

The Mentality Bunker

For decades,
the secretive
Pioneer Fund has promoted the
most dangerously explosive notion
in American life.

Who are these guys?

In the thirty-six years that Harry F. Weyher has headed the Pioneer Fund, he had never met with a member of the press until I had lunch with him this past summer. This reclusiveness is somewhat surprising, given that the Pioneer Fund—a small, right-wing outfit that subsidizes research into racial differences, much of which puts blacks in a highly unfavorable light—must be the most controversial organization of its size in America. It has set off localized media explosions practically everywhere it has gone for the past quarter century. A few years ago, for instance, a grant recipient named J. Philippe Rushton, a professor of psychology at the University of Western Ontario, declared that blacks as a race could be characterized by low intelligence, high criminality and extreme sexuality. That view was considered so abhorrent that the Ontario premier called for his firing, Rushton was investigated by the police for possible violations of Canadian laws against hate propaganda, and he was obliged to deliver his lectures by videotape after the university could no longer vouch for either his safety or that of his students. Other such Pioneer-related incidents have occurred in recent years at the University of Delaware, Smith College, the University of Minnesota, the City College of New York and the University of London, in England.

It was probably appropriate that when Weyher did emerge from the shadows, he chose to meet me for lunch at his club—the Racquet & Tennis Club, one of New York's toniest, a virtually all-white-male bastion on Park Avenue. Attuned to pedigrees, Weyher (pronounced "wire") had somehow divined

By John Sedgwick

PERSONS OF VALUE



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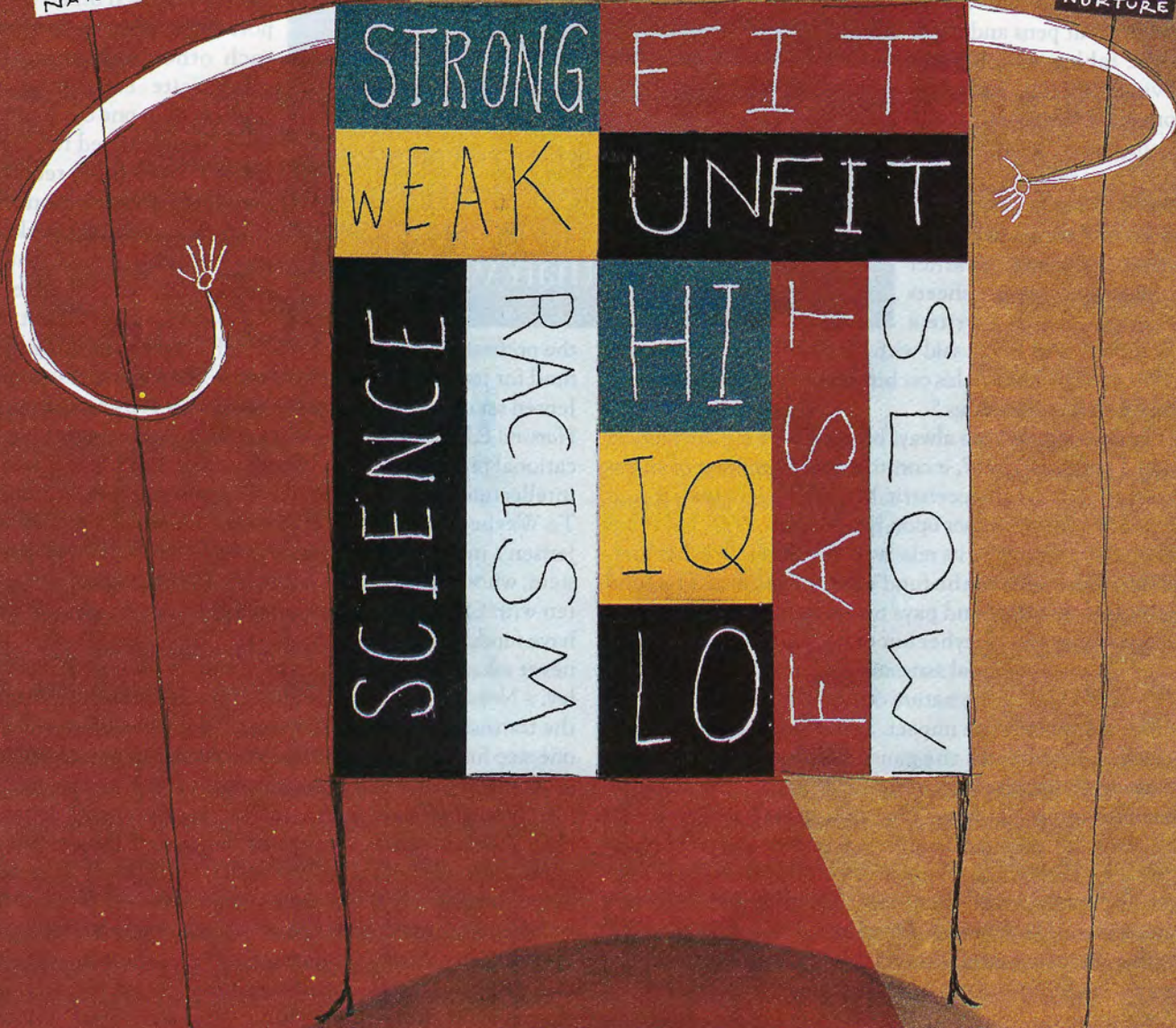
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that I am a Harvard graduate, and he apologized for not taking me to the Harvard Club, to which he also belongs. But there had been too much “noise” there lately, he said, referring to the boisterous crew of striking staff members, mostly black and Hispanic, that has gathered outside the front entrance for months now. He imagined that I would find the Racquet Club most congenial.

Weyher himself, at 73, doesn't play much tennis anymore. A courtly southerner, he is a little stooped with age, but as we settled ourselves into our chairs in the vast dining room, his face bore a sly, attentive expression. Club rules forbid bringing out pens and paper at the tables, which poses obvious difficulties for a reporter; I'd also had to check my bag with my notebook and tape recorder at the door. Weyher fumbled in his pocket and produced a small, rather elegant leather notepad with several sheets of paper. “You can write a few things on that,” he said with his North Carolina accent, redolent of tobacco fields on hot summer afternoons. “Just don't be too conspicuous.”

Conspicuousness has always been an issue for the Pioneer Fund. Founded in 1937, it controls only \$5 million of an endowment left by an eccentric Massachusetts textile heir named Wickliffe Draper upon his death in 1972, but it has gotten quite a bang for its relatively few bucks. Weyher himself attributes this to the fund's fiscal restraint. The fund maintains no office and pays no employees. It is run on a voluntary basis by Weyher out of his Fifth Avenue law office, with the occasional assistance of four unpaid directors.

More likely, it is the nature of the Pioneer Fund's activities that has made the impact. Broadly speaking, the Pioneer Fund advocates the cause of hereditarianism—in common terms, the notion that it is nature, not nurture, that determines our fates. That notion may appear to be a dry, academic proposition until you understand its implications, especially its racial ones. According to the fund's operating premise, intelligence is largely inherited, and one's class standing is an inevitable result of that inherited IQ. Further, Pioneer would contend, low IQ leads to criminality and to dangerous sexual licentiousness. Not surprisingly, given these questionable premises, the fund's directors



With Pioneer funds, J. Philippe Rushton concluded that blacks had lower IQs than whites.

maintain that African-Americans are at the bottom of most socioeconomic measures not because of traumas they have faced as a race but largely because they are genetically deficient. By positing that the races are inherently unequal because of their respective IQ scores, the Pioneer Fund dismisses one of our nation's central tenets, the unifying idea that opens the Declaration of Independence and that Lincoln reaffirmed at Gettysburg: “All men are created equal.”

At this point, the Pioneer Fund grantees are so closely allied that they might qualify as a race themselves. They know each other, support each other, study with each other, publish each other, cite each other's books and, in one case, have even been married to each other. To list these recipients is to know the Pioneer Fund. The notorious Berkeley psychologist Arthur Jensen was one grantee. Weyher calls him “a giant in the profession,” and Jensen returns the favor by praising the fund for its “important contribution” to genetic research. Jensen set off a national firestorm with his 1969 essay in the *Harvard Educational Review* arguing that compensatory educational programs for blacks were useless, since blacks were intellectually inferior to whites for largely genetic reasons. To Weyher's sorrow, the fund never did provide money to Jensen's intellectual descendent, the late Richard Herrnstein, whose controversial last book, *The Bell Curve*, cowritten with Charles Murray, was published last month. “We'd have funded him at the drop of a hat,” said Weyher, “but he never asked.” The fund did give a grant to William Shockley, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist and the coinventor of the transistor, who took Jensenism, as it came to be called, one step further, recommending the establishment of a fund to pay what he termed “intellectually inferior” people to allow themselves to be sterilized. Weyher has always denied that Shockley made any such proposal, ascribing its wide currency to a bit of misreporting that was broadly disseminated through the Nexis computer database—a tactic that he often uses to counter the many bits of unpleasantness that have involved the Pioneer Fund over the years. But in fact, Shockley, besides mentioning the idea on several talk shows, made this recommendation in a letter he sent to

members of the National Academy of Scientists on April 16, 1970. He suggested that \$1,000 be paid for each point below 100 IQ and noted that "\$30,000 [placed] in trust for a 70 IQ moron of twenty-child potential... might return \$250,000 to taxpayers in reduced costs of mental retardation care." Weyher calls Shockley a "great humanitarian," acknowledging only that he could be "bullheaded."

While such extremists have certainly had their effect, it is the mainstream research paid for by the fund that has yielded the greatest return for the cause. The Pioneer Fund has been the largest single supporter of Thomas Bouchard's now-famous Minnesota study of twins reared apart, having contributed \$500,000 to the effort over ten years. "We couldn't have done this project without the Pioneer Fund," Bouchard told me. Bouchard's team astounded the public with tales of the frequently uncanny similarities in twins raised separately. There were, for example, the sisters who both wore seven rings, leaving environmentalists grasping for explanations, such as that both women wanted to show off their elegant fingers. While Bouchard has published in refereed journals, he seems to have had his greatest impact in the mainstream press, which gloried in such anecdotes, invariably failing to note the many more differences that had been overlooked. Still, when the authors of a book called *The IQ Controversy* asked experts in issues involving heredity what evidence they'd found most convincing, a majority listed the twins studies, of which Bouchard's is by far the best-known. Indeed, Bouchard's research may well have paved the way for the current resurgence in hereditarian lines of inquiry that has, for example, led to the enormous public receptivity to news of the "discoveries" of the genes for alcoholism, homosexuality and schizophrenia, reports that were later either retracted or mired in qualifications. His work has encouraged deceptively simple, low-cost biological solutions, such as issuing Norplant implants to inner-city teenage girls, to complicated social problems. It has marshaled support for the current Human Genome Project—at \$3 billion, the largest biological study ever undertaken—which is designed to locate and identify each of the 100,000 genes in the human body. And, more

broadly, the Pioneer Fund's racial hereditarianism provides a frightening angle on much of the news of the day: the calamities in Rwanda and Haiti, the population issues recently raised at the United Nations conference in Cairo, even the O.J. Simpson murder case. In tilting public consciousness toward nature and away from nurture, in sum, the Pioneer Fund grants have ultimately caused us to think differently about ourselves and about one another.

On the political front, the fund's hereditarianism forms a kind of dogma that leads it to venture well away from strictly scientific topics to shape the larger debate over policy implications. Weyher freely admits that he would like to eliminate what he calls "Head Start-type" programs. But, to judge by the grants that it has made, the fund's administrators are also interested in limiting immigration, stopping busing, reversing integration and ending affirmative action. Given this agenda, it is not surprising that the Pioneer Fund has links to the far right. Thomas Ellis, a longtime political adviser to Jesse Helms, was a fund director for four years in the Seventies and is, in Weyher's words, "a very good friend." In 1985, Weyher's law firm, Olwine, Connelly, Chase, O'Donnell & Weyher, handled a suit against CBS for the Ellis-founded right-wing group Fairness in Media when it attempted to take over the network, although Wey-

her insists he had nothing to do with that litigation. The Pioneer Fund has also made grants to the Coalition for Freedom, which described itself in one register of foundations as "establishing a Jesse Helms Institute for Foreign Policy and American Studies."

Weyher has been approached many times by reporters, but he has not always been very cooperative with them. Recently, a 20/20 team came to interview him at his New York office. "They harassed me a lot," Weyher recalled. "But you could see what they were doing. They were going to get me there and then ask me 'When did you last have lunch with Adolf Hitler?' and then photograph me with my mouth open." He had his secretary send them away. The producers of *Inside Edition* were more persistent. Unable to get in to see him at his office, they dispatched a camera crew to his apartment building to interview his startled neighbors.

Historian Barry Mehler sees the Pioneer Fund as laying a pseudo-rationale for Fascism.



"They showed my building on the programs, and then they showed clips from the Holocaust of dead bodies as far as you could see," Weyher said.

With me, he seemed to be completely unconcerned that he might be in the presence of an enemy. He went on quite happily about the 450-page genealogy of the Weyher family that he had spent several years compiling, expressing mild distress at finding no particularly distinguished ancestors and many who were able to sign their names in county registers only with an X. He discussed his own rise from the tiny tobacco-farming town of Kinston, North Carolina, which he left for the University of North Carolina and, ultimately, Harvard Law School. In fact, the only time he reacted powerfully was when he got me talking about my own Harvard years, and he extracted from me the information that I had graduated magna cum laude. The light that suddenly came into his eyes nearly illuminated the room. "Well, good for you," he said solemnly. "You are one of the elite."

I first got wind of the Pioneer Fund from a sociologist who told me that if I wanted to find out about it, I should call historian Barry Mehler at Ferris State University, in Big Rapids, Michigan: He had done more investigating into it than anyone else. When I called Mehler, he would not talk to me until he could verify my identity. He explained that private investigators had been calling his friends, identifying themselves as reporters and asking probing questions about him. He assumed they were from the Pioneer Fund. Mehler must have assured himself that I was legitimate, because I soon received in the mail a number of articles he had written about the fund. When I called him back, however, he was still reluctant to speak to me. "They have threatened litigation," he said, "although they have never carried through on it. Still, the threat is there." He did explain that he'd looked into the fund because he saw it as laying a pseudoscientific rationale for the Fascist resurgence in Europe and for the rise of racist demagogues like David Duke and Tom Metzger in this country. As a Jew, he was especially unnerved by such developments. Then he returned to the hazards that he faced: "Look, I'm getting midnight phone calls. I'm getting harass-

ing letters. I'm the subject of an ongoing investigation. That's my reward for every blow that I strike against them. I don't slough this stuff off. The work I do, I pay for in a certain amount of anxiety for myself and my family."

Asked about Mehler, Weyher quickly grew irritated. "This fella is a historian, or so he says. He has all kinds of stuff about Nazis and Fascists and innuendo, and sometimes simply false things that are very often irrelevant to the whole field. He throws it around, and the media picks it up. It's exciting, it's titillating, and the denial of it kinda adds fuel to it." Did he put a private investigator on Mehler? "In a very limited situation," he said. He claimed he had an operative tape a press conference that Mehler held after he lost his job at the University of Illinois. "It was the funniest press conference you ever heard," Weyher said. "They fired him because of affirmative action. Mehler said, 'But I'm Jewish!' And they said, 'But you're white.' He was outraged." Weyher sounded delighted.

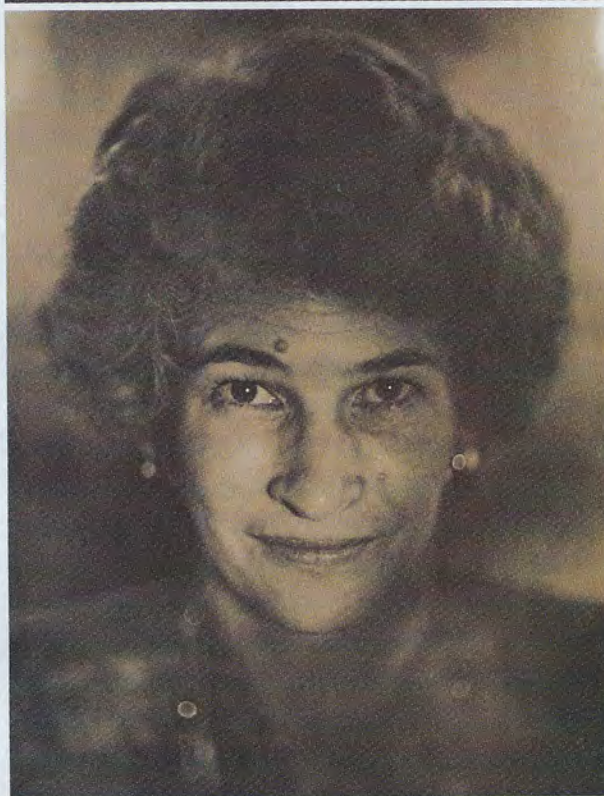
"Harry got the whole story wrong," Mehler replied when I asked about Weyher's charges. "I wasn't fired from anywhere." He couldn't have been fired by the University of Illinois because he never worked there; nor has he ever held a press conference. He did once give a lecture on academic racism at the YMCA near Ferris State, where he is an associate professor, in which he mentioned that the school had wanted to save his position for a minority applicant for reasons of affirmative action but instead ended up hiring two people: himself and a black man.

In his published material, Mehler is extremely hard-hitting, several times linking the Pioneer Fund historically to the Nazi program of racial purification. The Pioneer Fund grantees have retaliated by publishing their own investigations of Mehler's past, slamming him in one lengthy account as "an excellent example of a political activist operating from the security of the academic world."

The ultimate result of all this mudslinging is unclear, but the lesson is unmistakable. One enters the sphere of the Pioneer Fund as one enters a centrifuge. It quickly pushes everything to extremes.

This past winter, Oxford University Press published *The Nazi Connection*, a book that draws on some of Mehler's re-

Delaware's Gottfredson nearly lost her grant because of its source: the Pioneer Fund.



search to link the Pioneer Fund to the Nazi supremacists of the 1930s. The author notes that one founding director of the Pioneer Fund called himself “honored” to have received an honorary degree from the Nazi-tainted University of Heidelberg in 1936, well after the Nazi racial purification campaign was under way, and another wrote admiringly of the campaign a year later.

Since then, the Pioneer Fund has flirted with enough undesirables that the Nazi aura has never been entirely dispelled, even though, as Weyher repeatedly points out, many of the past and current directors fought against the Nazis in World War II. For example, when Donald Swan, a recipient of a \$6,000 Pioneer Fund grant in the Seventies, was investigated for mail fraud in 1966, the police discovered a small arsenal of illegal weapons and a large stash of racist literature, plus some Nazi flags, a German helmet and several photographs of himself with, according to the *New York Daily News*, “members of George Lincoln Rockwell’s neo-Nazi organization.” And in 1978, grant recipient Roger Pearson organized a World Anti-Communist League conference that included a rogues’ gallery of authoritarians, neofascists, racial hierarchists and anti-Semites, according to *The Washington Post*’s detailed report on the meeting. Among them were Giorgio Almirante, a leader in Benito Mussolini’s government, who was then the party chief of the Movimento Sociale Italiano-Deutra Nazionale, which *The Post* described as “the principal neo-fascist party of Italy”; and Willis Carto, head of Liberty Lobby, an ultraconservative organization that publishes *Spotlight*, featuring classified ads for Ku Klux Klan T-shirts and cassettes of Nazi marching songs. The Mexican delegation passed out an article attacking the NBC miniseries *Holocaust* as “another gigantic campaign of Jewish propaganda to conceal their objectives of world domination.”

Pearson was assisted in running the conference by Earl Thomas, a former American Nazi Party storm trooper. At one point during the proceedings, Pearson noticed two men distributing what *The Post* termed “anti-Jewish tracts,” as well as reprints from the *Thunderbolt*, a newspaper of the avowedly racist National States Rights Party (NSRP). Pearson asked them to leave, though not before telling them that he was “sympathetic with what you’re doing.” He added: “But don’t embarrass me and cut my throat.” As they left, he asked them to “give [his] regards” to NSRP chief Edward Fields, *The Post* reported.

This is all certainly repugnant, but it is doubtful if it makes the Pioneer Fund itself a tool of the Nazis any more than the fund’s environmentalist opponents are the Communist stooges the fund grantees invariably accuse them of being. Instead, it simply demonstrates the heavy politics of the nature-versus-nurture debate, by which those emphasizing “nature” are embraced by the hard right, while those embracing “nurture” make their friends on the left. In its search for companionship, the Pioneer Fund frequently finds itself in repellent company. But to call the administrators of the present-day Pioneer Fund “Nazis” is to miss the point. If anything, such staunch hereditarians are royalists. Like kings, they believe that the most important things in life are settled by birth.

This elitist theme emerges quite clearly in the heritage of the Pioneer Fund, which grew out of the eugenics movement of the early part of this century. Eugenics, which proposed cultivation of what was then termed the “germ plasm” to produce a superior strain of humanity, encouraging the breeding of the “fit” and discouraging the reproduction of the “unfit,” was inspired by Charles Darwin’s theories about the evolution of species. It was Darwin’s polymath cousin Francis Galton who coined the movement’s name—from the Greek, meaning “of good stock”—in 1883.

The idea of eugenics is reviled today, ever since the Nazis appropriated its notions of racial hygiene. Nevertheless, the philosophy was endorsed by a great number of the social elite, including such luminaries as Theodore Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, John D. Rockefeller Jr., Lady Ottoline Morrell and even the young F. Scott Fitzgerald, through the Thirties. Eugenics inspired Alfred Binet to create his famous intelligence test—a basis for the standard IQ test and the dreaded SATs—as a first step toward weeding out what was then called the “feeble-minded.” And eugenics prompted the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso to try to identify a criminal “type” on the basis of certain physical features. It is amazing, in retrospect, that the socially prominent backers of the eugenics movement—and they were nearly all from the upper middle class—were so unaware, or so unconcerned, that the criteria they set for eugenic perfection were invariably ones best met by themselves. One does not have to be a Marxist to see the class-bound tinge to these precepts, as the upper classes were inevitably exalted by all eugenics programs and the lower class decried. Indeed, the Catholic Church was a staunch opponent of the movement, in part because so many of its followers were the poor immigrants who were on every American eugenicist’s hit list.

In the United States, the movement led to the Immigration Act of 1924, which sharply restricted the admittance of certain out-of-favor ethnicities, especially those of Eastern and Southern Europe, for almost exactly the same reasons put forth by current Pioneer Fund grant recipients: They supposedly dilute the country’s genetic strength. Eugenicians have always been preoccupied with the breeding habits of populations they consider inferior, and this obsession reached its zenith in the early Thirties, as no less than thirty American states adopted laws requiring the sterilization of individuals bearing “undesirable” traits. According to *In the Name of Eugenics*, by Daniel Kevles, as a result of these laws, as many as 20,000 people had been forcibly sterilized in the United States by the time of World War II.

The most famous of them was Carrie Buck, who, after giving birth in the early 1920s to a baby girl named Vivian, was found to have a mental age of nine years, making her, in the terminology of the day, a “moron.” Since her mother scored lower still, Carrie was subject to sterilization under a Virginia law that required it in cases of second-generation mental deficiency. The man to give the case its scientific impetus was Harry H. Laughlin, superintendent of the Eugenics Record Office, tireless critic of immigrants and author of *Eugenical Sterilization in the United States*. Without taking the trouble even to

meet Buck, Laughlin testified that her feeble-mindedness had been inherited. In his view, she belonged to “the shiftless, ignorant, and worthless class of anti-social whites of the South.” The case ultimately went to the Supreme Court, where Laughlin’s views prevailed, 8-to-1. Vivian died of an intestinal disorder while she was still in elementary school. According to Kevles, her teachers considered her “very bright.”

Harry Laughlin became one of the four founding directors of the Pioneer Fund. Another was Frederick Osborn, the scion of a New York mercantile family and nephew of Henry Fairfield Osborn, then the director of the American Museum of Natural History. The younger Osborn was secretary of the American Eugenics Society, and, while he was a force for moderation in that effort, he expressed his admiration for Nazi eugenic sterilization in 1937. By that year, with the alarming news of the Nazi program starting to filter back from Europe, the steam had begun to run out of the eugenics cause—which may have been what spurred industrial heir Wickliffe Draper, along with Laughlin and Osborn, to start the Pioneer Fund.

The clubby overtones of the fund’s charter are unmistakable. It lists its first purpose as aiding “parents of unusual value as citizens,” and then defines those parents as ones whose children “are deemed to be descended predominately from white persons who settled in the original thirteen states prior to the adoption of the Constitution of the United States....” (The phrase “white persons” was amended to “persons” in 1985.) The ancestral requirements, not surprisingly, were met by the board of directors, which Weyher describes as “really blue chip.” Laughlin could trace his lineage back to sometime before the Revolutionary War, and even now, Harry Weyher can hardly contain himself when describing Draper’s distinguished forebears, who included two governors and two Civil War generals, one on each side. “He had the background where you’d expect he’d be something,” Weyher said.

It is not quite clear what Draper was, however. Independently wealthy, he traveled widely, hunted big game in Africa and took part in an archaeological expedition to search for evidence of early man. Above all, he seems to have been a war buff. In World War I, he fought first for the British, then for the Americans. He was an unpaid newspaper correspondent during the Spanish Civil War and served as an intelligence observer stationed in northern India in World War II.

One of Draper’s first acts after establishing the fund was to try to earmark money to encourage army pilots to have multiple children in order to boost the country’s genetic stock, but he soon abandoned the idea. Instead, he concentrated on the fund’s second purpose: to conduct research into “racial betterment.” The term was changed in 1985 to “human race betterment,” but the racial component cannot so easily be concealed. It was the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision desegregating the nation’s public schools that drew Harry Weyher into the organization. Although that decision is now generally hailed as a landmark in the development of civil rights in America, Draper instinctively regarded it as anathema, and the young Weyher shared that view.

Draper had come to Weyher in search of some fresh blood

for the fund. He’d asked around at the prominent New York law firm Cravath, Swaine & Moore, as well as at the smaller firm established by John Marshall Harlan, a Pioneer Fund director who would later become a Supreme Court justice. Weyher worked at Cravath as an associate, and he’d joined with Harlan on a crime-commission project. “My name floated back to Draper from both those sources,” said Weyher. Draper asked him if he had “an open mind” about the Supreme Court’s *Brown* decision. “I said that’s right,” Weyher told me. In truth, Weyher’s mind was more than open, it was positively keen on Draper’s point of view. “That decision was supposed to integrate the schools and everybody said we’d mix ’em up and the blacks’ scores would come up,” Weyher said. “But of course they never did. All *Brown* did was wreck the school system.” Before long, Draper had signed Harry Weyher on as the president of the Pioneer Fund.

And he had his man. Weyher supported the work of Audrey Shuey, whose “Testing of Negro Intelligence” was the first study to pursue a scientific basis for the idea that blacks are intellectually inferior to whites. In a kind of apostolic succession, Shuey provided the scientific underpinnings for Arthur Jensen, who in turn brought Thomas Bouchard into the Pioneer fold, and together, Jensen and Bouchard led the Pioneer Fund to Philippe Rushton.

P

hilippe Rushton was an obscure academic at the remote University of Western Ontario when he set off what amounted to an intellectual stink bomb at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in San Francisco in 1989. It was here that he propounded his theory comparing blacks, whites and Asians, by which

blacks trailed whites, who in turn trailed Asians, on various supposed measures of desirability, including intelligence, sexual restraint, social organization and something he called “maturational delay,” which included the age of first intercourse and the age of death.

Wholesale comparisons between races are always of dubious value and motive, and for Rushton to subject much of the world’s population to his own kind of thumbs-up/thumbs-down ranking compounded his problems. As one might expect, the media jumped all over him. The geneticist David Suzuki took on Rushton in a televised debate. Two weeks later, Rushton went on *Geraldo*. “I felt my views were being very badly distorted through the media,” Rushton explained to me. It was likely the first time in history that anyone turned to Geraldo Rivera to sort out a scientific debate. As a condition for appearing on the show, Rushton required that he be joined by other “knowledgeable behavioral geneticists.” Barry Mehler was one, and Jerry Hirsch, of the University of Illinois, was another. The conversation

quickly got bogged down in charges and countercharges, so Geraldo dismissed the other geneticists and brought out some black activists, and then popped the big question about the sole area where, according to Rushton, black men are definitely superior—penis size. A verbal brawl erupted. As Rushton remembered it, “the situation deteriorated into name-calling and so on.” What names? “The usual—‘racist,’ ‘Nazi.’ I don’t recall.”

