

■ In Our Nation's Best Interest — Eugenics in Finland until the promulgation of the Sterilization Law of 1935

Summary*

1. The Setting

To understand the events in Finland which are relevant to this study we must take a look into Finnish history. The area which is now Finland was joined to the kingdom of Sweden during the 13th century. Due to the war fought between Sweden and Russia Finland was annexed to the Russian Empire in 1809 as an autonomous Grand Duchy under the personal reign of the Russian Emperor (as a Grand Duke of Finland). As a legacy from Swedish rule the official language was Swedish and the political, economic and cultural elite was Swedish-speaking. However, early in the Russian reign the ideas of Romanticism inspired some academic Finns to seek the Finnish-speaking past. This caused a strong movement demanding official status and rights for the Finnish language. It divided Finnish society into two factions – Finnish-minded and Swedish-minded – and resulted in a conflict between them which manifested itself in many aspects of Finnish life.

During the last decades of the 19th century Finnish society had started to shape itself as a civil society. Strong social movements were under way. One of the earliest ways of getting organised was the Temperance Movement, another was the Women's Rights Movement and yet another the Workers' Movement resulting in the founding of the Social Democratic Party. The remarkable turning point was the establishing of the new unicameral Parliament which replaced the old estate based Diet in 1906. The *one citizen one vote* principle was adopted and almost everybody was enfranchised.

As the Finnish-speaking civil society emerged the Swedish speakers found themselves on the defensive. During the first two decades of the 20th century the Swedish speakers lost their traditional strongholds in Finland's political, economic and cultural life. The parliamentary reform of 1906 and the *one citizen one vote* principle meant that the political power of a group (or a

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* I am grateful to Virginia Mattila for checking the language.

party) was tied directly to the number of voters. This caused a severe loss of political power for the Swedish-minded – from the control of half of the old Diet to some 12 percent of the seats in the new Parliament. The structure of Finland's cultural and economic life was also changing when the Finnish-speaking *homines novi* took positions which used to belong to the Swedish-speakers. Along with this the statistics showed for the first time that the number of Swedish speakers definitely diminishing. Together all those changes meant continuously waning power.

Finland gained independence on 6 December 1917, after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Two months later a bloody Civil War between the non-socialists Whites and leftist Reds broke out and lasted a few months. The victorious Whites held their parade in Helsinki in mid-May 1918. After the Civil War the language conflict intensified again. The position of the Swedish language and Swedish-speaking people and culture in a new Finnish republic was at stake. The matter was politically settled in the Finnish Constitution in summer 1919 and by law in 1922. Both languages – Finnish and Swedish – were acknowledged as official languages in the country. In spite of this the language conflict persisted in cultural and academic circles until the aftermath of the Second World War brought new changes in society.

The end of the 1920s and the beginning of the next decade were a politically turbulent time. After the Civil War many Reds fled from Finland to Bolshevik Russia. There they founded the *Finnish Communist Party* and started to organise Finnish Communists under several cover organisations. There was constant unrest, especially in the labour market. The political right wing extremists felt that the White legacy of 1918 was in danger and started to organise at the end of 1929 in order to obliterate the Communism from Finland for ever. The right wing extremists persuaded the Finnish Parliament to pass a set of laws in 1930 that made Communism illegal, restricted the freedom of speech and assembly and freedom to form associations. However, the actions of the right wing extremists caused the State to tighten its grip. This manifested itself, for example, in the laws of 1934, which prohibited the use in public events of garments that indicated membership of a certain political organisation or party and tried to bring to an end the harsh criticism of Parliament, government and leading authorities that had been going on in certain newspapers. These events showed that in Finland, too, democracy had its back to the wall.

It is also to be noted that after independence the Finns started to construct a system of social welfare. In the 1920s and 1930s many new laws connected with that process were made. This was also a part of the background from which Finnish eugenics emerged.

2. Research Problem and Source Material

In the study I observe the early phases of eugenics in Finland, seeking answers to four main questions:

- 1) What needs did the eugenic demands and actions meet?
- 2) By whom were those demands presented and who took practical eugenic actions?
- 3) How were eugenic demands realised?
- 4) From where did Finnish activists derive their influences?

The answers to the three first questions will help to form a picture of Finnish eugenic thinking and practical actions. The fourth question helps to connect the Finnish phenomenon with general eugenic trends. It is also methodologically important because it brings a comparative touch to my work: Finnish events did not occur in isolation but were closely connected to the international eugenics movement and developments.

The research period starts with the first signs of eugenics in the 1890s and runs through to the year 1935, when the first Finnish sterilization law came into force. I have chosen this period because the time before the law is different in nature from the time after it. Before the sterilization law all kinds of eugenically motivated demands could be put forward, even – as my study shows – to the extent of performing alegal sterilizations¹. This time when the eugenics ideas and demands were – so to speak – brewing up is an extremely interesting research object. After the law was made the situation stabilised. Now there was a standard according to which to function, to compare one's demands, a law to criticise or to be happy with.

The nature of the study also changes with the making of the law. After the law the crucial research question would be how the eugenics legislation operated in practice: who were sterilized or had eugenically motivated abortions², what was the nature of the process leading to operation and what were the premises – the real premises which could be deduced from the individual files of persons who were operated on – which people were operated on. It also is the case that if a scholar enters the area of the praxis of the legislation, a scholar also has to carry the study to its logical conclusion. In the case of the Finnish sterilization laws that would be the law of 1970, which no longer allowed the compulsory sterilization of any legally competent person.

The source material consists of archive material, published primary material and secondary literature. The archive material is mainly used to shed light on the actions of authorities (government, ministries, central offices) some institutions (Perttula Training School for the Feeble-minded, Kuopio District Hospital) and organisations. However, there are two central organisations *Florinska Kommissionen* (The Florin Commission) and *Samfundet Folkhälsan i Svenska Finland* (Society for Improving Public

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- 1 By *alegal* I mean here measures that are neither legal nor illegal but are lying outside the sphere of law in force.
- 2 The first Finnish Abortion Law of 1950 also included abortion performed on eugenic grounds.

Health in Swedish Finland) whose archives have not been used. Instead I have used the published annual reports and also the correspondence of the leading men of those organisations which is stored in the Library of Uppsala University, Sweden (The Papers of Herman Lundborg), in the Library of the University of Helsinki and the Library of Åbo Akademi, Turku (The Papers of Harry Federley). Published primary material consists of the Parliamentary papers, laws, reports of governmental committees, official statistics as well as published papers of some expert meetings.

One set of primary sources comprises contemporary periodicals, magazines and newspapers. Systematically studied periodicals and magazines can be divided into three categories: professional, those published by societies and general cultural publications (written, edited and read by educated Finns). Professional periodicals included medical journals³, those for the people who worked with defectives, those for the workers in the social sector and those for lawyers – from which, however, very little material was found.⁴ In this category there are two international periodicals, namely *Nyt Tidsskrift for Abnormvæsenet omfattende Aandssvage-, Blinde- og Vanføre-Sagen i Norden* and *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*. *Tidsskrift* was a joint Nordic publication for the people who worked with defectives, it was edited in Denmark and written in Danish and Swedish. *Archiv* was the leading publication of the German-speaking eugenicists which was read in the Nordic countries and to which Nordic writers also contributed. While using the newspapers I have had a certain interesting date around which I have read the papers. I have moreover analysed contemporary books which were intended to educate the public about eugenics or related ideas and standard school textbooks on biology and public health.

There is quite a lot of secondary literature dealing with eugenics in general. For the referenced literature see the list of secondary sources (p. 363 onwards). However, not very much research has been done, particularly on the Finnish eugenics. The pioneer is Professor Marjatta Hietala, who has published two articles - one in Finnish, the other in English (Hietala 1985a and 1996). There are also two articles on specialised matters and eugenics (Rahikainen 1995 and Saukkonen 1990). Markku Mattila has also published on the topic (Mattila 1994 and 1996b and 1996c and 1997b and 1998). Apart from these eugenics has been touched on as a minor subject subordinate to some other object of study (e.g. Harjula 1996).

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- 3 Including two periodicals which were edited by the physicians and were intended to educate and enlighten the common people about health and sickness and new modern ways of maintaining one's health.
- 4 I have not systematically read through pedagogical periodicals and periodicals of the clergy. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, during my research I have not encountered teachers (of 'normal' pupils) or members of the clergy who were active eugenicists. And secondly, Minna Harjula, who has read through their periodicals for her PhD thesis dealing with the interpretations of disability in the Finnish professional and official debate from the late 19th century to the end of the 1930s (Harjula 1996) told me that there was no systematic discussion about the matter. The possible material from these sources would therefore not have been worth the work needed for systematic research.

3. Outline of the Study

I have divided my presentation into five main chapters. The First Chapter *Rotuhygienia ja ajan aatteet* (Eugenics and Contemporary Ideas) is a kind of introductory frame. I start with the general ideas of degeneration and how they were presented in Finland from the 1890s to the 1910s. The general degeneration theory was the broad frame for eugenics – eugenics was mainly aimed at preventing the expansion and advancement of hereditary degeneration.

The most important periodicals to publish the ideas were those two intended to educate and enlighten the common people about health and the new modern ways of maintaining it. In the Finnish-speaking publication in particular the long-term editor, Konrad ReijoWaara, MD (until 1906 Relander)⁵, wrote on degeneration. However, his proposed means to avoid it did not include new, scientifically reasoned eugenics. Instead he leaned on ordinary hygiene, maintenance of public health, hard physical work and a Christian God.

The editor and publisher of the Swedish-speaking health educational periodical was Wilhelm Sucksdorff, MD.⁶ In his paper Sucksdorff wrote especially about degeneration in connection with alcohol – Sucksdorff as well as ReijoWaara were strong supporters of the temperance movement – but Sucksdorff did not write about eugenics as such. However, he published a couple of articles about it. One was translated from the Norwegian health education periodical, the other was written by Sucksdorff's wife, Julia Sucksdorff, who was a known educator in the fields of health, marriage, upbringing and temperance and an active, leading member of the Finnish branch of the *Woman's Christian Temperance Union*.

