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## From Social Darwinism to National Socialism

THIS BOOK reconsiders deaf education during the era of National Socialism.<sup>1</sup> A leading historian on the education of hearing-impaired children in Germany has written that “German deaf education was set back decades as a consequence of National Socialism and the war,” but this is hardly an adequate explanation for the monstrous events of this period.<sup>2</sup> Before reviewing the historical record connecting deaf education to the sterilization of deaf men and women, forced aborting of deaf women’s fetuses, and killing of deaf people’s children that characterized the Nazi period, I will discuss how the positive, humanitarian achievements of deaf education degenerated into the degrading form it took under Nazism in the 1930s—what must be called the deaf education of National Socialism.

In 1861, a prominent teacher of deaf pupils, Friedrich Hill, noted a growing tendency among German physicians to speculate on hereditary biology. Hill saw this as a threat to deaf people, whose basic human rights could be violated without justification. He suspected that “physicians in general were quite unqualified to provide well-founded assessments” of deaf people. In particular, Hill was concerned about doctors who denounced congenital deafness as a “moral deficiency.” He wrote that these doctors were incompetent to judge the significance of the impairment they designated as “heritable.” “These moral deficiencies [of deaf people] are simply illusory and exist only in the minds of such persons as do not recognize the nature of the infirmity under discussion and its consequences for the temperament of those so afflicted,” Hill wrote.<sup>3</sup>

Hill believed that the medical establishment's political stance was conservative and aligned with the confused, irrational, racist ideas of the French philosopher of history, Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, that were popular among the German nobility and upper middle class in the late nineteenth century. Gobineau wrote in "Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races" that racial variability and inequality determined the course of every social development. He defined revolutions as "social diseases," supported demands for unrestricted one-class rule, and characterized claims for social equality as contrary to both law and nature.<sup>4</sup>

Following the nobility and *haute bourgeoisie*, the German middle class also became increasingly interested in theories that justified the existing power structure and the unequal distribution of property in the face of growing social opposition to such privilege. Charles Darwin's theories, as well as the laws of heredity published by Gregor Mendel in 1865, became handy instruments in these interpretations. Darwin had taught that evolution was possible only through the principle of natural selection, as the result of a struggle for existence that would eliminate weak and helpless individuals. Yet Darwin rejected the idea of the extermination of humans, since the preservation of the weak was a necessary aspect of the human instinct of sympathy.<sup>5</sup>

Within this milieu, in 1895 physician Alfred Plötz first used the concept of "racial hygiene" as he sought to develop an ideal of "Germanness" in human beings. Plötz believed that political and economic measures were insufficient to create a society based on "Germanness," but he thought that medicine offered hope for creating a new society. Plötz gained acceptance from the mainstream medical establishment after founding the Archive for Racial Science and Social Biology in 1904 and the Society for Racial Hygiene in 1905.<sup>6</sup> Interested parties in the growing German steel industry also supported Plötz's argument that the medicalization of social problems, regulated by the government, could produce an ideal society, and large industrial corporations provided substantial financial support for research and public information on racial hygiene. These commitments enhanced the subsequent

acceptability and feasibility of the National Socialists' eugenics program.

Plötz was not alone in his thinking on eugenics. As early as 1889, Paul Naecke, the public health officer in Colditz, had recommended the sterilization of "degenerates."<sup>7</sup> The psychiatrist, eugenicist, and later leading National Socialist Ernst Rüdin proposed the sterilization of alcoholics, among others, in 1903.<sup>8</sup>

Economic efficiency was the ultimate goal of German eugenicists, who believed that the "social burden" created by people with disabilities could be decreased through racial hygiene. Thus accounts from Switzerland of the sterilization of long-term female inmates were criticized as hardly sensible in economic terms because the program was voluntary. German eugenicists believed that only legally regulated compulsory sterilization would lead to effective measures, and they looked to the United States for a model.

In the *German Medical Weekly* (*Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift*), the physician O. Juliusburger described the sterilization program of an American prison doctor, H. Sharp, who sought to cure young men of excessive masturbation through sterilization. The alleged "good results," 456 sterilizations in nine years, led to legislation in the state of Indiana in 1907 that authorized the sterilization of "criminals, idiots, and the feeble-minded" without their consent. By 1911, Indiana had carried out this procedure on 873 men, "mostly criminals," according to Juliusburger.<sup>9</sup>

An essay by the German physician G. Hofmann, "Eugenics in the United States of America," gave this topic greater publicity.<sup>10</sup> Hofmann praised the United States "as a shining example in the matter of sterilization," but passed in silence over the fact that the legislatures of several states had decisively rejected bills that proposed the forced sterilization of persons with hereditary afflictions; only California and North and South Dakota had passed such bills.<sup>11</sup>

In 1911, the German Parliament passed an important law concerning the schooling of blind and deaf children.<sup>12</sup> This law did not mention the central tenet of the racial hygienists that "inferior"

people need to be sterilized, but appended to the legislation was a sample questionnaire that devoted considerable space to eugenic matters. Eight of the twenty-nine questions specifically targeted the heritability of deafness. Nazi directors of schools for deaf children later utilized this questionnaire as a model to refer pupils suspected of hereditary disease to the health authorities and hereditary health courts.

German teachers of deaf students were aware of racial hygiene theories and often linked eugenics with their professional responsibilities. One of the most eager advocates and instigators of the Nazi sterilization law of 1933 was Herbert Weinert of Dresden. In an essay that appeared in 1934, he wrote that “educators of the deaf were and still are interested in eugenics problems,” and he stated that under the provisions of the Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases “much practical work has already been accomplished,” that is, “drawing up genealogical charts, which even before [World War I] had been initiated on a tentative and trial basis in Leipzig and probably also at other institutions.”<sup>13</sup> As early as March of 1923 the executive committee of the Union of German Teachers of the Deaf demanded in the *Journal for Deaf Education (Blätter für Taubstummenebildung)*, their professional organ, that deafness be seen in the light of the modern science of genetics.<sup>14</sup> In the May 1923 issue, teacher G. Neuert raised the question “Should deaf-mutes marry?” He allowed that “medical science and statistics do not offer sufficient evidence to give a positive yes or no to the question.”<sup>15</sup>

In the same year, the district physician of Zwickau, Gustav Boeters—and later other racial hygienists—publicized results of their own investigations that gave a negative answer to Neuert’s question. Boeters’ draft of a law for the sterilization of “inferiors,” which he presented to the government of Saxony in 1923, carried the title “The prevention of unworthy life through operative measures.” Boeters promoted the *Lex Zwickau* (Zwickau Law), as it was called, in the editorial section of several newspapers. He also sent a selection of his newspaper pieces to the federal health authorities with the request that they take a stand on the matter.<sup>16</sup>

When the authorities did not respond, Boeters urged prompt attention to the issue and explained that he and his medical colleagues were already sterilizing disabled persons against their will. In a letter of December 3, 1923, he argued that “keeping down the numbers of poorly endowed offspring” promised great success for racial hygiene.

To my knowledge [Boeters continued], I am the first German medical official who has dared to translate the aims of practical racial hygiene into action in his area of professional responsibility. We in Zwickau have undertaken sterilization operations on mental defectives and others, under the aegis of our highest public authorities . . . since in many cases the consent of parents and others is not to be had at any price, even though the necessity of an operation is clearly evident for anyone not himself a mental defective, I urge the introduction of legislative coercion.<sup>17</sup>

Although the federal health authorities also failed to answer Boeters’ second communication, he lobbied the government of Saxony and the federal government ceaselessly.<sup>18</sup> Boeters’ pressure on the medical profession and on the state, his growing support among professional colleagues, his many press releases, and the media articles about him made the topic of racial hygiene a matter of great public interest in the 1920s. In order to provide a basis for future decisions, therefore, the federal ministry finally commissioned the Public Health Department to test Boeters’ case.

In one of the first public comments about Boeters’ proposals, the chairman of the Federal Health Department, Professor Bumm, stated in 1923 that his office did not reject the argument that “a reduction in the useless and unserviceable elements in the people” was in principle desirable. Bumm contended that forcible sterilization for eugenic reasons had certain financial advantages, but such an action would have to stand up to rigorous legal, economic, social, and theological testing. The federal ministry was instructed to defer the introduction of a forced sterilization bill until an empirical review had been completed. Boeters’ goal, to bring the draft to legislative deliberation, had been achieved.<sup>19</sup>

Still, the federal Public Health Department was not ready to accept Boeters' basic claim for racial hygiene. A committee of the Prussian Provincial Health Board on December 1, 1923, reached the conclusion that Boeters' proposals were "not suitable, at present," although the committee also said that experience in the United States and Switzerland revealed the "innocuousness of the operation . . . and the absence of negative consequences for the patient."<sup>20</sup>

By February 1925, the federal Public Health Department still showed no willingness to approve Boeters' principles, despite the fact that they had been expanded in the interim and had been praised in numerous commentaries by eugenicists and racial hygienists. Bumm objected that "in more than a few cases heredity was wrongly claimed as cause [for a disability], while the true reason was the unfavorable effects of upbringing and environment."<sup>21</sup>

The reservations of the public health authority could not check further developments, however. The National Socialist movement was becoming stronger, and in it were the most eager proponents of the Lex Zwickau principles. Professor of medicine Fritz Lenz, for example, expressed his concern for the Germans "without space . . . the at least 20 million capable persons," for whom he wished to find room within Germany's borders. Lenz recommended that more space could be found by reducing the population through the "sterilization of all the unfit and inferior."<sup>22</sup> Lenz believed about 30 percent of the population to be bearers of unsound hereditary traits who should have no right to reproduce.

Among German teachers of deaf children, growing support for racial hygiene and thus for sterilization was apparent in the 1920s. Teachers subscribed to the views of authors Bauer, Fischer, and Lenz in *Outline of Human Genetics and Racial Hygiene (Grundriss der menschlichen Erblchkeitslehre und Rassenhygiene)*, which was published in two volumes (Vol. 1, *Human Genetics*; Vol. 2, *Human Selection and Racial Hygiene*). A book reviewer for the *Journal for Deaf Education*, a teacher identified

only by the letters *W. J.*, noted in 1926 that Lenz had devoted a chapter to hereditary causes of deafness and gave great currency to the term "hereditary." On the whole, he "especially wished to recommend" the first volume. He also praised the second volume as "quite interesting," for "here the theme and objective of the entire work are revealed to the reader: an earnest and thoroughly justified exhortation to racial hygiene."<sup>23</sup>

Writing in the same journal, teacher A. Abend had asked in 1925, "What does racial hygiene have to say to the teacher of the deaf?" He insisted that all deaf educational efforts were failures, and that "the schooling of the deaf constitutes contra-selection." While he agreed that persons deafened from "accident or illness are genotypically [hereditarily] sound," persons with hereditary deafness should not be allowed to marry. His concluding thesis marked a strong endorsement of racial hygiene programs applied to deaf people. "The severely, genotypically degenerate deaf constitute a burden on the people. The people's need can demand the prevention of their reproduction."<sup>24</sup>

Abend's essay represented a change of course for German deaf education that would last until 1945. His central assertion, that "deafness represents nothing desirable, nothing worth striving for," marks the turning point. Abend reinforced his statement with an admonition to deaf education: "As teachers of the deaf, we too must adopt this [the eugenicist's] position."<sup>25</sup>

In 1929, teacher P. Schumann wrote about the causes of deafness and made clear that he, too, judged eugenics favorably. He granted heredity "a very important role" in deafness, and he noted with regret "that the influence of heredity is often underestimated." On the other hand, he warned against exaggerating the heritability of deafness, "lest there arise a demand for the sterilization of all the constitutionally deaf."<sup>26</sup> In the concluding part of his essay, Schumann returned to his approving assessment that "direct genetic transmission . . . to a certain and not inconsiderable extent is to be assumed as the cause of deafness."<sup>27</sup> Since genetic inheritance was "not, however, the rule," Schumann

suggested that "in general, legal intervention would not be useful relative to the elimination of reproduction among the deaf and dumb."<sup>28</sup>

Schumann's conclusions thus were ambiguous. It was not clear whether he rejected laws permitting forced sterilization, or whether he believed all legally deaf people were to be classified as hereditarily diseased according to the law. Schumann gave no opinion of his own about evaluating whether deafness was hereditary in individual cases, but deferred to the racial hygienists, since "the science of genetics . . . has drawn significant conclusions of both theoretical and practical worth from the material available for study."<sup>29</sup>

Herbert Weinert's 1934 pamphlet on "The Sterilization Law" also illustrates the spread of eugenics ideology among teachers of deaf children.<sup>30</sup> Weinert welcomed the Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases as "the fulfillment of years of publicly stated proposals and wishes, above all from eugenicists."<sup>31</sup> As proof that "the cadre of teachers of the deaf was and is interested in the problems of eugenics," he supplemented his essay with "an inventory of works on the theme of deafness and eugenics that have appeared in the professional press."<sup>32</sup>

The titles in Weinert's bibliography (here in English translation) also show the extent of the dissemination of eugenic thought and its potential:

- Abend, A. "What Does Racial Hygiene Have to Say to the Teacher of the Deaf?" *Journal for Deaf Education* [hereafter, *JDE*] (1925).  
 Schumann, P. "The Zwickau Law and the Deaf." *JDE* (1926).  
 Lindner, R. "Marriage Counseling for the Deaf." *Commemorative Volume of the Leipzig Institution for the Deaf* (1928).  
 Weinert, H. "On the Hereditary Transmission of Deafness." *JDE* (1928).  
*Handbook on Deafness* (1929), 16–20.  
 Hild, H. "On the Elimination of Deafness in the German State." *JDE* (1929).



- Weinert, H. "Hereditary Deafness and Its Suppression." *JDE* (1930).
- Schumann, P. "Dangers for the Deaf and Their Education." *JDE* (1932).
- Schumann, P. "Biological Considerations in External Affairs." *JDE* (1932).
- Richter. "Hereditary Deafness of the Mentally Defective Type." *JDE* (1932).
- Weinert, H. "Marriage Counseling and Genealogical Research on Behalf of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing." *Journal for the Welfare of the Deaf* (1933).
- Schmähl, O. The Deaf-mute. *Congress Proceedings* (1933).
- Gower, E. "Genetic Considerations in the Education of the Deaf." *JDE* (1933).
- Hild, H. "Sense and Mission of the School for the Deaf in the New State." *JDE* (1933).
- Schumann, P. "The Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases and Its Basis." *JDE* (1933).

Such publications by teachers, and their activities in support of race hygiene programs, fed the anxiety of students at deaf institutions. They feared that their instructors would report them under the sterilization law. Schumann wrote, for example, that "German teachers of the deaf . . . were well disposed to eugenic measures because of fresh daily experiences with their distinctive and difficult material."<sup>33</sup> In 1933, a teacher of the deaf urged the inclusion of individual teachers' associations in the larger organization of the National Socialist Teachers Confederation, calling for "a change in the work of welfare, whose mission . . . extends to serious genetics questions. We shall have to take a stand on these issues and, by our incorporation in the National Socialist Teachers Confederation, will do so unequivocally in the sense of National Socialism."<sup>34</sup>

In a 1933 essay on marriage counseling and genealogical research, Weinert proposed the establishment of "marriage coun-

seling centers at individual institutions for the deaf."<sup>35</sup> He also promoted questionnaires on heredity and "a card registry of all the hereditarily diseased" at the deaf schools, for, in his opinion, "the facts of heredity force us to practical counter-measures." He characterized the questionnaires, though, as innocuous, "more like preparatory, facilitating measures. They are an extension of the files established on all families with hereditary hearing impairment."<sup>36</sup>

Weinert also commented on the effectiveness of "practical counter-measures" to deafness in the same essay. "The surest is sterilization," he wrote, raising the question of what the true goal of his "marriage counseling centers" was to be. He proudly announced that eight hereditarily hearing-impaired persons had submitted to sterilization between 1930 and 1932. In all, "through the offices of the marriage counseling center [in Dresden under Professor Fetscher] 65 sterilizations have been effected since 1929."<sup>37</sup>

Weinert pursued his program in consistent fashion. The model of "marriage counseling" that he had conceived in 1933 was followed by the model of a larger "marriage agency." In an essay, he gave an account of a trial marriage agency for hearing-impaired Germans, established along racially hygienic lines, which he set up at the request of the Federal Committee for Public Health Service and the Race Policy Authority in the province of Saxony.<sup>38</sup>

In another essay, Weinert described the success of the race-hygienic care of hearing-impaired people in Saxony.<sup>39</sup> He particularly emphasized the value of the explanatory lectures that had been given by officials of the Race Policy Authority. In support of his "enlightening activity," he was allocated 1,000 marks by the Federal Committee for Public Health Service, for which he presented on February 14, 1935, an account of expenditures totaling 722.63 marks. The expense account noted that with these resources a total of fifty-one lectures had been given under the direction of the senior teacher of the deaf, "Herr Weinert of Dresden."<sup>40</sup>