In the weeks after the show, the cacophony grew louder. Besides calling for Rushton’s firing, Ontario premier David Peterson declared his work to be “highly questionable, destructive and offensive to the way Ontario thinks.” The widely read *Toronto Star* went after the “Nazi” Pioneer Fund for sponsoring such research; later, it ran a cartoon depicting Rushton wearing a Ku Klux Klan hood. After a police investigation, the Ontario attorney general decided not to prosecute Rushton for hate propaganda but, in a parting salvo, dismissed his ideas as “loony.” Picketers set up shop outside Rushton’s classroom. The university recalled too well an incident just a few months before in which a psychopath had murdered fourteen female economics students at the Ecole Polytechnic in Montreal before killing himself. Western considered having Rushton teach in a “portable,” a kind of trailer, since that could be easily defended by police. It settled on having him teach by videotape, a procedure that he reluctantly followed for three months, until the uproar finally subsided.

It is hard to know how to respond to research like Rushton’s. The University of Western Ontario decided to hold its nose and let Rushton proceed, which was probably wise. Censorship is a game that more than one can play. No matter how repugnant most people might find his ideas, Rushton has had them published repeatedly in respected, peer-reviewed journals and has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, among other honors. “When I say that Rushton’s academic record is sterling, I’m not kidding,” said Eموke Szathmary, a former dean of social sciences at the University of Western Ontario, who had headed the committee that decided Rushton’s professional fate. Still, this seems to have given Rushton delusions about how his work would play in public. Possibly Rushton enjoys the martyr’s role, now that he has gotten a chance to

play it. One might think that his *Geraldo* experience would have soured him on talk shows, but he followed it with self-aggrandizing appearances on *Donahue* and the national cable show *Jane Wallace*. “Do you know of even Nobel Prize winners who compare themselves to Galileo?” Szathmary asked me. “Philippe Rushton does.”

More dangerously, Rushton and his Pioneer Fund confreres suffer from a blindness to the historical context of their work, as if they thought that blacks had never before been called stupid, untrustworthy and oversexed. “Think of an equivalent topic for scientific inquiry, like ‘Are Jews Pushy?’” said Nicholas Lemann, author of *The Promised*

Jan Blits believes his research was attacked because of its success in the political arena.



Land, the award-winning study of African-American northern migration in this century. “Is this an issue that should be put out on the table?” Race relations are so fragile that it is impossible to discuss them without immense tact and a great deal of caution, two qualities that Rushton clearly lacks. When explaining his work to me, he did not gloss over his thoughts on differences in penis size, as I thought he might have, but rather recounted them in some detail. Besides being inflammatory, the topic of penis size may very well be irrelevant to the issues of male fertility that Rushton is exploring. As Szathmary, herself a population biologist, pointed out, “I would think that the size of the testicles, since they are the sperm-producing organ, would be a more direct measure of male fertility than the penis, which is only the object that delivers the sperm.”

In a sense, Rushton’s work is the natural culmination of that of so many of the Pioneer Fund hereditarians, as they circle around the great imponderable of racial differences. While comparative reproductive rates are a matter of concern for the hereditarians, they are bothersome to the rest of us, largely because of the so-called “dysgenic trend” involved—the notion that blacks are somehow dragging down the national IQ and that the more blacks there are, the lower it goes. The essential issue, then, centers on race and IQ. With this, of course, the hereditarians press two of the hottest buttons in the culture.

The debate over racial differences in intelligence is so gnarled and thorny and intricate, it is nearly impossible for a layperson to evaluate the many conflicting claims. Indeed, that is one of the difficulties in addressing the issue at all, since experts on race are rarely

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he doesn't think it comes out as openly with Clinton." Indeed, there are significant similarities between the two. Both came from a humble southern home and were raised primarily by their mother. But the resemblance ends there. Clinton was a model child from the start and began thinking about winning high political office when he was a teenager. Gramm traveled a much more circuitous route. When his ambition first took shape, in college, he decided to be a professor—of physics, initially, and then, when a specific fellowship was offered, of economics. And he didn't begin to consider entering politics until the early Seventies, when he realized that he could not ascend to the Nobel Prize heights of the economics profession.

Unlike Gramm, Clinton was never a zealot. As was revealed during the presidential campaign, he was an anguished bit player in the antiwar movement of the Sixties. By contrast, Gramm has always held strong and extreme views. When, in his early days as a politician, he began making a tour of Rotary Club and Kiwanis lunches, his stock speech was dramatically entitled "Government the Enemy." In 1974, he achieved national attention with a *Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed piece arguing that the energy crisis was a chimera. With his first campaign he adopted a tactic of vilifying his opponents. Clinton, by contrast, was a conciliator who always put a desire for adulation above—or at least on the same level as—any sense of ideological mission.

A closer comparison can be made between Gramm and Richard Nixon or Ronald Reagan, each of whom was also raised by a strong mother but adopted the secret dreams of his father. As Kemp noted, Gramm has Nixon's view of politics as war. And his background and ideological commitment are akin to those of Reagan. Rea-

gan's father was an alcoholic but also a defender of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal who once ran a Works Progress Administration office in Illinois. Like Gramm, Reagan fulfilled his father's dreams with a twist: He ultimately became a politician—as well as a fierce anti-New Dealer. And he was, like Gramm, determined to pursue his own ideological path regardless of criticism and even ridicule. One can pose the question of Gramm's presidency in terms of his resemblance to these two men: Does America need a new president with the political style of Nixon and the ideological earnestness of Reagan?