The new Mendelian study of heredity and the name of the internationally renowned geneticist Harry Federley belong together – Finnish academic research and teaching developed around him and his department of genetics. After achieving a PhD in zoology Federley went to Jena, Germany, where he stayed a year from the autumn of 1910. There he studied under Ludwig Plate, the famous German zoologist and eugenicist and familiarized himself with eugenics – for example he attended the meeting of eugenicists in Dresden in August 1911. Once home he was appointed docent of genetics at the University of Helsinki and in 1923 a professor extraordinarius of genetics in which post he remained until 1949. In his lectures he taught eugenics as an essential part of human heredity. During the 1920s and 1930s he participated in the international eugenics movement. Federley also became a prominent national expert in eugenics. Federley's eugenics career is mainly dealt with in Chapters Four and Five.

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5 ReijoWaara served as the district physician of Helsinki region from 1904 onwards.
6 Sucksdorff was appointed to the very first Finnish professorship (extraordinarius) of hygiene in 1894. However, he resigned the following year and moved to the position of chief medical officer of Helsinki city.

Some people, including leading eugenicists⁷, considered alcohol a “racial poison” sure to harm human germ-plasm. During the 1890s the Finnish anti-alcohol campaigners started to use new scientific arguments based on the idea that alcohol caused degeneration. Matti Helenius (later Helenius–Seppälä) was the leading figure using this argumentation. His doctoral thesis at the University of Copenhagen dealt with the problem of alcohol. When he published his work in Finland, he added large parts concerning the effects of alcohol, for example, on insanity, criminality, prostitution and heredity. In spite of this he never functioned in the Finnish eugenics movement or supported eugenics publicly. Helenius is a good example of the attitude of the whole Finnish Temperance Movement. They could use the degenerative effect of alcohol as an argument for giving up drinking or having prohibition but they did not enter into eugenics as such.

Eugenics was also connected to the problem of population. At the beginning of this century the general trend of declining birthrate was observed in Finland, too, but the phenomenon only concerned the Swedish-speaking population. In fact the absolute birthrate of the whole Finnish population reached its highest peak ever in 1909. At the same time the Swedish-speaking population got information that the birthrate was differentiating: Finnish speakers were multiplying much more rapidly than Swedish speakers. In the light of the language conflict, the new election law and the other changes in progress in the country’s economic and political structure this information was alarming. It was possible to interpret those trends in the light of the degeneration theory – to see them as signs of advancing degeneration. At the same time the Finnish-speaking population seemed to flourish – the declining birthrate of the whole population was not observed until the 1920s. At the beginning of the next decade some very gloomy prognoses of the future of the whole Finnish population were made. This resulted in the discussion about population policy which in turn was intensified by the Winter War of 1939. However, during my study period the more important thing from the angle of Finnish eugenics was the diminishing proportional amount of Swedish speakers. Yet another aspect from the standpoint of the population question and eugenics was the discussion about sex reforms including Neo-Malthusianism (contraception) and abortion. The Women’s Rights Movement, the socialists and the medical profession took part in this discussion.

The last contemporary idea to be discussed is the practice of sterilization as a method of preventing degeneration. I take an overview of sterilization as it was practised in the United States before the Second World War and also give an account of how the European countries followed this example. Stress is laid especially on the sterilization operations made without any regulating sterilization law (alegally) in the USA, Switzerland, Germany and Sweden (alegal Finnish sterilization is discussed in Chapter Four).

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7 For example the Germans Alfred Ploetz, Wilhelm Schallmayer, Ernst Rüdin and the British Caleb Williams Saleeby.

Chapter Two *Rotuhygienia ja julkisuus* (Eugenics in Public) deals with the several aspects of public life where eugenics ideas were promoted or discussed. It opens with a discussion on four contemporary books translated and published in Finland around 1910 presenting eugenic ideas. However, the main theme of each book was something other than direct eugenic propaganda but eugenic ideas had a significant role.⁸ Next I analyse original Finnish books about eugenics. The authors were Georg von Wendt, MD, PhD, professor of the study of domestic animals at the University of Helsinki, and Kalle Väänänen, MA. Von Wendt's book was called *Velvollisuutemme tulevia sukupolvia kohtaan: Eräitä yleisen rotuhygienian peruspiirteitä* (1912, in English *Our Duty to Future Generations: Some Principles of General Eugenics*)⁹ and Väänänen's *Periytyminen ja ihmismuvun jalostaminen* (1916, *Heredity and Improving the Human Race*). Väänänen's book especially was designed on the 'classic' model of eugenics treatise. He also acknowledged his debt to such authors as Charles Benedict Davenport, Caleb Williams Saleeby, Wilhelm Schallmayer and Herman Lundborg. However, he did not mention Harry Federley even though he had attended Federley's lectures on heredity at the University of Helsinki.

Next I explore the public debates – almost exclusively in the Swedish-speaking press – that took place in the beginning of 1912 and 1913 and after the Civil War of 1918. The debate of 1913 was connected with the lecture tour that Sweden's leading eugenicist, Herman Lundborg, made to Helsinki in January 1913. Nominally Lundborg was invited by the Swedish-speaking physicians' society, but the decision was actually made by three physicians who were members of the Florin Commission. Lundborg gave two public lectures and fuelled the ongoing discussion in Swedish-speaking newspapers and periodicals.

In the years 1918, 1919 and 1922 there was interesting discussion going on in a Swedish-speaking cultural periodical. Its background was the Civil War, Finland's new status as a independent country and the position of Swedish speakers in the new Finnish republic. In the discussion the members of the Florin Commission, first Robert Ehrström, MD, and afterwards Harry Federley, demanded that Finland give up democracy and the *one citizen one vote* principle. They justified their demand through biology. Biologically, they claimed, all men are not equal but unequal and so political rights should

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8 The books are: *Die sexuelle Frage* (orig. 1905, in Finnish *Sukupuolikiäsymys* 1911) by a Swiss physician, psychiatrist and eugenicist, August Forel, who had an important influence on many German eugenicists; *Hygiene des Geschlechtslebens* (orig. 1904, in Finnish *Sukupuolielämän terveystoppi* 1913, 2nd edit. 1923 and 3rd edit. 1939) by a German professor of hygiene, Max von Gruber, who was the head of the Institute of Hygiene at the University of Munich and the first chairman of the Munich Eugenics Society; *Rasverbetering en bewuste aantalsbeperking* (orig. 1905, in Finnish *Ihmismuvun jalostaminen* 1910) by a Dutch physician, Johannes Rutgers, Neo-Malthusian and well-known campaigner of the birth-control movement; *Vermehrung und Entwicklung in Natur und Gesellschaft* (orig. 1910, in Finnish *Lisääntyminen ja kehitys luonnossa sekä yhteiskunnassa* 1911) by the renowned German socialist Karl Kautsky.

9 The book was also simultaneously published in Swedish under the title *Våra plikter mot kommande släktled: Några grunddrag ur den allmänna rashygienen*.

be shared out according to people's biological fitness. Federley especially saw the working-class – which had just lost the Civil War – as biologically unfit. Federley and Ehrström did not, however, explicitly say that if the political rights of the working-class (e.g., the right to vote or enfranchisement) were reduced the political power of Swedish speakers would increase because the working-class was mainly Finnish-speaking. The demand was strongly opposed by Professor Uno Lindelöf, a philologist, and Harald Fabritius, MD, both of them also Swedish speakers. Some contemporary Finnish speakers interpreted the Civil War in the frame of biology or anthropology and demanded improvement of the race.

Women were also interested in eugenics. In 1916 *Valkonauha – Hvita Bandet*, the Finnish branch of the *Woman's Christian Temperance Union*¹⁰, published in its periodical a writing about eugenics by a Finnish female MD. After that eugenics was also promoted in the society's meetings. In the 1920s they started to raise money to build an institution for the feeble-minded, a little later expressly for feeble-minded girls. However, the eagerness cooled down by the beginning of the 1930s. With the abolition of the Finnish Prohibition law in 1932 they concentrated on their old foe, alcohol, and left eugenics totally aside.

The last thing under discussion in this chapter is how eugenics established itself in schools. In the 1910s a new subject called (general)biology was established in the three upper classes of school leading to the university. This new subject was a means to teach modern biological knowledge including heredity. In the new textbooks written in the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s eugenics was presented as a part of the study of human heredity. In the mid-1910s a new subject called public health was also established in secondary school but not until 1941 was it officially stipulated that eugenics was on the curriculum. However, the regulations allowed quite a lot to the teacher's discretion. That some teachers certainly taught basic eugenics as well is evident from the fact that in one of the standard textbooks (1st edit. 1921, 2nd 1923) the matter was taken up. It is also evident that this early integration of eugenics into the curriculum raised the level of eugenic consciousness among educated people. This, for its part, resulted in the positive public image that eugenics gained in Finland and also created such an atmosphere that made the sterilization law quite easy to accept.

Chapter Three *Asiantuntijat kiinnostuvat* (The Experts Grew Interested) concentrates on the opinion of experts, mainly physicians and people working with the feeble-minded. The main things that the experts connected to eugenic thinking were the rising rate of the feeble-minded and the prevention of criminality. In 1906 a governmental committee on mental illness under the chairmanship of the physician Albert Björkman counted how many mentally ill and feeble-minded individuals there were. This counting was the very first

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10 The organisation was founded by the American Frances Willard. After going international it was known as *World's Woman's Temperance Union*. Amongst the ideas that the Finnish society promoted were religion, public morals (anti-prostitution, decent sex life etc.), anti-alcoholism and having female police officers.

carried out in a scientific way by specialised physicians – before this the clergy had made the assessment. The result was that the number of the mentally ill and feeble-minded was three times higher than estimated earlier.¹¹ The proportion between the mentally ill and feeble-minded also changed. The new, higher proportion of feeble-minded was now 43 percent. The result was alarming. Degeneration seemed to be increasing and the care of degenerates would in the near future cost huge sums of money.

