



## Apes, men, and morons

*Ernest Albert Hooton*

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Published in 1937 -- the year before Hilter's annexation of the Sudetenland -- Earnest Albert Hooton's "Apes, Men, and Morons" is an example of the then fashionable notion that the human race can save itself only by enacting aggressive measures to promote selective breeding. From a review in AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH May, 1938: "The last chapter sums up what we must do to be saved. The author recognizes that there are many gaps in our knowledge of human biology and that we do not know enough to breed geniuses, but is firm in his opinion that we must bring about a 'sit-down reproductive strike of the busy breeders among the morons, criminals, and social ineffectuals of our population.' He holds that a biological purge is the essential prerequisite for a social and spiritual salvation. 'We must stop trying to cure malignant biological growths with patent sociological nostrums. The emergency demands a surgical operation.' " Beyond the obvious arrogance of such a position (there is little doubt Hooton considered himself and his progeny exempt from the "surgical operation" he calls for), Hooton says nothing as to whom should be entrusted with the power to identify the "social ineffectuals" among us who comprise the "malignant biological growth" to be purged. Worse, Hooton's endorsement of the very arguments Hitler was at that very moment using to justify the killing thousands of innocent German civilians clearly indicates socially ineffectual thinking. By Hooton's own logic then, he is himself guilty of social inefficacy, and therefore worthy of purging. Oh the irony. As perfect an example of comfortable, privileged, American armchair Nazism as can be found.

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