There are people in Washington who know Gramm well, who are familiar with his ruthlessness and zealotry, as well as his boundless energy and brilliance, and who believe that he would make a good president. Stuart Butler, the vice-president of domestic policy studies at the Heritage Foundation, has worked with Gramm. Last year, the two clashed over health-care policy when Butler argued that conservatives should present their own comprehensive plan for achieving universal coverage and Gramm demurred. Butler now thinks that Gramm was right, and while he is not endorsing anyone for president, he believes that Gramm would bring a welcome change to the office. "He is a politician who doesn't mind people hating him," Butler says. "He does allow much sharper distinctions. In general, I would always prefer someone at the top who prefers a clear, unmistakable view of where he is going and sticks with it. I think Gramm by his nature will be forced to make clear statements."

My own view is more negative. I see a prospective Gramm presidency as a throwback to an earlier era—a sharp indication that the country has learned nothing from

Watergate or from the financial excesses of the Reagan years. Gramm would raise the clang of factional discord that has plagued American politics during the past two decades and has made it impossible for Democrats or Republicans to govern. And he might well have precious little to contribute to the needs of a new American economy. Gramm, who once offered an amendment to replace the term "junk bond" with "high-yield bond" in financial-reform legislation, continues to believe in the principle of laissez-faire that fed the stock and savings-and-loan scandals of the Eighties and contributed to large trade deficits with Japan. And his antagonistic view of government would only fuel popular distrust at a time when the country needs to find better ways for the private and public sectors to work together.

Gramm, not surprisingly, sees his role in sharp ideological terms, often describing it with another favorite analogy: "As a conservative with strong values, I am like a boat with an anchor wedged firmly in the rocks. The storms won't blow me away, but if Americans decide they really want a liberal for president, I'll sink when that tide rises." It is a revealing metaphor: Gramm as a boat stuck in the rocks. The Texas senator, however, is unlikely to sink, whatever happens to the liberal tide. Under Texas law, he will still be able to run for Senate reelection while he is running for the presidency. And he is easily young enough to try again in 2000 or 2004 if he fails in 1996. By all odds, the man who flunked the third, seventh and ninth grades will emerge from the 1996 elections as a national figure we'll be contending with for a long time. ♦

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THE PIONEER FUND

(continued from page 235) experts on intelligence, experts on intelligence are rarely experts on race, and experts on genetic inheritance are rarely experts on either. And in this, no amount of expertise is ever enough. There is, for example, lingering controversy about whether there even is such a thing as IQ. Stephen Jay Gould argued in his celebrated *Mismeasure of Man* that the concept was, in effect, a result of social scientists' physics envy, their determination to give an impossible abstraction a number in hopes of capturing something real. Gould called this "reification," and he derided it at some length. Hereditarians counter that, real or not, and whatever the cause-and-effect relationship, IQ does correlate rather decidedly with socioeconomic success. As for IQ's genetic component, enough twins studies have been done by now that most experts agree that heritability accounts for somewhere in the vicinity of 50 percent to 70

percent of intelligence, with 60 percent the most likely figure, which of course still leaves ample room for environmental influence.

On the racial side of the question, it is hard to know what to make of the very premise of "race" these days. Technically, a race is genetically isolated, but that is hardly the case in a world that is growing more intermixed by the hour. Arthur Jensen concedes that the mingling of the races necessarily leads to a "dilution" of any race-related genetic effects. Now, most categorization is done purely on a cultural basis. If one thinks of oneself as black, one is.

If anything, "race," in the sense that the Pioneer Fund grantees use the term, might well be a measure of the cultural bias against it. The very terms "Asian," "white" and "black" carry a lot of baggage. And this is important, for, as Harvard biologist Richard Lewontin has pointed out, heritability mea-

sures only the genetic variability of a population within a comparable group. It does not measure differences between noncomparable groups, and that is the crux of the debate over racial characteristics. Statistically, blacks do seem to lag behind whites by about fifteen points on most IQ tests. But are blacks and whites comparable groups? If not, to attribute any IQ differential to deficient genes is a stretch. Jensen himself has wondered if there is an "X" factor to account for blacks' lower average performance on IQ tests. It shouldn't be hard to find, in a country where blacks are far more likely than whites to grow up poor, fatherless, malnourished, badly educated and victimized by crime and drugs. Then there is the matter of racism in America, which, like the bloodstains on the hands of Lady Macbeth, cannot be washed away.

It is important to realize that, even with a genetic basis, IQ scores vary over time for indi-

viduals, and they shift markedly for groups. Rushton lauds Chinese-Americans for their average IQ of 107, but tests showed that those Chinese who had immigrated to America after World War II trailed the white average of 100 by a point or two, according to James Flynn, a professor of political science at the University of Otago in New Zealand and the author of several scholarly books on the IQ controversy. Yet these Chinese immigrants then proceeded to outpace Americans socioeconomically—55 percent of them became professionals, compared with 30 percent of whites—and their IQ scores have since risen. “If IQ fully determined life’s outcomes, then what the Chinese did is quite impossible,” said Flynn. The Chinese, however, had the benefit of what Flynn termed a “dynamic work ethic”; they were entrepreneurial and abstemious, as well. Flynn noted that a study of black and white children of American GIs stationed in Germany—where their economic status is equivalent—suggests that there isn’t anything especially deficient about being black once environments have been equalized.