The need for eugenics was discussed in The Sixth Nordic Meeting of the Friends of Abnormal Persons in Helsinki 1912. There the leading Danish authority in the field of the care and control of the feeble-minded and his Finnish opposite member Edvin Hedman (the manager of the state owned Perttula Training School for the Feeble-minded) with Albert Björkman, (head of the state's biggest mental hospital) suggested sterilization be taken into practice to prevent the spread of hereditary degeneration. Edvin Hedman was leaning on the results of the *British Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded* (1908) and Albert Björkman on a German text¹² according to he named criminals, the feeble-minded, epileptics, the chronically insane who have been released from institutions and alcoholics as groups of people needing sterilization. All three men looked upon sterilization as the best way to prevent hereditary degeneration. It was certain and reliable, cheap (compared to life-long isolation in institutions, for example), humane (sterilized inmates could be released from institutions) and swift (it was said that it took only a couple of minutes to sterilize a man). In addition Georg von Wendt – most likely on the initiative or even on behalf of Edvin Hedman – delivered a lecture in which close and organised co-operation in eugenic matters between the Nordic countries was proposed. Even though the suggestion failed to materialise – in spite of Edvin Hedman's industrious lobbying which lasted half a year mainly in the pages of *Nytt Tidsskrift* – the meeting had an important impact on the eugenic movement in the Nordic countries.

By the beginning of the 1920s the experts in the field of care and control of the feeble-minded estimated that the amount of feeble-minded had increased. This was said to be due to the lack of institutions, most of the degenerated were wandering freely all around and producing degenerated offspring whenever they could. Another reason to believe in the increase was that it gained support from the information from other countries. Albert Björkman stated in 1925 that some German eugenicists, for example Alfred Grotjahn and Fritz Lenz, estimated the number of the denegerated to be about 10 percent of the whole population. In Finland that would have meant over 300,000 individuals. A couple of years later a Finnish writer quoted the British Dean William R. Inge and wrote that according to the intelligence

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11 According to the committee there were 11,710 mentally ill and 8,785 feeble-minded. The population of Finland was ca. 2.9 million people.

12 The cited text was most likely L. Loewenfeld, "Ueber medizinische Schutzmassnahmen (Kastration, Sterilisation) gegen Verbrechen und andere soziale Uebel, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der amerikanischen Gesetzgebung", *Sexualprobleme*, Band 6 (1910).

tests made in the USA only 53 percent of its population had a mental age above 13 years and similar information about the French was given by Alfred Binet. In 1931 the manager of the Perttula institution estimated the number of the feeble-minded to be at least 29,000. The estimate was based on the ratio derived from the newly published report of the British Government's *Joint Committee on Mental Deficiency*.

There were several things behind the vision of increasing feeble-mindedness. Firstly, from the very beginning degeneration was considered an expansive phenomenon – it went down to the family line and ‘contaminated’ all offspring. It should also be remembered that the degenerated were considered extremely sexual and fertile. It could be said that the idea of hereditary degeneration always included a conviction of its expansion. Secondly, some contemporary social innovations revealed new, hitherto unperceived ‘feeble-minded’ people. For example, the Compulsory Education Act of 1921 caused whole age groups to be put into the same kind of schools at the same time. This made the ‘feeble-mindedness’ of a pupil – the downward deviation from the mean among the pupils of the same age – come forward. Thirdly, the same kind of effect was produced by the changes in Finnish social relief. The new social legislation of the 1920s and 1930s meant that more people were taken into the scope of social welfare. At the same time the view strengthened that the main reason to get into the position of being in need of social relief was degeneration. In that context the increase of the people entitled to public welfare meant the increase of the degenerated. Fourthly, the experts themselves enlarged the scope of the people defined as mentally retarded. When IQ tests developed they became capable of making more and more delicate distinctions between the mental capacity of the people. This caused people who before were not by the naked eye taken to be retarded to be now defined as slightly retarded – the phenotype could seem normal but in the closer, scientific analysis the genotype was discovered to be damaged. And finally, the experts could consciously or unconsciously need the increase of degeneration because it gave reason and importance to their own position and work as experts.

The next Finnish survey on the number of feeble-minded and mentally ill in 1936 showed that the number had indeed increased but not as much as had been stated. The number was considered high but it followed the European average. The raise was mainly seen as a result of the more scientific methods used. All in all, the number of mentally retarded and ill had not increased dramatically but the fear had had its effect – the Finnish sterilization law was enacted a year before.

As a professional group the physicians were very likely to interest themselves in eugenics. When eugenics really ‘came’ to Finland in the beginning of the 1910s it was just the Swedish-speaking physicians who mainly became interested in it. Between 1911 and 1913 a total of twelve articles, reports or book reviews on eugenics were published in the monthly periodical of the Swedish-speaking physicians’ society, in 1912 altogether nine out of the sum total. It was significant that the eugenicist Ossian Schauman was then the editor of the periodical: he could exert great influence upon what kind of

material was published. Amongst the contributors were Albert Björkman and the leading men of the Florin Commission, Jarl Hagelstam, Ossian Schauman and Harry Federley. It could be seen that the main source of influence was Germany: quite many articles and reports were based on German material. This was natural because Germany was then the main foreign country for Finnish physicians (and scientists) to practice in and to carry out further studies.

Eugenics was discussed in the 24th general meeting of the Swedish-speaking physicians' society in the autumn of 1913. Beforehand the participants had received a printed paper about eugenics including a proposal that the society should take an initiative to establish a eugenics society. In the meeting one lecture about eugenics and Mendelian heredity was heard. Albert Björkman, who delivered the lecture, and C.G. Winqvist, who wrote the paper, stressed that eugenic actions should be taken to prevent the expanding hereditary (mental) degeneration. And, added Winqvist, even though one did not believe in degeneration one still could improve the human race by eugenics. In addition both pro-eugenics speakers strongly stressed the scientific nature of eugenics. This was the point that their opponents attacked. J.J. Karvonen and especially V.O. Sivén denied the scientific nature of eugenics. The attack on eugenics was threefold. The whole concept of degeneration could be regarded with suspicion. There were no means, claimed the assailants, to prove scientifically that the human race was physically or mentally degenerating. For example, the statistics had not a sufficiently long data series about height, weight etc. and the interpretation of the data was always very difficult; the same numbers could be understood positively or negatively. Thus the concept of degeneration was not yet a proven, scientific fact. The second point was whether the Mendelian laws could be applied to human beings. This suspicion was relevant because Mendelism was still a new theory and it was then not yet universally approved. Among the Finnish physicians Mendelian knowledge was still very scant. Thirdly, the research methods used by eugenicists were dubious. Especially the tracing of deceased ancestors and the making of family trees showing the descending of hereditary defects was under attack. Sivén suggested that there always was a possibility of extramarital sexual relationships that could have broken the straight heredity line without the knowledge of a researcher. Thus in the meeting the pro-eugenics faction claimed eugenics was based on the achievements of the latest science, anti-eugenics suspected it of being humbug.

Physicians also discussed the suggestion of taking the initiative to establish a eugenics society. This failed to gain support and the society did not take any actions in this direction. There are several reasons why this happened. Firstly, those who made the suggestion were specialised in mental and nervous diseases and there were as yet only few of them in Finland. The close connection posited between eugenic thinking and specialising in certain diseases may have repelled ordinary physicians. Secondly, as we already saw, not all physicians supported eugenics. And thirdly, some physicians, who were already taking eugenic actions in the Swedish-speaking Florin Commis-

sion, did not support the idea. More likely they did not want the language conflict to intensify within society and the remaining Finnish-speaking members to resign.¹³ Those eugenic activists were also active members of the physicians' society and they did not want the society to lose membership.

During the 1920s the Finnish experts began to worry seriously about the rising tide of criminality. In 1931 a governmental committee was appointed to study the matter and it found out that the statistics showed an increasing rate of violent crimes. On the initiative of the The Mental Health Association's (*Sielun terveystoimikunta*) secretary and obviously with the support of the society a civil committee consisting of prominent members of the society was founded in the autumn of 1933 to fight criminality. Early next year the committee arranged a public lecture series called Criminality Prevention Week. One of the main topics was criminality as a biological phenomenon and medical means, such as sterilization, to prevent it. Among the lecturers were Harry Federley and Brynolf Honkasalo, JD, who later that year drafted the sterilization bill.

At the same time women were worried about sex crimes, especially those targeted at children. In the beginning of 1933 two women's delegates¹⁴ visited the Finnish Minister of Justice pleading that sterilization, in fact castration, be taken into practice. While the matter was discussed in the newspapers the experts (Federley, A.J. Palmén, S.E. Donner) used the possibility to urgently recommend the passing of a sterilization law. The next autumn a group of the female non-socialist Members of Parliament put forward a proposition on this matter. The Parliament decided to recommend "medical treatment" of sex offenders to the Government. The Finnish sterilization law of 1935 included castration for those whose sexual drive was "unnaturally" strong or directed and who due to that could be dangerous to other persons.

In Chapter Four *Sanoista tekoihin* (From Words to Deeds) I study three separate cases when some people or group of people took concrete eugenic actions. It opens with the scrutinising of the positive eugenic work carried out by some patriotic-minded¹⁴ Swedish speakers to combine the good quality and large quantity of their population, to create a biologically fit Swedish-

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13 *Finska Läkaresällskapet* was the very first physicians' society (founded in 1835) and it was naturally Swedish-speaking. Every new physician was invited to be a member and so all physicians belonged to it. The language conflict changed the situation. Finnish-minded physicians founded a Finnish-speaking society called *Duodecim* in 1881. All physicians were still members of the *Läkaresällskapet* but the Finnish-minded were also members of *Duodecim*. In the early years of this century two things happened: the new Finnish-minded physicians began to join only *Duodecim* and the Finnish-minded members of the *Läkaresällskapet* began to resign from it. The Swedish-speaking society tended to grow smaller and the Finnish-speaking larger.

14 *Kokoomuksen eduskuntaryhmän naiset* (The Conservative Party's Female MPs) and *Suomen naisten kansallistiiton siveellisyysskomitea* (The Morality Committee of the Finnish Women's National Federation). The Female Members of the Conservative Party in Helsinki also sent a letter to the Minister of Justice supporting the opinion of their female MPs.

