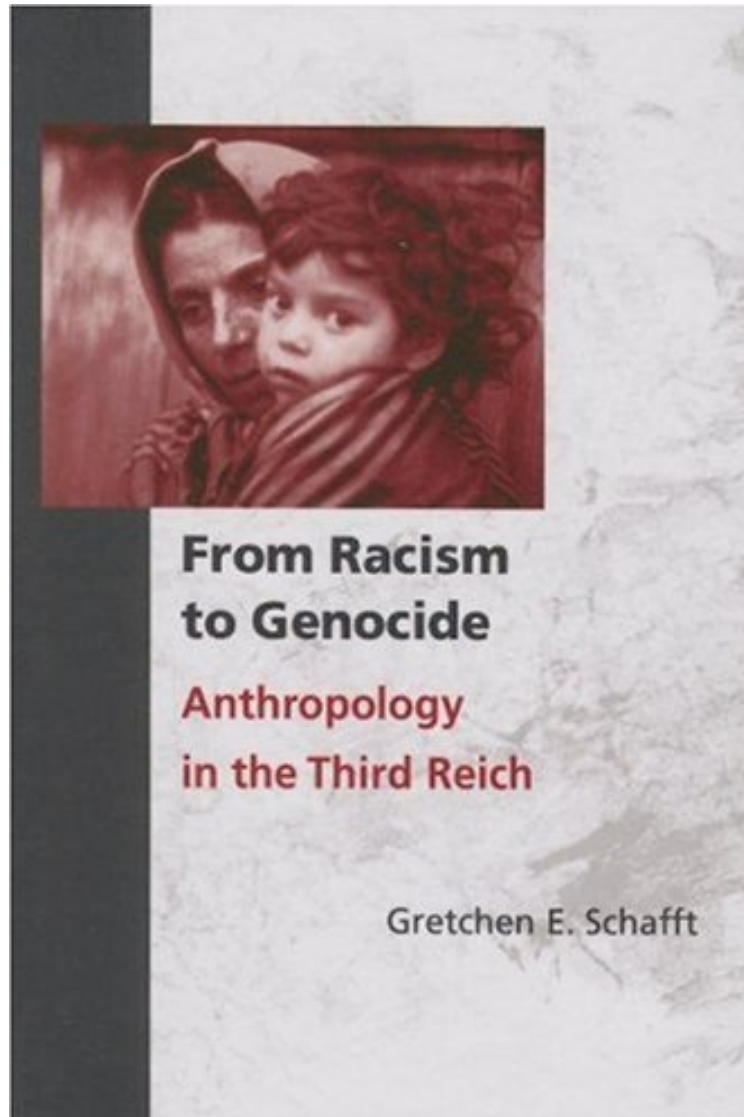


(Download) From Racism to Genocide: Anthropology in the Third Reich

From Racism to Genocide: Anthropology in the Third Reich

Gretchen E. Schafft

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Gretchen E. Schafft : From Racism to Genocide: Anthropology in the Third Reich before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From Racism to Genocide: Anthropology in the Third Reich:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well-written and informative By Colorado This book really opened my eyes to exactly who was doing what in the Nazi era to identify, classify, and basically mark for extermination, those who were part of the genocide. I had given little thought, as an anthropologist, as to what were the disciplines of those trying to use "racial identification and features" as tools to separate non-Aryans. The fact that they, for the most

part were those with anthropology degrees was difficult to understand. However the author explains how they were participants. Wehn I teach about Race and Ethnicity in my Anthropology classes, from now on they will understand how our discipline was participatory. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Concise and Scholarly