Of all the branches of science, the field of behavioral genetics—the area for much of the Pioneer Fund’s research into race and intelligence—is generally regarded as the most dubious, in large part because it is so prone to personal prejudices about the individuals under examination. Too often, the behavioral geneticist’s conclusions merely reflect his assumptions. Garbage in, as they say, garbage out. “People always come into behavioral genetics with some bias, and it may reflect their social bias,” Jonathan Beckwith, a professor of genetics at the Harvard Medical School, told me. “At the extreme, you get racists doing research of this sort.” Like Philippe Rushton? I asked. “When I said ‘racist,’ that’s the first person I thought of,” he replied. “From everything I know, it’s quite clear where his starting bias is.”

Because of its pure-science aura, genetics can easily be used as a cover for what are essentially political arguments. “One group of people is arrogating to themselves the ability to decide who is superior to whom,” Beckwith said. “And I object to that.” Besides, he argued, even if the heritability of a trait like intelligence is 70 percent, environmental factors can still affect it drastically, just as a drought can extinguish a corn crop, whatever its genetic programming. “Whether intelligence is genetic or environmental, you are still faced with a political and social decision about how to deal with any disparity in mental ability,” he concluded. “That’s the real question: Is society going to devote the resources to improving the situation?”

The Pioneer Fund faced a crisis of survival in 1991. That year, a dispute over two grant recipients, Linda Gottfredson and Jan Blits, came to a head at the University of Delaware. Previously, uproars over fund grants only tan-

gentially concerned Pioneer. This time, as Gottfredson told me, “the Pioneer Fund was the issue.” As an anguished letter to the school’s president from a linguist named William Frawley put it, “I...find it very difficult to believe that the University of Delaware, with its avowed goals of multicultural sensitivity, racial tolerance, and the promotion of minority education, could continue

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to accept money from the Pioneer Fund.” How could Delaware truly be committed to affirmative action? “I saw it as a make-or-break business for me and for the fund,” Gottfredson said. “If they could pick me off on account of my funding, if there were a precedent for cutting off funding, it would gradually kill the fund by disabling the people doing the work.”

Gottfredson and Blits received their grant to investigate “race-norming,” the practice by which minorities’ scores on federal job examinations are compared only to those of applicants from their own ethnicity, not to the entire pool of applicants. As a result, black scores are artificially inflated, giving blacks what Gottfredson and Blits believed was an unfair advantage. Congress ultimately agreed, and the practice was eliminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Gottfredson and Blits believe that they were attacked precisely because of their success in the political arena. Perhaps, but in its published records, the university seemed to be principally preoccupied with the ugly history of the Pioneer Fund, chiefly the racial orientation as expressed in its original charter and as evidenced by numerous grants since. As is typical where the fund is concerned, the debate quickly became overheated. At one point, the University of Delaware African American Coalition took out an ad in a local paper accusing Gottfredson of genocide, and it organized a sit-in of her class. Seeing how much was at stake, Harry Weyher himself made a rare public appearance to testify on behalf of the fund. Nevertheless, the university ruled that, while Gottfredson could keep her grant, future Pioneer money was not welcome on campus as long as the fund “remains committed to the intent of its original charter and to a pattern of activities incompatible with the university’s mission.” Barry Mehler found that impressive. “For a university to say ‘We don’t want your money,’ that’s amazing,” he said. “Usually all they say is ‘Is it green?’”

Gottfredson and Blits declared that the ruling violated their academic freedom, and, with the assistance of University of Delaware trustee and former Republican presidential candidate Pete du Pont, they retained an expensive attorney to appeal the decision to a federal arbiter. In the end, the arbiter sided with Gottfredson and Blits. The reasoning remains sealed at the request of the university,

but it is not hard to guess what it might be. The Pioneer Fund’s politics and its past may be unsavory, but “academic freedom” means that academics must be free to pursue their view of the truth, regardless of the funding sources.

So the Pioneer Fund has survived—at least for the time being. It may soon spend itself out of existence. The fund is now running through

\$500,000 a year, regardless of the income on the investments that Morgan Guaranty has selected for it. “It seemed to make more sense to spend the money than to save it,” Weyher said, “so we spent it. Once it’s gone we’ll just quit.” If the stock market stays flat, the Pioneer Fund could be depleted in ten years.

Or it could literally die out. This is, after all, a fund administered by five very old men—a kind of politburo of powerful geriatrics. At 73, Weyher is the youngest by about a decade. One of the other four, Randolph Speight, is a former partner at Shearson Lehman who now devotes himself to playing croquet in Bermuda. Another, former investment banker John B. Trevor, has dedicated himself to carrying on the policies of his father, anti-immigration advocate John B. Trevor Sr. Another is Karl Schakel, whom Weyher describes as an “international farmer.” “He has seen civilization,” Weyher said cryptically. “We didn’t have to educate him.”

The full effects of these cumulated years were not fully apparent to me until Harry Weyher proudly led a little tour of the Racquet Club after lunch. We got a bit lost in the maze of the upper floors but finally made our way first to the racquets court, with walls and floor of slate, then to the room for court tennis, a rare, antique game that was also played at Henry VIII’s Hampton Court and precious few other places. “Somebody once told me that if I played court tennis, I’d immediately be ranked eighteenth in the world,” Weyher joked. He had been intrigued by the possibility but declined nevertheless. He showed me the odd felt-covered ball, a hybrid of a tennis ball and a baseball, and the peculiar lopsided racquet, which looked like an old wooden tennis racquet that had been left out in the rain.

If the Pioneer Fund had a headquarters, it would be a place like this. No less than the Racquet Club, the Pioneer Fund is a club. It has its musty charter, its lily-white members, its smug exclusivity, its foolish lore. Unlike the Racquet Club, however, the Pioneer is trying to foist its principles on the country. Happily, the country continues to lumber on in fitful pursuit of the ideals of its founders. With luck, the Pioneer Fund will someday be as much a relic as court tennis. ♦

John Sedgwick, a GQ contributing writer, reported on the troubles at Yale University in the April issue.