14 By patriotism I mean, in this context, a patriotic feeling which was directed at their own Swedish-speaking population.

speaking population which would be able to maintain its culture and existence in Finland. The Florin Commission was established in December 1911. The organisation consisted of eight members (five of them physicians) but very soon three of them formed some kind of leading triumvirate: Ossian Schauman, professor extraordinarius of internal medicine (chairman) and Jarl Hagelstam, MD, lecturer in neurology and the geneticist Harry Federley (secretary). The purpose was to find out whether the Swedish-speaking population was degenerating. In the background were the recently observed alarming trends of diminishing population and vanishing political, cultural and economic positions already discussed here. In March 1921 a new and bigger organisation, called the Society for Improving Public Health in Swedish Finland, was formed, under the guidance of Schauman and Federley (and Hagelstam). The old Commission carried on as a scientific section and a new practical-hygienic section was established to do practical work for the maintenance of public health in Swedish-speaking Finland.

The organisations had several eugenically based actions. The Commission launched a programme to examine the conditions of the Swedish-speaking population. Before 1916 some 23,000 Swedish-speaking persons were examined and data about their physical anthropology (height, colour of eyes and hair etc.), health (especially mental and nervous diseases and feeble-mindedness and possible hereditary factors, tuberculosis, ability to breastfeed, condition of teeth etc.), housing (how many and what kind of buildings and inhabitants), nutrition and emigration was gathered. Another action was to take part in the *Swedish National-Type Exhibition* in Uppsala which was arranged by Herman Lundborg in the spring of 1919. The Commission sent photographs of the “Swedish race” in Finland. The Commission even wanted to ship the exhibition over to Finland as an expression of its position in the intensified language conflict. For the Swedish-speakers the spring of 1919 was crucial because decisions about the future position of the Swedish language and culture in a new Finnish republic were being made. On second thoughts, however, the Commission gave up the idea. Obviously the situation was politically too hot.

In the 1920s the scientific section of the Society for Improving Public Health in Swedish Finland tried to fix scientific marks for the “Swedish Race” by funding the research that tried to combine blood groups with the anthropological properties. However, it turned out that there was no correspondence between distinctive anthropological “racial characteristics” and blood groups. Another project was to establish a private Swedish institute for heredity research and applied genetics under the leadership of Harry Federley. This project did not materialise due to financial problems: the money Ossian Schauman left specifically for the project when he died in 1922 turned out, in the end, to be insufficient and the *Rockefeller Foundation* in 1926 also refused to fund such a small independent project. If the project had been realised the institute would probably have collaborated at least with the Swedish Institute for Race Biology, The Eugenics Record Office in the USA and the German Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics. Harry Federley had connections to leading eugenicists working

in those institutes. Obviously the failure of that plan was a loss to the Finnish eugenics movement.

A remarkable programme was giving awards to healthy Swedish-speaking mothers. The regulations stressed health both phenotypal and genotypal: being healthy meant being physically, mentally, socially and morally healthy and hereditary health was especially stressed. The mothers receiving awards had to be descended from healthy Swedish-speaking families and be married to the same kind of men. The couples should also have at least four healthy and well-cared for children. The award was either a diploma and a sum of money or only a diploma. The programme was carried out together with a Swedish-speaking section of the Society Martha called *Förening Martha*¹⁶, a women's association which stressed in its programme practical domestic skills and woman's position as the caring heart of the home. The programme aimed at educating both the applying mothers and the Martha members who were helping to inspect the mothers and their families according to a form. Between 1920 and 1939 over 1,200 mothers were interviewed and examined and altogether 629 mothers received awards.

In the Perttula Training School for the Feeble-minded¹⁷ negative eugenics was practiced. Between 1912 and 1922 altogether 19 inmates (of whom only one was a girl) were sterilized there (see Appendix I, p. 430). The sterilizations based on the sole decision of the manager, until 1915 Edvin Hedman and after him his widow, Emma Hedman.¹⁸ Edvin Hedman had started his work among the feeble-minded in the 1880s with Christian-philanthropic ideas. During the years 1907–1912 he rejected the old view and adopted a new eugenic one. He was greatly influenced by the current eugenic trends in the care and control of the feeble-minded in the USA which came to the Nordic countries via Denmark. The new eugenic view offered new and more profound importance for his work. In the old Christian-philanthropic view the feeble-minded were to be protected against society. The new eugenic view looked upon hereditary feeble-mindedness as a severe menace to society which, in turn, needed to be protected. The new conception could also be used as a tool while competing with other branches of defective care (i.e., schools for the blind etc.) for governmental subsidies. At the personal level, too, Edvin Hedman was convinced that the new view offered a valid scientific vision about the causes and cures of feeble-mindedness. Emma Hedman shared the views of her husband. She carried on the sterilizations and had a total of 13 inmates sterilized, most of them between 1920–1922. Her

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- 16 The language conflict divided Society Martha (founded in 1899) into two separate organisations in 1924. Before that the two linguistic groups had already functioned practically separately. The name Martha refers to the Biblical Martha from the Gospel according to St. Luke.
- 17 The Perttula institution was owned by the Finnish State, and, with 100 beds, was the only one of its kind in the country .
- 18 Their son Reidar became a manager after his mother in 1927. Reidar had prepared himself for the job by, for instance, working for a short time under the Danish expert Christian Keller in Denmark and studying genetics under Harry Federley at the University of Helsinki in the early 1920s. Reidar Hedman felt that the knowledge of heredity was decisive in the field of care and control of the feeble-minded.

sterilization activities are scrutinized in the context of demanding stricter control over the inmates and ex-inmates. The effect of the Finnish Civil War is also taken into consideration. All the sterilization operations were performed by the physician of the Perttula institution, Walther Einar Anthoni.

I have also taken a look at the alegal sterilization practice of the public hospitals. I found out that in the state-owned Kuopio District Hospital altogether nine women were sterilized on eugenic indications between 1930 and the enacting of the sterilization law (see Appendix II, p. 431). Eight out of those nine were pregnant and the operation was abortion and sterilization. The case of Kuopio indicates that the eugenic ideas had gained a strong hold on the Finnish medical profession by the beginning of the 1930s. I take the case of Kuopio District Hospital to be representative, not unique.¹⁹

Chapter Five *Valtio ottaa ohjat* (The State Takes the Reins) deals with the passing of eugenic legislation, the Marriage Law of 1929 and the Sterilization Law of 1935. The draft for the new Marriage Law was ready in 1924. The main models for its eugenic points were the eugenic stipulations in the marriage laws of several states in the USA and the eugenic articles in the laws of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. These articles were based on the common model law that these three Nordic Countries produced jointly in 1913.

The Finnish Marriage Bill included several eugenically motivated prohibitions and impediments to marriage. It was proposed that mentally retarded or mentally ill persons should have no right to marry at all. Too close kinship was also considered an absolute impediment both for moral and eugenic reasons. For epileptics, deaf-mutes and persons whose venereal disease was in its contagious phase it was proposed the permission for marriage be required. Hereditary epilepsy (epilepsia idiopathica) had been an impediment to marriage ever since the law of 1734, so it was not a new stipulation. It was proposed that deaf-mutes should need permission if both of the betrothed had been born deaf-mutes. When motivating the proposal other possible reasons for impediment – such as leprosy, tuberculosis, alcoholism, blindness at birth and impotence – were discussed, but they were not looked upon as relevant justifications and were omitted from the proposal.

The Finnish Parliament did not change the proposed prohibitions and impediments and the law was passed in 1929. Some criticism was evinced. It came from the deaf-mutes who wanted to be excluded from the law because, as they said, it was extremely difficult to say whose deafness was hereditary and whose deafness was not. In spite of the criticism they did not oppose the eugenic points as such. On the contrary, some of them demanded that the law be applied to alcoholics. The most extreme view expressed was a demand that even criminals and all “abnormal” people should be included.

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19 I have one source stating that such operations were performed in the Helsingin naistenklinikka hospital as well. Earlier in my study (*Euroopassa seurataan esimerkkiä*, in Chapter One) I have discussed the alegal sterilizations performed in Germany and Sweden.

The key figure to take an initiative for the sterilization law was the director of the Department of the Child Welfare at the Ministry for Social Affairs, Adolf von Bonsdorff. In 1925 he arranged the first meeting of the Finnish professionals working in the field of the care and control of the feeble-minded. For the meeting he prepared a survey of the current situation and provided a plan for improvements. One point among the proposed actions was that the government should appoint a committee to survey the possible sterilization of the feeble-minded. The meeting approved von Bonsdorff's plan. Back in the Ministry for the Social Affairs von Bonsdorff got support from the Minister (of the Agrarian Union) and continued working to realise his ideas. In the spring of 1926 the Finnish Government²⁰ appointed a four-man committee. The leading figure was to be Harry Federley and the other influential members were the psychiatrist E.J. Horelli (later a Counsellor of Medicine in the National Board of Health) and surgeon A.J. Palmén, MD, (later professor extraordinarius of surgery).

By 1929 the report was ready. The committee proposed sterilization of the mentally retarded, mentally ill and epileptics²¹ as well as the castration of sex-offenders²² if consent was given. If an individual was in such a state of mind that he could not understand the meaning of sterilization then the permission of his/her guardian was needed. In every case the operation was to be possible only by the permission of the National Board of Health. After receiving the report the Ministry for Social Affairs asked for opinions on the proposed law: among the opinion-givers were the National Board of Health, the five local inspectors of poor relief, the Perttula institution and the Mental Health Association. The opinions given showed that the law had wide support among the authorities and civil servants and the experts in medicine and poor relief. Nobody objected to the law and some of the opinion-givers showed quite an enthusiasm. At the beginning of 1930 the matter was passed on to the Ministry of the Interior.