The primary purpose of the talks and explanations was “to make the idea of sterilization popular among the relevant hereditarily impaired”<sup>41</sup> and to deflect “further criticism of sterilization.”<sup>42</sup> Weinert believed that intensive efforts to influence deaf people were urgently required because “some of the sterilizations that have been carried out so far have had an unfavorable effect, in that the subjects have claimed that their health has been negatively affected by them.”<sup>43</sup>

The experts Weinert hired to counsel deaf people included officials from the schools for deaf children in Dresden and Leipzig. In addition to Weinert, Dresden provided a teacher named Heidrich, and the school principal, named Conrad. Dr. Becker (with Sandig, the deputy provincial head of the Reich Union of the Deaf of Germany [REGEDE], as interpreter), senior teacher Lindner, and teacher Eymann were from Leipzig.<sup>44</sup> “Almost 3,000” persons attended the lectures. The following topics were addressed:

1. The Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases
2. The German People and the Family
3. The German and the Jews
4. The Life and Death of Civilized Nations
5. Practical Experience in the Cultivation of Hereditary Health
6. The Marriage Health Law
7. Hereditary Value—Performance Value
8. All Life Is a Struggle, a Struggle for Existence
9. Race-hygienic Marriage Mediation
10. German Pre-history<sup>45</sup>

Weinert was still not satisfied with these activities, however, and thus he also informed on deaf people he believed were hereditarily afflicted: “In about 300 cases, information and expert opinions were furnished to the health authorities, the hereditary health department of the Ministry of the Interior of Saxony, the hereditary health courts, as well as the race and morals authority of the SS,” Weinert wrote. In addition, he provided the hereditary

health authority of Saxony with genealogical charts for more than two hundred deaf families.<sup>46</sup>

Weinert's activities challenge the argument of one German historian who has stated that teachers of disabled students, such as those who were blind or mentally impaired, only reluctantly supported the coercive nature of the 1933 sterilization law or complied with it with a bad conscience.<sup>47</sup> This thesis can also be tested against the further examples of the teachers of deaf pupils, Otto Schmähl, Hans Hild, and Schumann.

In 1930, the director of the Educational and Training Institution for the Deaf of Breslau, Dr. Otto Schmähl, had vehemently denied that "the congenitally deaf were to be categorized with the mentally ill, idiots, epileptics, dipsomaniacs."<sup>48</sup> He also rejected the demand that "all the congenitally deaf, who . . . could never be determined with certainty and in whose identification some hereditarily sound would also be included, should be forcibly sterilized."<sup>49</sup> He "could not justify such measures, either ethically or socially." Yet three years later, Schmähl expressed no reservations about "voluntary sterilization in the case of hereditary deafness." He now cited page 8 of Weinert's essay of 1933, which assured him to his satisfaction that "in the case of the deaf, too, such voluntary sterilizations had already been effected."<sup>50</sup>

Schmähl attended the National Socialist Teachers Confederation program at Birkenwerder training camp from January 7 to January 15, 1935, as did several other teachers of deaf pupils. In 1937, Schmähl made public his change of opinion. He now accorded deaf people "the *right to a modest place*" \* in the German community, but he reminded hereditarily deaf people of their duty to agree to sterilization "with full understanding to the racial policies and measures of the state."<sup>51</sup>

Fully subscribing to Abend's thesis, Schmähl represented deafness as a physical defect, "which, like all defects, was undesirable in society." Concerned with the degradation of the race by the "hereditarily unfit," Schmähl justified the sterilization law, since

\*Emphasis in the original.

it sought to "eliminate this diseased strain." In his estimation, hereditarily deaf individuals constituted "about 35 percent of all German deaf."<sup>52</sup>

Schmähl also proposed collaboration between deaf education and Nazi medicine:

The necessity of cooperation with the district doctors lies not just in the fact that they complete the questionnaires for the subsequent education of deaf children; collaboration is above all also necessary in the interest of implementing the Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases.<sup>53</sup>

A pamphlet Schmähl wrote on continuing education courses for the vocational training of deaf adults proves that in the end he unconditionally followed the Nazi racial policy program. In the commentary to the pamphlet, he said that "not the least of the objectives of" vocational training "would be the ideological and racial-political instruction of the deaf."<sup>54</sup> When he, a fellow-director from Liegnitz, and a senior teacher from Breslau were named advisors to the race policy authority, Schmähl enthusiastically shared the news of his professional advancement with the readers of a journal, for the most part teachers of deaf children.