By Ansen PlobundleSchafft's work is concise, scholarly, and comprehensive. Her primary field of study is social anthropology and linguistics and much of the research in the work is from primary data she was involved in (11). FRG has both a broad and narrow focus. Her story of the Jews in Tarnow cannot be told without the broader surrounding story of the Third Reich in general. So, most of this is a historical 'putting-into-perspective' work of anthropologists in the Third Reich, with a specific emphasis of the anthropologists at Tarnow. The ending brings the reader back into the present to discuss issues like scientism, racism, and denial (on both its civic and professional levels, cf. x). Essentially, Schafft argues that the Third Reich anthropologists desire for scientism was a primary cause in the atrocities of the Third Reich, in the sense that -- if Hitler's policies were going to be carried out, someone from the university had to willfully and wholeheartedly do what the anthropologists did. She defines scientism as "the urge to follow lines of inquiry to the ultimate conclusion regardless of human consequences and without respect for standards of scientific thought and process" (1). This pursuit was at least partly the result of personal career building (1). Of course there is an inherent power structure that the anthropologists are participating in. The anthropologists fit their research to "match government agency agendas without offering clear statements about the limitations such funding and policy influences place upon the scientific enterprise" (3). But it was not a one way street. Anthropologists helped to develop and support the Third Reich racial plans as well (3). Specifically at Tarnow, ". . . their own pride and self-desire led them to 'completely objectify these persons, slanting all their conclusions to fit the political picture that would help them gain more access and be more successful in their careers'" (31). The Third Reich anthropologists had a participatory front-row seat in developing and implementing these policies (7). And with funding from German (IDO, KWIA), and non-German sources (Rockefeller Foundation), and the power of the state, there was nothing that could stop their experiments, nor the power they could wield in racial courts (7). In other words, they have blood on their hands. And many of them continued in the university after the Nuremburg trials and were never prosecuted. They were called "Schreibtischtäter" or "desk perpetrators". Though research has been done concerning the role of anthropologists in the Third Reich, more needs to be done (of course, that is often hard to do, considering many of their records have been scrubbed out of existence). Schafft's work lets the reader see into the world of the Third Reich not often talked or thought about. One's presuppositions and worldview color how one answers and perceives such evil. For my own take, I think a worldview that has no philosophical or existential explanation of humanity perpetually leaves itself open to such genocidal tendencies. Worldviews that have no way of consistently labeling human beings as intrinsically valuable naturally begin to rate them on a scale of worth. And the answers are often seemingly the same - the handicapped (physically and mental), the elderly, the very young, or groups that are perceived scapegoats of societal ills (religious or specifically ethnic groups). The reality is that these worldviews are all around us in America. Abortion was originally a racial and eugenics movement (and still is, actually, though cleverly disguised), the new healthcare bill will eliminate those that it deems are not worth the money to care for, the environmental movement is always pushing a faulty Malthusian overpopulation agenda and the list goes on and on. These movements often side themselves with the most powerful earthly entity around--the state, if it is to accomplish its goals. Schafft's work also highlights the intrinsic power relationship that exists between science and the state. This is often seen in the realms of psychology, where powerful influencing forces wield control of what constitutes a mental 'disease' and how these 'problems' should be handled (Foucault was right 'on the money'). The bottom line is that secularism and science contributed to the genocide of differing population groups in the Third Reich, no matter what detractors may say. This work is a testimony to that. However, those personal desires to further scientism are, in my opinion, the result of human sin--and that is the fundamental problem. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A powerful indictment of Third Reich "science"

By Charlotte I. Miller This book is a combination of carefully researched historical analysis, biographical vignettes, and personal memoir written by medical anthropologist Gretchen Schafft. It documents work done by German anthropologists employed by foundations, academic institutions and the German government from the 1930s until the end of World War II. These anthropologists apparently embraced Nazi ideology so thoroughly that they left behind their scientific methods and ethics to become co-opted into the processes undertaken by the Nazi party, the SS and other government officials to eliminate political opponents, people of color, homosexuals, Roma, Polish, and Jews from German and German-occupied territory. Their ability to deceive themselves into believing that their work in categorizing people destined for death camps was scientifically valuable is astonishing. The fact that they were never punished for their complicity in the Final Solution is extremely sad. Dr. Schafft has done an extremely thorough job of reviewing holocaust literature and newly available archival materials from both the Smithsonian Institution and sources in Europe to bring the reader extensive understanding of this co-option. She places the activities of the Third Reich's anthropologists in the context of other well known events from the rise of Nazism and the war. This convincing saga has, as Schafft says "no smoking gun" pointing to the crimes (including euthanasia, trafficking in body parts, and unethical torture filled medical experimentation) that these anthropologists very probably were complicit in. I bought this book because I am interested in the moral lessons of the

holocaust. As an applied anthropologist myself, this disturbing and detailed story awakened in me a desire to deeply evaluate my own work as an applied anthropologist. The book is well written, although some of the translated German memos have a stuffy bureaucratic sound--attesting to their authenticity, no doubt. I recommend this book to general readers as well as professional specialists in history, anthropology, and the history of science. It will change how you think about the German public's awareness of the evils perpetrated by Hitler's regime. by Charlotte Miller, Ph.D.

In paperback for the first time, *From Racism to Genocide* is an explosive, richly detailed account of how Nazi anthropologists justified racism, developed practical applications of racist theory, and eventually participated in every phase of the Holocaust. Using original sources and previously unpublished documentation, Gretchen E. Schafft shows the total range of anti-human activity from within the confines of a particular discipline. Based on seven years of archival research in the United States and abroad, the work includes many original photos and documents, most of which have never before been published. It uses primary data and original texts whenever possible, including correspondence written by perpetrators. The book also reveals that the United States was not merely a bystander in this research, but instead contributed professional and financial support to early racial research that continued through the first five years of Hitler's regime.

From Racism to Genocide is an original and important piece of scholarship based on never-before-published archival material. The analysis of the supporting role played by the anthropological sciences in the creation of Nazi racial and genocidal policies is painfully relevant for us today.-- Bettina Arnold, associate professor of anthropology, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee