposedly driven by Jews.<sup>231</sup> Additionally, he founded an explicitly racial journal entitled *Mankind Quarterly* and wrote about classifying a hierarchy of races based upon genetic differences. He even went so far as to argue that different races, such as negroids and mongoloids, should be characterized as different species.<sup>232</sup> Meanwhile, in Britain, Sir Edward Keith, the avowed racist, warned of the negative effects of racial mixing while Sir Ronald Fisher, renowned population geneticist and former Vice President of the British Eugenics Society, criticized the position of the Society in avoiding race questions. Sir Ronald Fisher also spoke of intellectual differences between groups.<sup>233</sup>

This element was not necessarily representative of the scientific mainstream, but is illustrative of the fact that the hereditarian thought underpinning established science allowed the fringe to flourish. Among the more dominant reform eugenicists, biologically-based inequality in mental capacity was viewed as natural and explicable in the range of IQ scores. Within this group, Julian Huxley defended the science of race in his 1962 Galton lecture, while other crypto-

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<sup>229</sup> Clyde, 86-87.

<sup>230</sup> Stepan, 131.

<sup>231</sup> Kuhl, 159.

<sup>232</sup> Reginald Ruggles Gates, *Man* 37 (February 1937): 28-32.

<sup>233</sup> Kuhl, 143.

eugenicists, including Lancelot Hogben and J. B. S. Haldane, wrote of the inequalities between black and white<sup>234</sup> Further, the Bishop of Birmingham gave the annual Galton Lecture in 1949 by painting a picture of racial doom at the hands of white women marrying South Asian men, who, he believed, created “plague spots” within British society.<sup>235</sup> Though alarmist, the lecture was given within the respectable annual gathering of the Eugenics Society, as food for thought for even the most quiescent of society members. Overall, then, beliefs about unchanging genetic foundations paved the way for racial intellectual theorizing to enter mainstream scientific discourses.<sup>236</sup> Even in face of resistance, there remained eugenicists and psychometricians in the 1950’s and 1960’s committed to the biological inheritance of intelligence. Their core tenets were about to receive a revitalizing shock from across the Atlantic.

In 1969, Arthur Jensen, educational psychologist and pupil of Burt, published a controversial paper in America which spearheaded the IQ debate into the scientific mainstream. Jensen wrote: “Nearly every anatomical, physiological, and biochemical system investigated shows racial differences. Why should the brain be any exception?”<sup>237</sup> Based upon Burt’s earlier statistical work, Jensen argued that intelligence had a high heritability and could consequently explain a fifteen-point IQ gap between whites and African Americans. As a result, not only did he conclude that a higher percentage of blacks were mentally retarded than whites, but he argued that any educational policies seeking to redress the educational achievement gap with

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<sup>234</sup> Schaffer 143-146.

<sup>235</sup> E. W. Barnes, “The Mixing of Races and Social Decay,” *The Eugenics Review* 41, no. 1 (April 1949): 11-16, accessed November 10, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2972888/>.

<sup>236</sup> Cox and Dyson.

<sup>237</sup> Arthur Jensen, “How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?” *Harvard Educational Review* 39, no. 1 (January 1969): 80.

compensatory education would prove futile.<sup>238</sup> He suggested making policy changes akin to the British model, whereby students were segregated by “patterns of ability.”<sup>239</sup>

Though published in America, the Jensen thesis was influential in Britain, sparking a flurry of discussion. Jensen visited England for a meeting of the Cambridge Society for Social Responsibility in Science, and the Editorial published from the CSSRS Bulletin reported that: “The segregationists of the southern US, the Powellite element of the Tory party, and the more-means-worse authors of the Black Paper on Education have all used the scientific evidence of Professor Jensen’s article to bolster their political aims.”<sup>240</sup> Though heavily criticized, Jensen’s work was viewed as a godsend for the hereditarian school and as a distortion by its critics. They claimed that he underestimated genetic complexity, pointing out that: “No general statement could be made about the assignment of fixed proportions to the contributions of heredity and environment either to the development of a single individual or to the differences among members of a population.”<sup>241</sup> Principally, on mental characteristics, critics alleged that he misconstrued variation within groups and variation between groups.<sup>242</sup>

However, Jensen’s work gave fuel to psychometric flames of the centrality heredity in determining intelligence. “The present concern with testing intellectual functioning can thus be seen as a continuation of this scientific campaign to demonstrate genetic differences in socially important characters.”<sup>243</sup> In the ensuing years, in the vein of “biologism,” and eugenic anxieties

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>240</sup> Simon, 247.

<sup>241</sup> Clyde, 99.

<sup>242</sup> G. M. Morant, “The significance of Racial Differences,” in *Race and Science: The Race Question in Modern Science* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1961): 338.

<sup>243</sup> *Journal of Biosocial Science* 8, no. 4 (October 1976); 330.

about declining intelligence, both the Eugenics Society and the British Psychological Association undertook new studies on the genetic differences between races.<sup>244</sup>

Back in London, Hans Eysenck, a former classmate of Jensen and a current Professor of Psychology at University College London, defended the hereditarian thesis. Principally, he connected differences in IQ with the progress of European versus African civilization.<sup>245</sup> He felt that American social problems were coming to England as a result of immigration from the British colonies. Perhaps his youth in Nazi Germany left an impact, for in his writings, he described the myth of racial equality as scientific fact and contested the original UNESCO claim that there was no proof of differences in mankind according to intelligence.<sup>246</sup> He also particularly emphasized the low IQ scores of coloured children.<sup>247</sup>

Meanwhile, the Eugenics Society continued racially-charged research on intellectual variation. Based on another study of African Americans, the Society found that critics of the hereditarian view attributed too much weight to environmental causes of variation. Responding to the finding that African Americans who moved to the northern United States showed marked improvement in mental testing, a Society member remarked that the difference was evidently due to the selective migration of the brighter stocks.<sup>248</sup> This line of argumentation was the reverse of that articulated in response to “coloured” immigration concerns, which argued that the debased character of “coloured” immigration was exacerbated by the selective migration of the less “fit.” Essentially, then, selective migration patterns could always be found to support the genetic view.

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<sup>244</sup> *Journal of Biosocial Science* 8, no. 4 (1976): 331.

<sup>245</sup> Kuhl, 271.

<sup>246</sup> H. J. Eysenck, *Race, Intelligence, and Education* (New York, NY: Library Press, 1971).

<sup>247</sup> H. J. Eysenck, *The Inequality of Man* (London, UK: Temple Smith, 1973), 125.

<sup>248</sup> P. E. Vernon, “The Testing of Negro Intelligence,” *The Eugenics Review* 52, no. 3 (October 1960): 174, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2972821/>

Additionally, the Society concluded that the intellectual ability in negroes of mixed-race descent was related to the amount of white admixture in the individuals concerned, so mixes tested higher than unmixed negroes. This further supported the hereditarian view.<sup>249</sup>

Ongoing interest in eugenic theories relating to race, as well as class, ultimately coincided with a period of reevaluating the work of the hereditarians. After Burt's death in October 1971, the validity of his work, which informed so much of eugenic thought, was reexamined, principally by Leon Kamin, a critic of the psychometric school, who suspected that Burt had created false data to support his genetic theories. In particular, many of the studies that Burt had conducted on identical twins raised apart, which attested to the hereditary nature of intelligence, were fabricated.<sup>250</sup> Given the influence Burt's work had on establishing secondary education criteria in Britain, the validity of his work became not just a scientific, but also a political and public concern.<sup>251</sup> Allies of Burt, including Eysenck and Jensen, defended his record, but ultimately, a confidant of Burt, Leslie Hearnshaw, published a 1979 biography which confirmed the fabrication claims.<sup>252</sup>

Thus, narratives of "old" versus "new" eugenics are misleading, for hereditarian thought never disappeared. Rather, Burt and his followers developed theories of heredity, linked to race, which legitimized intelligence testing, measuring between group intellectual differences, and which also justified establishing separate educational tracks for different social groups. In practice, IQ testing served both as a means for charting inequalities between groups and, in and

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<sup>249</sup> K. F. Dyer, "Patterns of Gene Flow Between Negroes and Whites in the US," *Journal of Biosocial Science* 8, no. 4 (October 1976): 330.

<sup>250</sup> Eysenck and Kamin, 103.

<sup>251</sup> Clyde, 108.

<sup>252</sup> L. S. Hearnshaw, *Cyril Burt: Psychologist* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979).

of itself, as its own branch of eugenics, focused upon promoting the “better” or more “intelligent” stocks.

### Conclusion

To conclude, as Professor Gilman once wrote, racial biology was a study of the barriers between groups and the degeneration implicit when those barriers broke down.<sup>253</sup> And as an intellectual enterprise fixated on notions of social decay, racism built upon degeneracy theory.<sup>254</sup> To that, I would add that eugenics built on degeneracy theory; specifically, the degeneracy that policy makers, scientists, pseudo-scientists, and members of the British public perceived to be occurring in the post-war moment.