In 1932, Camberg teacher Hans Hild appeared to oppose racial hygiene policies. He published a pamphlet at his own expense on the topic of "Special Education and Youth Welfare in the Context of National Defense."<sup>55</sup> He gave it the subtitle "A defense against unilateral practical politics (*Realpolitik*) and unbounded eugenics proposals." In the pamphlet, released just before the Nazi assumption of power, he rejected "the tendency toward radical racial betterment as it might affect the deaf." Hild called on his colleagues to defend "the respect for the life of another person . . . at a time when political incitement and social confusion are playing with the fate of the German people."<sup>56</sup>

But in August of 1933, Hild also shifted course to the Nazis. The same man who one year earlier had leveled sharp criticism at the contempt for humanity behind the Nazi sterilization law now congratulated the Nazis on their rise to power, on "the great

awakening of the German nation," which would also assign new responsibilities to teachers of deaf pupils in the national state.<sup>57</sup>

Chapter 2 of Hild's 1933 essay laid out what the National Socialists might expect of deaf education, stating that "even the schools for the deaf have to train their pupils as Germans." He cited Minister of the Interior Frick's contention that the general task of education was "to form the political person, who in every thought and deed had his roots in the people whom he served, for whom he sacrificed, and who was linked in his heart to the history and destiny of his nation."<sup>58</sup>

Hild explained his sudden ideological about-face in his chapter "Race Cultivation." He accorded it "particular attention in the new state." He wrote that hereditary deafness did not make "our charges inferior," yet he believed that because of deaf people's "biological inferiority . . . a legal distinction . . . of a mere 5 percent of all deaf" would be justifiable. The racial hygienists, once Hild's opponents, had become his "friends of compulsory sterilization."<sup>59</sup>

Schumann also made a public display of his integrity and loyalty toward the Nazi regime. He familiarized his readers with the Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases and expressed his confidence that "German teachers of the deaf approve of the law with inner conviction," since their responsibilities would be enhanced under it. Teachers of deaf pupils would profit by the new law: "The compulsory implementation of the law would, and must necessarily, advance our knowledge of deafness."<sup>60</sup> In his own reflections on the advancement of knowledge in this sphere, he developed concepts that a future program of race cultivation would promote—concepts to the disadvantage of deaf people and their education.<sup>61</sup> Among these notions, "genealogy, . . . the administration of genetic questionnaires, and the creation of a card catalog of all the hereditarily deaf in every district and province" were requirements that both supported arguments that deaf people who wished to marry each other should be sterilized and concurred with Weinert's demands.<sup>62</sup> Two quotations

illustrate Schumann's opportunism and invite the conclusion that his efforts strengthened the fascist racial fanatics in deaf education.

Early in 1933, Schumann was still engaged in "the right to life of the deaf" and warned of the intention to divest deaf persons of "the right to pass on their life to the future."<sup>63</sup> Seven years later, however, in his account of the "History of the Deaf from the German Perspective," he fully adopted fascist terminology and thereby established himself as a Nazi race ideologue:

But neither training nor welfare [of deaf persons] should be promoted to the detriment of the people as a whole, in that they might create the possibility of founding families and thus through heredity transmit the affliction, thereby contributing to the degeneration of the race. The educational and extra-educational care for the deaf will be acceptable to the people only in conjunction with eugenic and race-hygienic measures, as stipulated in the Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases of July 14, 1933.<sup>64</sup>

The majority of educators of deaf children perhaps greeted the Nazi regime "with the same enthusiasm and hopes as the conservative-nationalist faction generally," as has been said of the teaching staffs of the special schools for mentally impaired children.<sup>65</sup> A 1933 essay entitled "Transformation!" in the *Journal for Education of the Deaf* provided a description of the intellectual milieu that enveloped German teachers of deaf children at the beginning of the Nazi era. The author wrote of the "unfortunate tragedy . . . of deaf-mutes deprived of hearing and speech." This "tragedy," he continued, "forces us to a conviction—generally characterized as conservative in the past"—that is "a correctly oriented party position." The teachers' patriotic line, the author claimed, would prevent "the association [of German Teachers of the Deaf] from ever being yanked towards the left." The author knew of the "hate-filled" and "very strident" protests of the "left-leaning deaf" who, however, generally could change nothing in the hopeless situation of their fellow-sufferers, "for the great majority of teachers of the deaf stood on the right."<sup>66</sup>