ForeWord Reviews

CULTURE

The Funding of Scientific Racism: Wickliffe Draper and the Pioneer Fund
William H. Tucker
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Draper wanted to do to American blacks what Hitler did to the Jews. As a blue-blooded Harvard man and grandson of Kentucky's largest slave owner, Draper had the wealth and connections to think he could make this happen.

The author, a Rutgers University Psychology professor and the award-winning author of The Science and Politics of Racial Research, shows how Draper pursued his racist agenda by "charitable" giving through the tax-exempt Pioneer Fund. Established in 1937, the Pioneer Fund spent millions to become the primary funder of scientific racism, "dignifying hate groups with academic support."

In lucid, dispassionate, and well-footnoted detail, Tucker describes the people and projects brought together by the Fund. He provides the backgrounds of Pioneer board members such as Harry H. Laughlin, a eugenicist and the architect of the 1924 Immigration Restriction Act; Fredrick Osborne, a supporter of segregation and sterilization of the disabled; John B. Trevor, who was indicted by the Justice Department for sedition for support of Nazis; and Francis Walter, chair of the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Pioneer's first project was to arrange American distribution of the Nazi eugenics film, The Hereditary Defective. In the 1920s and '30s, Pioneer supported research and activism in support of forcibly sending all American blacks to Africa. In the 1950s and '60s, Pioneer funded attempts to stop desegregation. More recently, Pioneer funded the controversial book The Bell Curve, which argues that African Americans are genetically predisposed to have IQs lower than Caucasians. Pioneer has funded a preponderance of the texts marketed by contemporary American fascists like David Duke and William Pierce of the National Alliance.

Tucker offers encyclopedic coverage of scientific racism in the United States. He ably navigates the maze of journals, funders, projects, and front groups. A valuable illumination of under-reported history and culture, this book shows how bigotry and self-interest can be legitimized and institutionalized by a small, well-financed group.

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