To the extent that, in centuries past, scientists interested in charting the variation between groups, with the goal in mind of determining innate intelligence, measured skulls, in the twentieth century, they measured the outputs of the brain. Evidently, this lineage of racial thinking stretches from the nineteenth century, past the first egalitarian UNESCO statement, and tinges through the post-war era. Yet the race concept is complex, in that, it may appear a truism that races plainly exist, but the race concept, in and of itself, explains nothing.<sup>255</sup>

However, it seems evident that the language of race was used to articulate a deeply-rooted anxiety, which I describe as a eugenic framework, concentrated on societal deterioration. Even after months of research, it is difficult to tease out the specific sources of this anxiety, but its manifestations are clear and an examination of Britain in the mid-twentieth century provides the case in point. For Britain, in this moment, combined a formal scientific movement, incorporated into the British Eugenics Society, which was fixated upon facilitating societal

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<sup>253</sup> J. Edward Chamberlain and Sander Gilman, *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1985), 98.

<sup>254</sup> Chamberlain and Gilman, 190.

<sup>255</sup> G.A. Harrison, “The Race Concept in Human Biology,” (The Galton Lecture, London, 1968).

improvement and averting decline, with a pseudo-scientific branch of psychology which articulated that decline within the language of IQ. These two movements, whose personnel and goals were often intertwined, occurred in the context of structural changes in the very definition of British nationality, identity, economic priority, and societal-ethnic constitution. This period under examination, then, represents a conceptual fault line, or a time which, despite the recent wartime victory, was impregnated with a profound unease about the composition of British nationhood and the relative place of Britain in the world.

Upon initial inspection, the post-war climate, bearing the initial revelations of eugenic-linked Nazi atrocity and ensuing international attempts to discredit scientific racism, did not provide fertile ground for authoritarian science, yet neither feature put fixed notions of biological determinism to rest. Instead, as I have shown, conceptions of biological race persisted through three mechanisms: the mixture of social and biological racism underpinning the policy debates surrounding New Commonwealth immigration, the Eugenic Society's propagandizing activities against societal degeneration, in the form of "coloured" immigration, and the debates and education policy proposals concerning mental testing produced by eugenicists and psychometricians.

Further, the hereditarian theory behind IQ testing was constructed as a tool to statistically validate societal inequalities. Eugenicists and psychometricians utilized it as a means for propagating ideologically-cemented beliefs, in particular, as regards the dysgenic elements of the population. To this end, race and class mutually reinforced one another concerning "coloured" immigration. "Coloured" immigration represented a eugenic problem, to the extent that it implied a degeneration of the imagined racial community, coupled with the extent to which psychometricians analyzed immigration as an assault upon the national intellectual capacity.



Dauntingly, we currently are entering an era of political retrenchment, when people are especially receptive to arguments of social or racial prejudice expressed as scientific truths. To the extent that biologically-constructed racism has been useful at legitimizing scientific prejudices and public fears, I believe that it will continue to resurface. And, though the public may not navigate the nuanced arguments about heredity and environment held among scientists, eugenics nonetheless provides the veneer of scientific credibility to popular prejudices. Meanwhile, the determined efforts of the minority faction committed to a hereditarian-based outlook will continue to take inequalities for granted. Given the fact that these movements, busy propagating a dogmatic outlook of innate, biologically-determined genetic capabilities, tend not to concern themselves with the validity of their arguments, they are that much more difficult to contain. At its heart, then, the eugenic framework propagates racism within the context of ingrained inequalities between individuals, classes, and ethnic groups.

This is not to presuppose that all hereditarians are racists, or categorical mental testers, or lacking in scientific validity. Richardson said it best: “Not all who argue for the influence of human genetics are racists; not all who argue from the environmental point of view are mindless egalitarians.”<sup>256</sup> However, the fixed hereditarian view provides an essential support to biological racism, especially to the extent that inequalities are applied among, as opposed to within, groups or races. Elements of the scientific community, in fomenting a deep ambivalence towards biological race at best, and a propagation of biological race at worst, allow pseudo-science to flourish. This step is the building block to racism, as racism, alongside social Darwinism, and

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<sup>256</sup> Richardson, 11.

even Nazism, recognizes the fundamental inequality of man based on biological characteristics.<sup>257</sup>

Nor does my argument rule out the existence of cultural forms of racism alongside biological racism. Instead, my argument provides a new framework for understanding conceptions of biological racism. It retaliates against assumptions that scientific and societal progress succeeded in shining a dissipating light upon racial prejudice in the aftermath of the Second World War.

In sum, the influence of eugenics in post-war Britain transcended the boundary of the British Eugenics Society, which, in and of itself, constituted a central point at the intersection of social belief and scientific practice. Eugenics, as a biological mechanism for conceiving of societal change, found refuge in the discourses of race and hereditarian determinism which permeated across sections of the public and the scientific communities who were concerned with the social, economic, and demographic changes restructuring their nation.

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<sup>257</sup> Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 7.

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