It seems that the Ministry of the Interior was somewhat less interested in the plan than the Ministry for Social Affairs – the matter seemed to get stuck there. Only after the initiatives of women's delegates already discussed earlier and the making of the German sterilization law in July 1933 did the matter gain momentum. In the summer of 1934 the Finnish Government²³ appointed the Professor of Criminal Law at University of Helsinki, Brynolf Honkasalo, to prepare a government bill. By the end of the October the bill was passed to the Parliament.

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- 20 Government consisted of members of the Agrarian Union and Conservatives and was thus a non-socialist coalition.
- 21 It was also said in the proposal that sterilization of an epileptic and deaf-mute could be legally performed if it were a condition for the person's marriage according to the new Marriage Law (the law of 1929 was in the making).
- 22 Practically this meant pedophiles.
- 23 The Government consisted of members of the National Progressive Party, the Conservatives, the Swedish People's Party and the Agrarian Union and was thus a non-socialist coalition.

The bill drafted by Honkasalo was quite similar to the proposal made by the sterilization committee. One change was added, namely the stipulation that sterilization would be necessary if the person's children were, due to the individual's hereditarily transmitted condition, to be left without sufficient care. However, the most notable difference was that Honkasalo proposed sterilization without consent, i.e. by the sole decision of the National Board of Health. According to Honkasalo, the main reason for this change was that the law dealt with people who mostly had diminished understanding: they were not capable of understanding the moral and ethical premises behind the measure and it was to be expected that they therefore might refuse to give their consent. It was therefore better to make legal provision for sterilization without consent. This premise was derived from the principle the sterilization committee had expressed in this way:

It is a generally admitted juridical maxim, that the interest of an individual must give way when it is in conflict with the interest of a society. Because it is not in the interest of society that its new members be feeble-minded, mentally ill and epileptic, it must be required that individuals with such a genotype causing diseases like those mentioned above, must submit themselves sterilization.²⁴

The Parliament made only minor changes to the bill – the most remarkable was the exclusion of epileptics from the law (about the law, see Appendix III, p. 432). The law was passed in the Finnish Parliament in March 1935 with a vast majority and by the support of the members of all parties.²⁵ The President signed the law on July 13 and it came into force instantly.

There are several reasons why the Sterilization Law was passed so easily. Firstly, there was the “Zeitgeist”. Sterilization laws were made in the USA, Germany and other Nordic Countries. It seemed to be a part of modern social legislation. Secondly, scientific authorities and other experts supported it. They presented it as a scientifically based tool for solving the social problems caused by ‘bad’ heredity. The Parliament had no reason to go against their advice. Thirdly, it was possible to think of the law as a relief or protection law. Such a law corresponded nicely to the general social ethos of the day: social legislation was strongly promoted and several “protection laws”²⁶ were made. Fourthly, after all most of the people the law concerned had diminished understanding. This meant that they were lacking, for example, the right to vote. In a sense they were not real citizens but some kind of social ‘ballast’, marginal people. They had been given into the care of the experts: if the experts now needed the opportunity to sterilize them in order to carry out their task, that opportunity had to be granted. Fifthly, sterilization promised

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24 *Komiteamietintö* [Committee Report] 1929:5, p. 14.

25 Out of the 200 MPs 144 voted for the law, 14 against. There were also 6 abstentions and 35 MPs were absent from the voting.

26 For example the Child Protection Act, the Alcoholics Act, the Vagrancy Act (1936) and Mental Illness Act (1937).

something for everybody, for every political party. For those worried about the rising costs of the social sector or criminality it promised a way to cut them down: fewer defective people, fewer institutions, staff and other costs. For those worried about the genetic quality of the population it promised a way to raise it. For those dreaming of a way to efficiently and rationally steer the development of population and thus society it seemed to grant a tool. And finally, the possibility to castrate a child molesters increased the popularity of the law.

Some criticism was expressed while the bill was under Parliamentary discussion. For example some priests were worried because sterilization by vasectomy or salpingectomy gave people the possibility to have sex without the fear of offspring, which meant immorality. That is why they rejected it. If the method had always been castration they would have supported the law wholeheartedly. The main criticism, however, came outside the Parliament. *Tulenkantajat*²⁷ – a cultural liberal, leftist, radical, democratic and free-thinking weekly paper – was the main critic. The views expressed in the paper changed during the process. When the Government's bill was drafted in the autumn of 1934 the paper said it did not oppose the sterilization of the hereditarily unfit. By the next spring the paper did not accept the sterilization law in any form. Even though the paper's view on the sterilization law changed to absolute negative, the paper did not reject the idea of eugenics as such. Instead of sterilization they suggested an eugenic abortion be taken into practice.

The criticism presented in *Tulenkantajat* could be divided into several lines. One point was to criticise the law's authoritarianism. According to the bill it was local or public authorities that made the proposal for sterilization and another authority (the National Board of Health) supervised the procedure. The law text itself was formulated in such a way that especially in the case of social sterilization indication it allowed the authorities to apply it quite freely. *Tulenkantajat* also feared that there might be hidden political and social goals behind the law and that it could be used in an arbitrary way, for example, on political premises. As an example the paper published an article that dealt with the implementation of the German sterilization law – the article claimed that the German law was implemented in a very random way. Furthermore, it was claimed that the National Socialists implemented the law on their political opponents.

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27 The goal of *Tulenkantajat* [Lightbearers] was to create a more humane society by emphasizing mutual solidarity and the responsibility of the individual. The politics of the paper consisted of free-thinking, socialdemocratism and radicalism and it has been defined as general democratic opposition to Finnish politics of its day. *Tulenkantajat* made opposition to ultranationalism, limiting of the individual rights, militarism, politics that turned Finland to Germany and "fascism", especially German National Socialism. The paper supported internationalism, freedom of expression and pacifism. Regarding internal politics it reflected mainly the views of the left wing of the Finnish Social Democrats and regarding foreign policy it wanted Finland to look to Scandinavia and Western Europe instead of Germany. The driving force behind the paper was Erkki Vala, the editor in chief.

This line of criticism was linked to the political events of the day. The emergence of the extreme Right movement and its fight against communism caused turbulence in Finnish politics and made the State tighten its grip. It was in this context that *Tulenkantajat* expressed its criticism against authoritarianism. Furthermore, the paper explicitly stated in the very first critical article on the sterilization law that it was only touched upon as a timely example of the current trend to diminish the rights of the individual and increase the rights of the authorities – the State.

The other line of *Tulenkantajat*'s criticism was directed towards the scientific basis of sterilization. They published an article by a German sexual reformer and eugenicist Magnus Hirschfeld – who had fled from Hitler's Germany – in which Hirschfeld wrote that the opinion against sterilization was growing stronger in the USA. According to him the opposition was based on the view that so little was known about the laws of heredity that such a strict measure as sterilization could not be applied. Furthermore, *Tulenkantajat* pointed out that among the scientists and physicians the opinions about the physical and mental consequences were controversial. It indicated that sufficient scientific knowledge about the nature of sterilization was still lacking.

One prominent Finnish scientist criticised the law. The professor of anatomy at the University of Helsinki, Väinö Lassila, said in the interview published in *Tulenkantajat* that the sterilization law did not bring any good things with it – not even the imagined cutting of the costs of poor relief. Lassila also said that the sterilization bill gravely violated human rights. This coincided with one main line that the *Tulenkantajat* was pushing. The editor in chief, Erkki Vala, wrote that the ongoing fight between democracy and "fascism" was seen especially in the question of such human rights as equality before the law, freedom of thought, religion, expression and association, right to work and knowledge – the democrats were supporting these and the "fascists" were trying to take these away. According to Vala the policy of reducing human rights was also seen in the contemporary Finnish legislation. For example, Vala wrote, the new law on vagrancy that was in the making would make it possible to send every unemployed person to hard labour – and such a law was being drafted just when the depression had made lots of people unemployed. When the Finnish League of Human Rights (*Ihmisoikeuksien liitto*) was founded in November 1935 Erkki Vala and Väinö Lassila were among the driving forces.²⁸

The last line of criticism was the intention to show that the sterilization operation was dangerous. After the sterilization bill was passed by the Parliament *Tulenkantajat* published a letter to the editor where a woman

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28 The main point that led to the founding of the League was an attempt to enact capital punishment for such a crime as treason and espionage. Because Communism was illegal it was to be feared that being a communist, for example, could be looked upon as "treason" or working under the instructions of the Soviet Union based Finnish Communist Party as "espionage" which was to be punished by capital punishment. A public petition against it was gathered and right after it was handed to the authorities the founding of the Finnish League of Human Rights took place.

reported that she has been sterilized – obviously illegally – and that the operation is a “major and difficult operation which easily could be lethal”. Next autumn *Tulenkantajat* answered an article published in a Swedish-speaking newspaper. In the article it was said that according to the German experts sterilization was safe. Quoting Väinö Lassila *Tulenkantajat* wrote that in Germany 2,800 out of the total 56,000 sterilized had died of the operation. And lastly in the Christmas week of 1935 *Tulenkantajat* reported the first castration performed on a male prisoner. The point was that the regular physician of the prison had refused to perform the operation because in his mind there was no medical indication for the operation. Another physician had to be brought in to do it.

During the making of the sterilization law *Tulenkantajat* was the only forum for systematic criticism. However, the criticism was mainly targeted at other things than eugenics as such. Within a few years another kind of criticism was also presented. Some of the eager supporters of the law were disappointed with the implementation. In their opinion far too few operations – some 100 per year – were carried out. This criticism resulted in the appointment of a new committee in 1943 which was to make the implementation more efficient. This led to the new laws of 1950: the sterilization law, castration law and eugenic stipulations in the abortion law.

The effort to increase the efficiency proved to be successful (see Appendix IV, p. 434). According to the statistics there were over 200 eugenically motivated sterilization operations every year between 1951 and 1969 – the lowest amount was 211 (1951) and highest 514 (1960). The peak period was 1956–1963 – in those years altogether 3,573 eugenic sterilization operations were performed. This is almost 47.5 per cent of all sterilizations performed 1935–1970 or under the laws that allowed a compulsory sterilization of legally competent persons. This is very a different situation than in the other Nordic Countries. While the amount of eugenic sterilization operations fell steeply in Denmark, Sweden and Norway around the year 1950 in Finland it began to rise rapidly. In addition we must note that under the Finnish abortion law 4,000 eugenic abortions were performed (1950–1970). It seems that the golden age of Finnish eugenics – sterilization and abortion – dawned long after the making of the 1935 law. It remains to answer why it happened so.

4. The Results

Who ?

The Finnish eugenics movement was characteristically a specialists' movement, as it was everywhere else, too. These specialists included representatives of science (genetics and medicine, especially psychiatrists), social welfare authorities and workers and people working with defective individuals. Specialists could also be said to include such female professionals of 'righteous life' - the propagators of public morals and a socially approved and "useful" way of living - as the Finnish branch of the *Woman's Christian Temperance Union* (*Valkonauha - Hvita Bandet*) and the Swedish-speaking section of Society Martha (*Förening Martha*). It should be noted that the activists of these organisations were often mothers, sisters, wives and daughters of the above mentioned specialists. High-ranking public officials like the director of the Department of the Child Welfare at the Ministry for Social Affairs, Adolf von Bonsdorff (non-socialist), or the director general of the National Board of Health, Hannes Ryömä (Social Democrat), could also be looked upon as specialists.

A common denominator for the experts was the fact that they represented the top of their fields; they were aware of the times and their occupational field on an international level. This explains how eugenics, which became a movement by the beginning of the 20th century, almost immediately found its way to Finland. The specialists kept their finger on the pulse of the time and immediately felt such changes as the appearance of eugenic thinking. It could be said that in Finland - as apparently all over the world - the supporters of eugenics were people who were standing in the front line of science and 'progress' and were inclined to put the new knowledge into practice. It was precisely the faith in science and the possibility of realising social regulation through it that formed the common ideological foundation of the proponents of eugenics.

The group of people propagating eugenics was a mixture in terms of their political views. Eugenic thinking was supported by both conservatives and representatives of the Left, both suffragettes and representatives of the 'patriarchal' social order, religious people and atheists alike. The large number of these supporters is clearly evidenced by the fact that there was very little opposition to the sterilization law to be passed in the Parliament. This reveals that, as an idea and a practice, eugenics and the sterilization law offered almost everybody some aspect encouraging them to accept it. On the other hand this also reveals that the sterilization law did not give rise to ideas inciting people to refute it.

A characteristically Finnish phenomenon is the fact that the support for eugenics was divided according to language: in the early decades of the 20th century eugenic thinking proved attractive to the Swedish-speaking experts in Finland. This had to do with the fact that among certain Swedish-speaking patriots - patriotism here refers to their own, Swedish-speaking community - the future of the Swedish-speaking population and culture was considered to

be particularly threatened. The experts confronting these threats looked for shelter in opportunities offered by the new and prestigious scientific field of the era, genetics, and the eugenics stemming from it. While the Finnish-speaking people concerned about the vitality of the nation still leaned on 'hygiene, athletics and education', to condense the ideas, the Swedish-speaking patriots also adopted new eugenic doctrines into their arsenal of available means. The fact that the Swedish-speakers were quicker to fall for eugenics could in addition to the activities of the Florin Commission also be seen in that the public debate on eugenics in the 1910s took place mainly in Swedish press and in the Swedish-speaking physicians' society and in its monthly periodical. The Finnish-speaking circles started to pay more and more attention to eugenics after the winning of Finland's independence, and during the 1920s the language division vanished.

It is also worth noting during the early phases of Finnish eugenics that in Finland the national minority adopted eugenics in order to secure its national survival through it. In all other cases that I am familiar with, eugenics was practised expressly by the national majority.

Which problems were being answered?

Fundamentally, eugenics offered biological solutions to social problems. The most current contemporary problem to be dealt with, a problem the Swedish-speaking patriots in particular were painfully aware of, was the population problem - the threat of Finland's Swedish-speaking population being trampled under the feet of the more populous Finnish-speaking population and disappearing from the theatre of humanity. On the level of Finland's total population the decline of the population growth began to be discernible in the 1920s, but the concern about it was not strong enough to result in actual measures until halfway through the following decade.

Another eugenic concern of the first years of the 20th century was the threat posed by degenerated individuals. First the feeble-minded and the mentally ill, since the late 1920s more and more criminals, were also being considered a biological menace. The number of degenerated individuals was thought to be on the rise. There were suggestions that this was due to their 'unbridled' eroticism and their characteristic fertility, which was higher than that of the 'normal' population. The lack of necessary and sufficient supervision was also considered an important factor. There were claims that a large part of the degenerated individuals were at large in society and had the opportunity to satisfy their sexual desires as they wished, thereby bringing new degenerated generations into the world. It was also claimed that the supervision in the already existing institutions was not strict enough: for example the inmates of poorhouses had plenty of opportunities for sexual intercourse and thereby procreating new babies. To use a coarse expression: in the absence of care, treatment and control the degenerated individuals were believed to 'breed like rabbits'.

An important impetus for these fears was the result that a governmental committee on mental illness, chaired by Albert Björkman, achieved in 1906,

according to which the number of the feeble-minded and mentally ill was almost three times larger than the result of earlier statistics. Furthermore, the relative share of the feeble-minded kept increasing, and now their share of the total group was estimated as 43 per cent. Around the same time a British survey declared that the problem constituted by the feeble-minded was worse than had been imagined and that it was getting still worse at an alarming speed. In Finland, Edvin Hedman, the director of the Perttula Training School for the Feeble-minded, also leaned particularly on this British survey.

The next Finnish survey of the total number of degenerated individuals was not carried out until after the passing of the sterilization law. Instead, new estimates about the growing number of degenerated individuals were presented throughout the 1920s. The estimates varied from moderate figures (27,000 feeble-minded, mentally ill and epileptics) to the “fantastic” figure of 10 per cent - 300,000 degenerated individuals. These figures were often based on figures from abroad and the belief concerning the uninhibited and reckless procreation of degenerated people. The common message of both the moderate and the far-fetched estimates was that harsher measures than those already in existence were called for to check the spreading degeneration.

For the people concerned about the degeneration danger caused by the mentally ill and feeble-minded, eugenic ideas were not an end as such; instead, they were closely connected to the development of the treatment of mental illness and social welfare for the feeble-minded. This is best evidenced by the overall plan for the social welfare for the feeble-minded created by Adolf von Bonsdorff in 1925, where sterilization is linked with increasing the social welfare and treatment. In these plans the sterilization of the feeble-minded could be seen as a logical necessity dictated by the entire system of social welfare for the feeble-minded: there was no further need to keep sterilized individuals under tight control, and this would facilitate the adoption of more liberal forms of treatment - work homes and especially family care. Among others, Edvin, Emma, and Reidar Hedman, as well as Alfred Petré, the Swedish pioneer of sterilization, shared von Bonsdorff's ideas.

At the bottom of the fear of criminality lay the concern about the rising tide of criminality as well as the view that the fundamental cause of criminality was to be found in human genotype material. Although the Lombroso idea about a “natural-born criminal” who could be identified simply by sight had become old-fashioned, the general opinion among physicians and criminologists was that heredity was a significant factor in the birth of criminality. Conversely: because of their condition, the degenerated individuals were considered at least potential criminals. These ideas were reflected among others by Finland's sterilization committee's statement that criminality was not a product of one gene but a result of an inferior combination of genes. At about the same time the German Johannes Lange published his research on identical twins. It appeared that his results provided scientifically valid evidence of the genetic foundation of criminality. Lange's research results were taken seriously in Finland, and their impact could be seen clearly in the Criminality Prevention Week programme in the spring of 1934. One of the

issues of the Week was sterilization, and there were demands to adopt the procedure in order to prevent crime.

Sex crimes against children played an important role in the demands for a sterilization law. Socially aware non-socialist women in particular were concerned about statistics which showed that this type of crime was increasing. The women's demands for the passing of a sterilization law with castration section to be included in it hastened the planning of the law by making it a topic of public debate and by offering a reason - child welfare - to justify the need for the law among others in the Parliament. It is worth noting that these Finnish events of the early 1930s largely re-enacted the events in Denmark in the 1920s, when the Danish sterilization law was being planned.

The degenerated individuals also threatened the purse of decent citizens - the tax-payers - because their treatment, care and control cost money. The governmental committee on mental illness had already presented an expensive plan to improve the governmental treatment of mental illness. Around the same time, the state took over the Perttula institution and started to extend it. The expenditures grew in the early 1920s. In accordance with Adolf von Bonsdorff's overall reform plan for the social welfare for the feeble-minded, the Perttula institution was extended by connecting the Yläne farm to it to operate as a work home. The Parliament passed laws which guaranteed a system of state subsidies both to municipal and private institutions for the feeble-minded and to municipal mental institutions. At the same time the favourite trend of poor relief favoured institutional care - the more expensive alternative. These development trends coincided with the economic depression which began in the late 1920s.

The connection between costs and the fight against degeneration could be seen among others in the work of the sterilization committee. The committee, for example, studied how many feeble-minded, mentally ill or epileptic women receiving poor relief were single mothers and how many of their children conceived out of wedlock received poor relief. The report also counted the expenditures of the municipalities. The municipalities had provided information according to which the poor relief expenditures were becoming "unbearable" at least in some municipalities precisely because of the degenerated individuals and their swarms of children. The committee also paid attention to the state's growing financial burden. Harry Federley, the 'strong man' of the committee, also announced in public in 1933 that the most significant aspect of the sterilization law was an economic one, as it would relieve the municipalities of a part of the expenditures caused by degenerated individuals. The connection between sterilization and cutting social expenditure was self-evident, for example at the Ministry for Social Affairs. According to a public poor relief inspector the demands for sterilization laws in the Nordic Countries had become a current topic precisely because their system of social welfare had been developed so well. Although the relationship between sterilization and economy, cutting the expenditure, was not always stated as explicitly as this, it was always tacitly present. The great economic depression served for its part to expedite the passing of the sterilization law.

