TERM 2: GRADE 11 Topic 3:

Ideas of Race in the late 19th and 20th centuries

Study Notes
Notions About the Hierarchies of Race in the 19th Century

• 1730’s, Carolus Linnaeus (Swedish) classification of living things. Human species: European, American, Asiatic, African

• 1795, Johan Blumenbach classified humans into 5 groups: Negro (African), Mongolian (Asian), Malay (Southeast Asia), American Indian (American) and Caucasian (European). Believed Caucasians were the top race and the other 4 races were degenerations from the Caucasian race.

• 1790’s, Petrus Camper (Dutch) believed all races shared common ancestor but some had drifted from the Biblical ideal. Greeks and Romans ranked highest in beauty and human perfection.
Notions About the Hierarchies of Race in the 19th Century

• Mid 19th Century, Samuel Morton (American) believed in common ancestor but that each race was created separately and differently. Believed intelligence was linked to brain size. According to his measurement Whites had the largest skulls and were therefore most intelligent.

• 1854, Josiah Nott (American doctor) and George Gliddon (Egyptologist) published *Types of Mankind* and in 1857, *Indigenous Races of the Earth*
Notions About the Hierarchies of Race in the 19th Century

- Samuel Morton’s work, and work of similar scientists gave racism legitimacy
- Racist ideas taught in universities & churches and spread in media
- Many leaders used these ideas to justify slavery & dispossession of Native Americans of land
- Few questioned; exception was Friedrich Tiedemann whose findings conflicted with Morton’s
Notions About the Hierarchies of Race in the 19th Century: Role of DARWIN

- Charles Darwin (1809-1882) believed that plants and animals evolved by natural selection process, due to competition for natural resources.
- Those best suited to the environment a.k.a. the “fittest” would survive to pass on their genes to future generations.
- Work was controversial because the belief that a human being was a form of animal contradicted teaching of the church.
- Social Darwinism – Darwin’s ideas applied to society by Herbert Spencer. Used term “evolution.” Believed that societies also evolved through natural selection.
- Due to military strength, countries like America, Britain and Germany (White races) were deemed superior and highest ranking.
- This was used to justify colonialism and imperialism (Scramble for Africa).
- Fairs held world-wide exhibiting and ranking people of different races.
Explanation of Eugenics

• Sir Francis Galton devised the term ‘eugenics’ in 1883
• Greek *eugenés* means “well-born”
• Science of improving human race by breeding the ‘best with the best’
• Enlightened society should weed out weaknesses and thereby control inherited human traits
• Scientific funding by wealthy American business men
• Charles Davenport – centre for experimental investigation (1904) and records centre (1910) in New York
• Claimed that various races inherited various different traits
Negative Eugenics

- Forced sterilization policy
- Discouraging reproduction of the genetically unfit would eliminate many social problems
- Thirty US states passed sterilization laws
- 65,000 people involuntarily sterilised
“Positive” Eugenics

- Superior couples encouraged to have more children
- “Fitter Family” and “Better Babies” contests
- Formation of family planning clinics
Modern Understanding of Race

- Archaeology & palaeontology & genetic research conclude that there is one single human “race”
- Palaeontology – provides information on evolution from fossil records
- Human Genome Project (1990-2003) – genetic research programme to map all human genes: no such thing as racial difference & humans originated in Africa
Practices of Race and Eugenics - USA

- USA, Germany and Britain initially most involved
- USA early 1900’s eugenics policies e.g. banning of marriage if one party was ‘feeble-minded’, alcoholic or diseased with TB or syphilis
- Suggested that education should not be wasted on ‘feeble minded’, nor social welfare, as it was helping the weak to survive
- IQ tests used and weighted in favour of Whites
- Immigration restricted those not from northern Europe
- Used to justify action against indigenous people of America
Practices of Race and Eugenics - Australia

• 1 Million Aboriginal Australians when European colonization started late 18th Century
• Reduced to 400 000 due to diseases introduced and conflicts with settlers over land
• Eugenics policies sought removal of ‘mixed race’ children > foster homes > assimilate to White Australian society
• Aim to ‘breed out’ Aboriginal blood, create White population
• Encouragement of European settlers > Australia
Practices of Race and Eugenics – Germany & South Africa

• Social Darwinism & eugenics > nationalism (wanting single race) and fascism
• Led to Third Reich (Hitler)
• Led to apartheid (South Africa) : many believed that there were physiological differences in the brains of blacks and whites > influenced apartheid education
• 1920's South African Eugenics institution formed
• Great Depression (1929-1932) fear of racial mixing in South Africa
• Birth control programme introduced in South Africa
  - White women encouraged to have children & white-preferred immigration policy
  - Black women pressured to use birth control / be sterilised
Practices of Race and Eugenics – Namibia

• Namibia was a German colony till end of WW1 (called South West Africa)

• 1904 campaign to exterminate Herero people (genocide)

• Concepts of racial hygiene and racial cleansing developed by German doctors and scientists

• Concentration and work camps for Nama and Herero

• Dr Eugen Fischer > SW Africa (Namibia) to carry out medical experiments on children of German men and Rehoboth women (he concluded that their offspring were mentally inferior to German fathers)

• His work was studied by Hitler in prison

• Mixed marriages banned in SW Africa (Namibia)

• Fischer > influential Nazi
Case Study: Australia and the indigenous Australians

Background: the colonisation of Australia
- 1788 first fleet from Britain arrived (to Botany Bay)
- Britain wanted to found a colony of banished convicts
- 1788-1867, 162 000 convicts sent from England and Ireland
- Many convicted for minor crimes, sentenced to 7yrs transportation
- Many tradesmen or farmers, often pardoned if they stayed
- First governor of New South Wales (Captain Arthur Phillip) intended friendly relations with Australian Aborigines
- Majority of settlers, however, treated Aborigines inhumanely
Case Study: Australia and the indigenous Australians

Background: the colonisation of Australia

- On arrival of British there were 750,000 – 1 million Aboriginal Australians in Australia
- Decimated by smallpox epidemic
- 1790-1816 guerilla attacks against invaders (farm raids, sheep destroyed, fires)
- Settler attacks lasted > 1880’s (Aboriginal population est. 80,000 in 1888)
- 26 Jan 1938 – Australia Day celebrated by white Australians but known as Day of Mourning for Aboriginal Australians marking 150 yrs. of degradation and mistreatment
Race theories in Australia in the early 20th century

- Two main debates around ‘racial suicide and racial decay’
- Colonial conquest legitimised by alleged inferiority of indigenous people thought to be ‘primitive’ and ‘scarcely human’
- Eugenics movement peaked first half of 20th Century
- Eugenics Society of Victoria – Richard Berry was a main member (compared head measurements and concluded that White people had biggest heads and therefore smartest)
Race Theories in Australia in the Early 20th century – Racial Suicide Debate

- Racial suicide – Australians feared invasion of Asians if the white population did not expand quickly enough > Immigration Restriction Act (1901)
- Limited immigration to those who could pass a dictation test in a European language (based on law in Natal, South Africa designed to keep out non-Europeans)
- British Empire Settlement Act of 1922 encouraged adult immigration to Australia from UK
- 2 objectives: increase white population in colonies & reduce UK unemployment
Race Theories in Australia in the Early 20th century – Racial Decay Debate

• Central to eugenic thinking around the world
• Racial decay - concern that successful and wealthy white mothers having fewer children than ‘inferior’ groups (poor)
• 1912 white mothers offered £5 childbirth bounty
• 1928 Royal Commission on Child Endowment or Family Allowance – stated eugenic considerations must be taken into account, when providing family support
• Feared effect of “racial poisons” such as venereal disease, TB, prostitution, alcoholism and criminality
Australia’s Immigration Policies

• Children sent from Britain to Australia 1920’s – 1967 to increase number of settlers
• Children were from poor backgrounds / in social or charitable care
• Children cut off from families – many told they were orphans
• Parents told that children had gone to a better life
• Children sent to Australian orphanages / to farming families as unpaid labour
• Many physically and sexually abused
• Catholic church set up some homes for children and provided education
• Young men (15-19) also encouraged to migrate to the colonies (Big Brother Movement) to be farm workers
The Stolen Generation

• First official policies about ‘mixed’ unions in early 20th Century
• ‘Half-caste’ populations thought to threaten ideal of a “White Australia”
• Biologist W Baldwin Spencer set out proposals to manage “problem”
• By early 1930’s a eugenicist scheme was set in place managed by CE Cook and AO Neville
• 100 000 ‘mixed-race’ children snatched from parents by police or government officials between 1910 and 1970 to be ‘assimilated’ into White population (‘breeding blackness out’); placed with foster parents / sent to institutions or made to work for white families
• Hasluck stated policy based on concerns for the welfare of the children
• Official apologies made to the ‘stolen generation’ by 2008/9 Prime Minister Rudd (Australia) and 2009 Prime Minister Gordon Brown (Britain)
Hitler’s Consolidation of power

• 1929-1932 six million Germans out of work due to effect of Great Depression; more people attracted to political parties with extremist ideals i.e. Communist Party, Nazi Party

• Nazi party was looking for scapegoats to attack (Communists, Jews and democratic politicians) > chaos and violence

• Hitler’s campaign took him all over Germany where he appealed to all types of people : played on the fears of all classes; accusing German politicians of betrayal; Hitler funded by industrialists > three massive election campaigns 1930-1932

