

factors, such as the influence of the Colonial Office and the medical necessities of war, arise in Jennifer Beinart's essay on tropical medicine. And Jonathan Liebenau's case study of insulin production provides evidence of new difficulties, this time between the MRC and the pharmaceutical industry, and highlights the strong leadership given to the MRC by Fletcher and Henry Dale in dealing with the problems of patents, manufacturing and distribution.

It is only in the final contribution, on clinical research by Sir Christopher Booth, that details of the people who did the research (as opposed to those who organized it) and what that research was, emerge. Naturally Sir Thomas Lewis achieves much prominence, as do his conflicts with Walter Fletcher, frequently mediated by the much-underestimated figure of T. R. Elliott. The attitudes of more clinically experienced Secretaries (Mellanby and Himsworth); debates over the establishment of research "units" in teaching hospitals; the creation of a Clinical Research Board, and later Centre; and a brief survey of the expansion of the MRC's activities during the 1950s and 1960s, are all given, although necessarily brief, assessment.

Principally this book provides an administrative account of the role of the MRC, a history, not uninteresting, of the policy proposals, decisions and implementations that have shaped much of modern medical research in Britain.

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JAN NOORDMAN, *Om de kwaliteit van het nageslacht: eugenetica in Nederland 1900–1950*, Nijmegen, SUN, 1989, 8vo, pp. 304, Dfl. 39.50.

Since the publication of *In the name of eugenics* (1985) many have come to accept Daniel Kevles's assertion that the history of sciences of necessity merges with cultural and socio-political history when it comes to the history of eugenics. Regional studies have analysed eugenics as indicative of cultural forces that not only shape differences in the formulation of problems relevant to eugenics, but—more importantly—cause variations in the introduction of legal measures or the applications of compulsion. Eugenics has thereby become an attractive—albeit notoriously elusive—subject for study, even where it concerns countries not strongly associated with eugenicist programmes.

In this well-researched book Noordman has made an admirable attempt to disentangle eugenicist ideology and practice. Although not intended as a comparative study, ample reference is made to British, American, and German situations. What, according to Noordman, seem to crystallize as characteristic of Dutch eugenics are the class rather than race orientation of its ideas, and the pervasive influence of the religious Dutch political parties in preventing most eugenicist measures from materializing. He starts his discussion around 1900, even though institutions and societies that more explicitly promoted eugenicist research were founded, on a relatively small scale, in the 1920s and 1930s and the bulk of his source material dates from those years.

Arguing that confessional objections to social Darwinism prevented it from gaining great popularity in The Netherlands, Noordman traces the origins and the vocabulary of early Dutch eugenicist arguments to the radical liberal sanitary tradition of the nineteenth century. In theory, the step from public to private hygiene was easily made, even with the precise impact of nature versus nurture still unresolved. In practice, however, throughout the period he discusses, except between 1940 and 1945, public resistance to genetic determinism, to medical control over sexual mores, and to state intervention instead of "caritas" remained too strong to allow any compulsory eugenicist regulation to be introduced.

In The Netherlands as elsewhere, medical discussions about the feasibility of obligatory premarital screening were stimulated at the turn of the century by widespread concern about the "poisonous" effects of tuberculosis, alcoholism, and venereal disease. Pleas for such examinations and, if necessary, interdiction of marriage by such radical spokesmen as C. J. Wijnaendts Francken (1863–1944) remained, however, without practical effect. Most Dutch biologists were reluctant to extend the conclusions of their breeding researches to the social realm, and social theorists of a radical eugenicist calibre, such as S. R. Steinmetz (1862–1940) did

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not obtain the legal support they wanted. Publicly systematic research in eugenics was advocated by only a small group of people; names like those of the physicians Frets and Van Herwerden often recur. Only after the First World War did a few organizations for anthropogenetics, anthropology, and population studies amalgamate to become the Dutch Eugenics Federation in 1930. The final 100 pages of the book are devoted to the wide range of negative and positive eugenicist measures proposed, ranging from screening for VD to isolation or sterilization. Noordman discusses various parliamentary and media debates, again carefully displaying the multi-layered political, professional, and ethical motivations of their participants.

This is the first comprehensive study of the subject in The Netherlands in recent times. Many of its themes could be further developed: one, as the author himself points out, is the relation between the degenerationist and eugenicist arguments; another is the presence, here maybe slightly underrated, of racial arguments in Dutch medical writings.

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JOAN AUSTOKER, *A history of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund 1902–1986*, Oxford University Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. xvii, 375, illus., £40.00.

Writing the history of an institution presents problems. To balance its scientific achievements with developments elsewhere, to assess the relative contributions of a succession of directors and of individual scientific staff and, in the case of a charity, to relate scientific endeavour to the availability of financial support are tasks that would daunt the faint-hearted. In *A history of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund*, Joan Austoker has achieved a synthesis that demonstrates formidable scholarship. The book has been extensively researched and the footnotes so prolific that on some pages they exceed the text.

The origins of the cancer research are to be found in the nineteenth century but it was not until the early decades of the twentieth that the foundations of modern experimental cancer research were laid. The Imperial Cancer Research Fund, founded in 1902, was the first attempt in this country to set up a national body to organize and fund cancer research. Its subsequent success as a research-funding body was not achieved without difficulty. In the early years there were conflicts with the Medical Research Council and the Department of Health, and the foundation of a rival body during the 1920s, the British Empire Cancer Campaign (now the Cancer Research Campaign) did not help matters. There were, furthermore, differences between scientists who believed that the future lay in the experimental research laboratory, and those clinicians who sought to encourage the study of the patient. Nevertheless, a succession of Directors and Chairmen of Council laboured manfully through the years between the World Wars, although the period 1933–9 was to be associated with disillusion and dissension that necessitated extensive reconstruction. Since the late 1950s, however, new initiatives were undertaken, new buildings opened in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and the way set for the modern era. It was undoubtedly during the years of Sir Michael Stoker's direction of the Fund's scientific activities that a centre of international excellence was established. It was also during this period that the policy of founding extramural Units in the Universities and medical schools was formulated. At St Bartholomew's Hospital, as a result of the tireless activities of Gordon Hamilton Fairley and with support from the Fund, the speciality of medical oncology emerged in this country. The book begins with a perceptive introduction by Sir Angus Ogilvy, who has done so much as President of the Fund since 1964, and there is an epilogue looking to the future by the present Director of Research, Sir Walter Bodmer.

There are moments when the reader may find it difficult to see the wood for the trees, such is the mass of information obtained by generations of dedicated workers in cancer research, retailed in painstaking detail by Dr Austoker. But there is no doubt that this work is a major contribution to the history of contemporary medical science and it will remain the authoritative account of the history of the Fund.

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