Concrete measures

The eugenic demands of the Swedish speakers manifested themselves as practical activities for the benefit of their own group. The aim of the Florin Commission was to study the people and come up with “accurate information about the condition of today’s Swedish-speaking population”, the factors affecting its quantity and quality. With this goal in mind, the committee studied a total of some 23,000 Swedish-speaking individuals with a certain programme in the 1910s. Later, when it seemed that the future living conditions of all “Swedishness” in independent Finland were at stake, attempts were also made through scientific research to define the objective anthropological criteria by which the representatives of the “Swedish race” could be separated from the population.

With the founding of a new organisation, the Society for Improving Public Health in Swedish Finland, the field of activities expanded to include general public health, and scientific research was shunted to a siding. The inherited nuclear trio of the Florin Commission - Ossian Schauman, Harry Federley and Jarl Hagelstam - especially supported eugenic ideas and directed the Society’s activities accordingly. They initiated a mother’s award competition in the early 1920s. The awards were given to mothers of genetically healthy families who had at least four healthy and well-tended children. At the same time they spread eugenic propaganda about the significance of choosing a genetically healthy spouse. The aim of the competition was to encourage the growth of “quality population” by making the mothers important, acclaimed, and worthy of merit. On the other hand the members of the Swedish-speaking Society Martha who participated in the organisation of the competition were educated into a motivated and conscious vanguard who had adopted the eugenic ideas, prominent “Swedish” women. The idea was to acquire a scientific foundation for eugenic work by founding a private Swedish institute for heredity research and applied genetics under the leadership of the internationally renowned geneticist Harry Federley. However, the project was never realised due to insufficient funds.

Autonomous work also followed the eugenic demands of the Finnish-speakers. The Finnish branch of the *Woman’s Christian Temperance Union* gathered money in the 1920s in order to found a private institution, a shelter for feeble-minded girls. The project was justified to the membership and the general audience alike with the fight against the degenerate menace. In the activity of certain professions - social welfare for the feeble-minded and physicians - words became deeds, eugenic sterilization operations, executed without the existence of legislation regulating the activity.

The motive of the 19 sterilization operations at the Perttula Training School for the Feeble-minded during 1912–1922 was not only to fight degeneration but also to maintain order and control at the institution. Even without the eugenic side of the matter it was namely not desirable that the inmates of the institution should conceive children out of wedlock. The strong connection between sterilization and staying at work at the institution - the Perttula institution or the Yläne work home indicates that the sterilised pupils were trusted with more freedom inside the institution. Or, to turn the

issue around: the jobs with more freedom required “specially treated” youths to do them.

It appears that among the physicians, sterilising degenerated women became, as it were, ‘habitual’ after the late 1920s. The causes for the abortions and sterilization operations performed inside hospitals were distinctly eugenic, as in the light of material from the Kuopio District Hospital the diagnosis seems to have been “pregnancy and a hereditary (mental) condition”. It could be argued that from the point of view of a certain group of physicians it was necessary to pass a sterilization law, as stopping these kinds of operations was clearly not desired, but in the long run it would have become impossible to perform them without justification provided by law. However, not much can be said about such activities here, as for work economic reasons an extensive analysis on the issue remains outside the scope of this research.

Finally the eugenic demands manifested themselves in legislation. The Marriage Law of 1929 set marriage prohibitions and obstacles to individuals suffering from hereditary illnesses or conditions - feeble-mindedness, mental illness, epilepsy and deaf-muteness. It was nevertheless clear from the outset that marriage prohibitions had no important eugenic significance, as prohibitions do not prevent the begetting of children. Even the sterilization committee regarded the marriage prohibitions only as important stands on principle. It was considered that the prohibitions gave a clear signal of the desirable behaviour, strengthened the individuals’ sense of duty as regards the quality of their offspring, and supported general eugenic education and information.

The sterilization law was the factor that actually cemented eugenics into Finnish society. As elsewhere in the world, the law had been demanded ever since the beginning of the 1910s first and foremost by experts, physicians and people engaged in work with the feeble-minded. The issue began to proceed when the Ministry for Social Affairs and expressly the director of the Department of the Child Welfare at the Ministry for Social Affairs, Adolf von Bonsdorff, began vigorous preparations to pass the law in the mid-1920s. In spite of the report of the governmental sterilization committee in 1929 it seemed that the issue would vanish inside the machinery of government administration. It took women’s demands for a sterilization law, the passing of a sterilization law in Germany in July 1933 and civic activity launched against crime to bring the issue up once more. The government bill was presented to the Parliament in the autumn of 1934. It is indicative of the tightening of the eugenic moods that the bill was based on sterilization without consent, while the proposal of the sterilization committee was based on sterilization with consent.

In the Parliament, the handling of the sterilization law proceeded smoothly. The inclusion of epileptics among the people to be sterilised caused some debate, similarly a clause in the law according to which sterilization was also possible if the consideration was that the parents would be incapable of caring for and educating their children due to hereditary inability. Epileptics were left outside the law, because the goal was to pass the law as soon and as

smoothly as possible. While making the omission it was stated that if the need arose, it would be easy to return the epileptics under a law that already existed. The section on care and education met with criticism and caused debate but failed to result in changes or abandoning the law, which was finally passed with a vast majority of votes.

It is true that the sterilization bill was criticised. One of the basic lines of the contemporary criticism was that sterilization should have been more extensive and strict than the law allowed for. When the law had been in force for a few years, its inefficiency also proved disappointing. The law was later reformed because of criticism.

The law was opposed consistently only by the *Tulenkantajat* paper. The leader of the criticism was Erkki Vala, the editor of *Tulenkantajat* and a social authority. It seems that he did not actually oppose eugenics as such to the same extent that he opposed the sterilization law as an authoritarian non-democratic trend which put too much power in the hands of officials (experts). In his thinking the law was linked with “fascism” - first and foremost Hitler’s Germany - because of its mode of execution, as well as the repressive policy pursued by domestic right wing circles and the trends threatening democracy. It was not sound policy to deliver into the hands of the state weapons that could not be controlled by citizens, weapons that could be used even against political adversaries.

Channels of influence and connections

Eugenic thinking came to Finland at the same time that it spread wider in the universal consciousness. The Finns drew from original sources. German-speaking Europe was a significant channel of influences, but information was also received from the United States. The Nordic Countries, mainly Sweden and Denmark, were central co-operation partners and the influences travelled in both directions.

The influences on public discussion and scientific circles usually came from Germany. For example the material published in Finnish newspapers, periodicals and magazines leaned strongly on German sources. Germany was also important through personal contacts: it was there that Harry Federley acquainted himself with the basics of eugenics and its key individuals; it was there that the Florin Commission sent Jarl Hagestam for a course trip; George von Wendt had strong ties to Germany. The connection could also be seen in the pages of *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*, the mouthpiece of the German eugenic movement. The paper for example reviewed von Wendt’s revivalist treatise. Federley for his part reported in the paper about the programme of the newly founded Florin Commission and later also about the awards for mothers.

Sweden was an important direction of co-operation particularly to the Florin Commission and later to the Society for Improving Public Health in Swedish Finland, in practice to Ossian Schauman, Jarl Hagestam, and Harry Federley. The co-operative relationship was particularly warm with the leading Swedish eugenicist and race biologist Herman Lundborg. The Finns

participated in the National-Type Exhibition assembled by Lundborg by sending material from Finland. Reciprocally, Lundborg lectured in Finland and took pains to complement and promote the striving of his Finnish friends in the articles he wrote to Finnish newspapers, like the promotion of Federley to Professor of Genetics. Federley for his part wrote articles for Swedish papers supporting Lundborg's projects. This co-operation was by no means peripheral; it was carried out by men who were well-known and acknowledged in the international eugenic movement.

To the pioneers of work among the feeble-minded, Edvin and Emma Hedman, Denmark in particular was a professionally significant destination. The Hedmans were long-time family friends of Christian Keller, the *grand old man* of work among the feeble-minded in Denmark and all the Nordic countries. Keller was their professional model, and for example Reidar, their son, practised under the supervision of Keller in Denmark in the spring of 1921. In the field of eugenics, however, the Hedmans showed an example to Keller and the rest of the Nordic countries, as the sterilization campaign of the inmates launched at the Perttula institution in the autumn of 1912 was significantly extensive and early even on a European level. An important organ of co-operation was the Nordic *Nyt Tidsskrift for Abnormvæsenet omfattende Aandssvage-, Blinde- og Vanføre-Sagen i Norden*, published in Denmark. It was through just this periodical that the Hedmans acquainted themselves with the United States mode of eugenic thinking and received influences which made them switch from their 'old-fashioned' philanthropic treatment ideology into a new eugenic view based on genetics. They also told their colleagues about their sterilization activities and experience in the periodical in two articles (1915, 1924). The pioneer standing of the Hedmans is also revealed by Edvin Hedman's attempt to organise all-Nordic eugenic co-operation between the people involved in the treatment of sensory defects. The trade journal mentioned above was a key factor in this attempt as well.

The officials also had their own connections. They paid close attention to what was going on in the other Nordic countries, and Germany was also a significant source. This was nothing unusual, as the developments in these countries were surveyed carefully from the point of view of legislation and the development of the society in general. Among the officials, it seems that to von Bonsdorff Sweden was the key source of inspiration, because he was guided in terms of eugenic thinking by his Swedish colleague Alfred Petrén.

If we compare the Finnish eugenics movement to the other eugenics movements a few things are to be noted. Firstly, in Finland there was never a eugenics society or publication. According to the general trend there was an attempt to establish a society among medical practitioners but it failed. In spite of the eugenics work carried out by the Florin Commission and the Society for Improving Public Health in Swedish Finland they could not be looked upon as (purely) eugenics societies but societies with some eugenic goals. Secondly, in many countries – e.g. in Sweden, Germany, Britain, the USA – there were some kinds of eugenics research institutions. In Finland Schauman, Hagelstam and Federley were willing to establish such an institution but the lack of money made it impossible. This certainly was a

setback hindering more integrated international scientific co-operation in the field of eugenics. Thirdly, it seems that in the field of sterilization the Finnish eugenics movement was, thanks to the Hedmans and also some physicians, in the front line. The Perttula experiment seems to be unique in the Nordic Countries and on the European level it also was very early and large – the contemporary comparisons were to be found in the USA, the leading country in the field. The alegal eugenic sterilizations carried out in the hospitals were in time with the Swedish and German experiments.

* * *

The Finnish eugenics movement, especially from the angle of sterilization and the role of the State, was very similar to the movement in the other Nordic Countries and Germany. This was natural, because the structure of these societies was quite similar as were also the problems and the eugenic solutions and because the scientists and specialists formed a fairly coherent group which communicated with each other.

APPENDIX II. *Alegal eugenic sterilizations in the Kuopio District Hospital between 1930 and 1935.*

	Diagnosis	Marital status	Age	Social status	I	II	III
1.	G + debility	M	34	carpenter's wife	A + S	—	1930
2.	G + imbecile	U	40	inmate	A + S	Y	1930
3.	G + imbecile	U	21	farmer's daughter	A + S	—	1930
4.	psychopathia constitutionalis	M	24	farmer's wife	S	Y	1933
5.	G + psychosis (schizophrenia)	M	22	farmer's wife	A + S	Y	1934
6.	G + epileptic + appendicitis	M	24	worker's wife	A + S	—	1934
7.	G + epileptic + imbecile	U	20	unskilled worker	A + S	Y	1934
8.	G + debility	U	36	inmate	A + S	—	1934
9.	G + epileptic	U	26	needlewoman	A + S	—	1935

G = gravid (pregnant) A = abortion Y = yes
M = married S = sterilization — = no data
U = unmarried
I = operation performed
II = has been in mental hospital or institution for epileptics
III = year of operation
inmate = inmate in the local poorhouse owned by municipality

SOURCE: Medical records of the Kuopio District Hospital 1930–1935, and Operating-room records of the Kuopio District Hospital 1930–1935 as well as the case histories of the Individual Patients in the Kuopio District Hospital 1930–1935, Papers of Kuopio District Hospital, Provincial Archives of Joensuu (Joensuu, Finland).

Sterilisation Act.
Enacted in Helsinki 13 June 1935.

It is hereby stipulated according to the decision of the Parliament that:

1 §.

A person who is an idiot, imbecile or mentally ill^[1] may be ordered to be rendered incapable of reproduction if there is reason to believe that such offspring would inherit such defects or if it is likely that such offsprings would by reason of deficiency be uncared for.

Let the same law prevail in the case of an individual found guilty of a crime or attempted crime by a legally instituted court of law, which finds that the individual concerned is possessed of an unnaturally strong or unnaturally oriented sexual drive and there is reason to fear that such an individual constitutes a hazard to others.

2 §.

Permission may be granted to render an individual incapable of reproduction at that person's request, even without the conditions in 1 § above being met, if there is reason to fear that defective offspring would result from marriage or that the individual concerned is, by reason of an unnaturally strong or unnaturally oriented sexual drive, rendered prone to commit crimes.

3 §.

The order or permission to render such person incapable of reproduction shall be issued by the National Board of Health.

4 §.

If a person mentioned in 1 § (1) is in an institution for the mentally ill or in other corresponding institution the director of the institution shall make the proposal for removing the person's capacity of reproduction. In other cases the proposal shall be made by the local public health committee.

If a person mentioned in 1 § (2) is in a penal establishment the proposal shall be made by the director of the institution. If the person resides in the countryside the proposal shall be made by a bailiff or a district police superintendent, if he/she resides in town, by a public prosecutor or a chief of police.

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1 The 1 § of the Sterilization Statute reads: "In 1 § of the Sterilization Act refers to idiot a mentally retarded person whose mental capability remains about on the level of the normal six-year-old child, imbecile to a mentally retarded person whose mental capability remains on the level of the fourteen-year-old person, and mentally ill to a person suffering all the time or occasionally from schizophrenia or manic-depressive or some other mental illness diagnosed as hereditarily transmitted." The Sterilization Statute of 13 June 1935 (No. 228/1935), 1 §, *Suomen Asetuskokoelma* 1935 [The Statute Book of Finland, 1935].

5 §.

Before the order or permission for removing the person's capacity for reproduction is delivered an opportunity must be given for the person's spouse, if the person is married, or to the person's guardian, if the person is incompetent, to make a statement about the matter, as far as it is possible.

If National Board of Health wishes, it may order witnesses to be interrogated in the local lower court of justice. If the proposal concerns a person mentioned in 1 § (2) and the subject of the proposal wishes to have witnesses interrogated, the National Board of Health shall order a hearing to take place in the local lower court of justice.

6 §.

While delivering an order or a permission for the removal of a person's capacity for reproduction the National Board of Health shall determine the way by which the person's capacity of reproduction will be removed. Only if the subject is a person mentioned in 1 § (2) or if there are special reasons and the legally competent person gives consent shall such a method be used that removes the ability to have sexual intercourse.^[2]

7 §.

The removing of a person's capacity for reproduction shall be performed in a hospital by a physician.

The measure stipulated in 1 § shall be performed free of charge in a State owned hospital.

8 §.

A person has the right to appeal against the National Board of Health's order to remove a person's capacity for reproduction to the Supreme Court. The appeal shall be made within thirty days before noon after receiving the decision. The Supreme Court shall give these appeals urgent consideration.

9 §.

Persons who have participated in the procedure or by their office or post have gained information about the matters regulated in this law are obligated to keep secret what they have learned.

10 §.

Detailed instructions about the execution of this law will be given in the statute.

SOURCE: Sterilization Act of 13 June 1935 (No. 227/1935), *Suomen Asetuskokoelma 1935* [The Statute Book of Finland, 1935].

Translated by Markku Mattila.

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2 The 5 § of the Sterilization Statute reads: "The removing of a person's capacity of reproduction will be carried out either by cutting the ducts leading from the sex glands (salpingectomy, vasectomy) or by removing the sex glands (castration)." The Sterilization Statute of 13 June 1935 (No. 228/1935), 5 §, *Suomen Asetuskokoelma 1935* [The Statute Book of Finland, 1935].

APPENDIX IV. *Sterilizations made in Finland 13.6.1935–31.5.1970.*

The sterilization laws of 1935 and 1950 allow operations without consent. The law of 1970 (as of 1.6.1970) did not allow operation without consent of such a person competent before the law.

Year	Total	I	II	III	IV
13.6.1935– 30.6.1950	996 ^a	*	996 ^a	**	—
1.7.1950– 31.12.1950	95 ^b	—	95 ^b	—	—
1951	781	569	211 ^c	**	1
1952	1 016	777	232 ^c	**	7
1953	1 064	813	248 ^c	**	3
1954	1 069	733	335 ^c	**	1
1955	1 236	1014	222 ^c	**	0
1956	1 582	1107	452 ^d	23	0
1957	1 728	1201 _f	504 ^d	21	2
1958	2 208	1 767 _f	413 ^e	26	2
1959	2 597	1 921 _f	436 ^e	239	1
1960	3 200	2 362 _f	514 ^e	321	3
1961	3 199	2 353 _f	463 ^e	377	6
1962	3 461	2 612 _f	411 ^e	365	73
1963	3 573	2 729 _f	380 ^e	402	62
1964	3 298	2 676 _f	216 ^e	405	1
1965	3 206	2 711 _f	237 ^e	258	0
1966	3 543	3 012 _f	271 ^e	260	0
1967	4 022	3 521 _f	269 ^e	232	0
1968	4 294	3 817 _f	218 ^e	259	0
1969	5 449	4 983 _f	307 ^e	159	0
1.1.–31.5.1970	2 511	2 385 _f	100 ^e	26	0
13.6.1935– 31.5.1970	54 128	43 063	7 530	3 373	162

I = Medical reason
II = Eugenic reason

III = Social reason
IV = Other reason

- a = The sum total of those sterilized under the sterilization law of 1935. According to Tabvll 3. Antalet steriliserade, fördelat på den 20 årsperioden in Borgström 1958, p. 49.
- b = Estimation of the sterilizations carried out 1.7.1950–31.12.1950. The number is reached by dividing the sum total of those sterilized 1.7.1950–30.6.1951 by two. The sum total (189 sterilized) was taken from Tabell 3. in Borgström 1958, p. 49.
- c = Probably includes sterilizations for social reasons because it was mentioned in the current law but not separately indicated in the statistics.
- d = Includes the operations carried out for “somatic disease or defect” by the authorization of the National Board of Health. Operations were looked upon as eugenic.
- e = Includes the operations carried out for “severe somatic disease or defect” which were looked upon and marked in the statistics as eugenic operations.
- f = Sterilizations carried out on the authorization of two physicians or the National Board of Health. The reason was “somatic disease or defect” which was looked upon and marked in the statistics as a medical reason.
- * = The reason was not mentioned in the current sterilization law.
- ** = The reason was mentioned in the current sterilization law but was not separately indicated in the statistics.
- = No data.

Column IV (Other reason) = Emergency or on the authorization of one physician. The reason was imminent miscarriage and the operation abortion and sterilization. In statistics there is no explanation for the peak of the years 1962 and 1963.

SOURCE: C.A. Borgström, *Tillämpningen av lagen om sterilisering i Finland 13.6.1935–30.6.1955, kastreringarna obeaktade av Medicinalstyrelsen behandlade fall. With English Summary*. Bidrag till kännedom av Finlands natur och folk utgivna av Finska Vetenskaps-Societeten, H. 103. (Helsingfors 1958) [doktorsavhandling]; *Suomen Virallinen Tilasto, sarja XI* [The Official Statistics of Finland, series XI] (osa numero [vol number], taulu numero [table number]): osa 57, taulu 52; osa 58, taulu 38; osa 59, taulu 39; osa 60, taulu 46; osa 61, taulu 47; osa 62, taulu 35; osa 63, taulu 38; osa 64, taulu 8.13; osa 65&66, taulu 8.23; osa 67, taulu 8.23; osa 68, taulu 8.23; osa 69, taulu 8.23; osa 70&71, taulu 8.2.3; osa 72&73, taulu 8.2.3.