• Goebbels given job of spreading Nazi message (propaganda)

• By July 1932 Nazis were largest single party with 230 seats in Reichstag (German Parliament) but in Nov 1932 dropped to 196 seats (looked as if bid for power might fail)

• Saved by President Hindenburg who was persuaded to lead coalition government with Hitler/Nazis
Hitler’s Consolidation of power

• 13 Jan 1933, Hitler became Chancellor of Germany which was celebrated by his Nazi followers

• Hitler had no intention of honouring coalition and called for another election, publicly he simply appealed for support from German people

• Reichstag building burned one week before election; Hitler blamed the Communists

• Hitler persuaded Lindenberg to sign a decree enabling Nazis to put their political opponents in prisons and concentration camps

• By March 1933, Nazis had 288 seats in the Reichstag (party now dominated)
Hitler’s Consolidation of power

- Goering (faithful to Hitler) was President and Reichstag building packed with Nazi Storm Troopers (the SA)
- Hitler demanded and got Enabling Act giving him power to make his own laws and set up totalitarian state – took away civil liberties from Germans, centralised the government (appointed Gauleiter to manage the states), destroyed free trade union movement
- Soon after, other political parties abolished & leaders herded into concentration camps
- Nazis also burned books to stamp out ideas
- Hitler faced problems in his own ranks: SA (2 Million men, working class Nazi militia) wanted more control in running of country with more socialist emphasis (Leader - Röhm wanted to control army)
- 30 June 1934 – Night of the Long Knives, Röhm and followers murdered by Heinrich Himmler and SS (Schutzstaffel – Protection Squadron in German army). 400 murdered.
Nazi Germany and the Holocaust

Hitler’s Consolidation of power

• Hitler justified his actions to the Reichstag claiming that he was the supreme court of justice for the German people during the 24 hours it took to kill the ‘guilty’

• August 1934, Hindenburg died; immediately Hitler made himself Führer – leader of the German nation (merged positions of Chancellor & President)

• Soldiers had to swear oath of loyalty

• Hitler now all-powerful in Nazi party and Germany became a police state

• SS and police given powers to arrest, punish, execute those considered to be enemies of the state (Heinrich Himmler led the SS – ruthless)

• Himmler created special security service and gained control of the Gestapo (German secret state police); established network of informers
Nazi Racial Ideology

- Hitler believed in hierarchy of races and Social Darwinism (survival of the fittest)
- Determined to create racial purity to retain strength of the German people
- ‘Aryan race’ top of the hierarchy: people of Northern Europe with blond hair and blue eyes
- Bottom of hierarchy – Africans, Slavs, Roma and Sinti (Gypsies) and Jews
- Sources of thinking: colonial anthropologists in Namibia and eugenics in the USA
- In German colony, South West Africa (Namibia) order was given to annihilate the Herero people (1904-1908): dress rehearsal for the Nazi’s Final Solution > Holocaust
- Eugene Fischer (anthropologist) argued African blood of lesser value and Africans should be exploited as long as they were useful, and then eliminated
- 1920’s-1930’s German eugenicists worked with American counterparts, claimed link between race, intelligence and personalities

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The Creation of a Racial State in Germany

- Defining the pure Aryan race in the German nation as an example of the ideal in relation to the ‘other’ who were stereotyped > prejudice > marginalisation > segregation > mass murder
- ‘Superior’ Aryan qualities: blond hair, blue eyes, intelligent, hard working, willing to sacrifice themselves for Germany
- Hitler wanted Germany ‘cleansed’ of all non-Aryan elements: the ‘other’
- The ‘other’ were the
  - Unproductive: the unhealthy, the severely disabled, the mentally handicapped, homeless people, beggars
  - Asocial and undesirable: alcoholics and prostitutes
  - Homosexuals
  - Juvenile delinquents
  - Roma and Sinti (Gypsies)
  - Jews (obsessive hatred of Jews (anti-Semitism), much deeper than most Germans who had limited hostility based on Christendom)
Applying Racial & Eugenic Laws & Policies

‘Positive’ eugenics
• Incentives to ‘breed’ pure Aryans
• Breeding programs between SS men and ‘Aryan’ women

Negative eugenics: laws introduced to eliminate ‘contaminating’ elements from Germany
• Sterilisation Law of 1933 (‘feeble-minded’, schizophrenics, epileptics, alcoholics)
• By 1936 – concentration camps for homeless, beggars, alcoholics, prostitutes, juvenile delinquents
• Euthanasia programmes: Oct 1939, Hitlers signed decree permitting killing of the handicapped by lethal injection and then by carbon monoxide gas (secret killings in gas chambers, disguised as shower rooms, Brandenburg Prison)
• 1940-1941 approximately 70 000 euthanized (5 000 were Jews who were killed regardless). Protests ended programme in 1941.
Groups Targeted by the Nazis

Jews

• Hitler believed Jews were a separate race that embodied evil

• Nazi approach was gradual

• Propaganda against Jews increased

• Jews were segregated and excluded from political, educational, cultural, economic and sporting life in Germany

• 1933-1934 - boycotting of Jewish shops and professions

• 1935 Nuremberg Laws – Reich Citizenship Act (only those with German blood were citizens of the Reich); Law for Protection of German Blood and German Honour (marriages and extra-marital relations between Jews and Germans forbidden)
Groups Targeted by the Nazis

Jews

- 1938 Hitler annexed Austria to German Reich spreading Jewish persecution to Austria
- Ernst von Rath (German diplomat) killed by a Jew, Herschel Grünspan (7 Nov)
- Retaliation: Nazis initiated pogrom (organised killing of an ethnic group)
- Attacking of Jewish homes and businesses (Kristallnacht (Crystal Night))
- Jewish pupils expelled from schools (15 Nov)
- Jewish businesses forced to close (3 Dec)
- All Jewish valuables confiscated & curfew set for all Jews (1939)
Groups Targeted by the Nazi

- Sinti and Roma (Gypsies): 1935 law – Fight against the Gypsy Menace, all Sinti and Roma had to register with police > deported to ghettos and concentration camps > death (gassing, starvation, exhaustion, experimentation on children by Dr Josef Mengele)
- Dark-skinned German people
- Jehovah’s Witnesses who refused to submit to new regime
- Communists, Socialists, Social Democrats, and trade union leaders and thousands accused of ‘asocial’ or criminal behaviour, as well as homosexual people
Choices That People Made

• Perpetrator: Hitler; Nazis; those who ran concentration and death camps; members of Einsatzgruppen; ordinary people who joined in the killing; those who took part in the exterminations; secretaries who typed up lists of targets; bureaucrats who signed transport lists; train drivers

• Bystander: Most German people stood by and did nothing. By being passive witnesses they affirmed the actions of the perpetrators.

• Resister: Bystanders who stood up against the regime became resisters

• Rescuer: Those who risked their lives to hide Jews or help them escape
Responses of Persecuted

Exile – many intended victims were able to flee but were caught up later by German occupation of Europe and much of Russia

Accommodation – accepting the ever-increasing demands of the Nazis leading to imprisonment in concentration camps and, most likely, death

Defiance -

• Partisan activity (smuggling of food and messages and weapons, sabotage, military engagement, wilful disobedience e.g. continuing to practise religious or cultural activities)

• Underground resistance movements based elsewhere in Europe e.g. France

• Warsaw Ghetto: Ghetto fighters held out against the Nazis for several weeks (1943)
The Final Solution: Labour & Extermination Camps – 6 Million Jews murdered

- WW2 gave Hitler cover needed to carry out his ‘Final Solution’
- 1939 invaded Poland and any Polish civilians resisting the Germans / capable of resisting were sent to concentration camps, forced labour camps or killed. Poles were considered ‘sub-humans’.
- 3 Million Polish Jews forced into ghettos
- 1941 Hitler invaded Russia. Armies were followed by the Einsatzgruppen of the SS to round up and kill Jews
- Hitler experimented with ways to kill Jews
- 1941, 700 Polish Jews taken to Chelmno and killed (first death camp)

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The Final Solution: Labour & Extermination Camps
– 6 Million Jews murdered

• Jan 1942 decision at Wannsee Conference to systematically exterminate all Jews in Europe
• Six death camps set up: Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka. Two were labour camps as well as death camps –Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek.
• Victims crowded into cattle trucks; many died on the way; on arrival they had to undress and move into gas chambers disguised as shower rooms
• Selected Jewish prisoners called sonderkommando had to salvage anything of value from the corpses e.g. hair and gold teeth, and then they were also killed 4-6 weeks later
• Feb 1943 Warsaw ghetto destruction; all survivors deported.
• Jan 1945, Germany defeated in WW2 and liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland by Russians followed by more liberations; many inmates weak or ill and dying as liberation took place
Forms of Justice: The Nuremberg Trials

- Britain, France, USA and USSR put main perpetrators on trial
- 1946 International Military Tribunal set up
- 22 Nazi leaders on trial for crimes against humanity
- Some argued that they were not complicit, merely following orders
- Hitler and Goebbels committed suicide at end of WW2 and Robert Ley before his trial; Gustav Krupp too ill to stand trial and Adolf Eichmann disappeared
- 13 separate trials 1945-1950: 199 Nazis tried
- Thousands of smaller perpetrators escaped retributive justice
- Culture of silence (denial of responsibility) for many years in Germany