



# The Wheel of Life, and the Ideological Nemesis

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**Perspective**

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## Abstract

A century ago, during the 1920s, the world was reorganizing its geography and recovering from the First World War. Even though almost no one includes the word eugenics in their argument, which seems more like a museum concept, remnants of the past, as I mentioned before, sometimes do change their name, and opportunists take advantage of certain moments in history to relaunch or insert an old concept, adorned with plumage that is ad hoc for the times. There are some false truths that monopolized the world, it is true. Humanity has survived two world wars, the atomic bomb, the Holocaust and countless other disasters.

It wouldn't be impossible for a cybernetic triumvirate, in the near future, to take information from the cloud and applies eugenics, a new and greater racial cleansing, to the entire human race, without distinction of country, religion or class.

**Keywords:** Eugenics; Humanity; Nemesis; Genocide; Genetical

## Key points

- Explore the historical context of the 1920s and 1930s, focusing on how the aftermath of World War I set the stage for the rise of totalitarian regimes. Analyze the socio-political factors that contributed to the emergence of dictatorships in Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union.
- Investigate the ethical implications of eugenics, tracing its evolution from ancient philosophical concepts to its controversial application in the 20th century. Discuss how the misuse of eugenics led to horrific consequences, including genocide, and examine the lessons learned that inform contemporary genetic research.
- Examine the role of propaganda in the Nazi regime, particularly how it was used to manipulate public perception and suppress dissent. Highlight the experiences of individuals who opposed the regime and the consequences they faced, shedding light on the importance of resistance in the face of totalitarianism.

## Perspective

A century ago, during the 1920s, the world was reorganizing its geography and recovering from the First World War. But then, in the 1930s, the rise of totalitarian regimes came about and Hitler's Nazism (1933), together with Stalin and Mussolini, formed the dictatorial triumvirate. Beyond the biographical details of the rise of dictatorships in these countries, these regimes persecuted everything and everyone who did not support or were not unconditionally loyal to their ideas [1]. Nazism, in particular, persecuted allies, opponents and even ordinary Germans who were initially sympathetic to Hitler's deceitful schemes, but who, upon expressing dissent, were condemned to forced labor for miserable wages [2]. The Nazis also embraced the ideas of eugenics to initiate racial cleansing policies that dragged, among others, the medical profession into the mainstream (unfortunately, in practice, these ideas led to genocide) [3].



The origin of the word eugenics can be found in ancient Greece, in the writings and statements of Plato. *Eu* (good) and *Genesis* (generation, origin, birth); that is, the wellborn or the good reproduction. However, it was not until the 19th century that the Englishman Sir Francis Galton appeared, to whom history grants the title of the father of eugenics. Galton, a multifaceted scholar, spent decades studying how to improve the physical and mental condition of individuals [4]. He clearly tended to favor the fittest, the most intelligent and the genetically best endowed individual, to the detriment of the weakest. Galton was strongly influenced by social Darwinism (taken from the theories of his cousin Charles Darwin).

Anti-Semitism and the mass elimination of Jews (as well as other ethnic groups) left a huge black stain on the catalogue of history, and eugenics, due to the misuse of its concept, was relegated to the category of pseudoscience [5]. However, scientists have rescued the positive side of eugenics from the trunk, to give rise today to advanced studies related to the modification of the genetic code in order to prevent cancer or autoimmune diseases in human beings. But history surprises us, again and again, by repeating nefarious events under a different name and attire, but the “crux” is the same [6].

The recent Palestinian-Israeli armed conflict was initially detonated on October 7, 2023, that fateful day when 1,400 Jewish men, women and children were murdered. The massacre made world headlines in a few hours triggering a very strong and sustained response from Israel. At the time of closing of this editorial, the conflict, far from settling down, has increased both geopolitically and in numbers, and deaths due to collateral damage on both sides have continued to rise. The element that aggravates the problem even more is the permanence of Israelis in the hands of their captors. As a doctor, my heart aches for the deaths of innocent people no matter which side they are on or under what flag. It is also painful that since the day of the attack and the subsequent response, the wave of Anti-Semitism (which had remained semi-hidden) has spread rapidly and widely throughout Europe and the United States and has even reached countries like my own, Chile, so far from the nerve center of the conflict. A country, my country, where not long ago, Christians, Jews and Palestinians lived together in peace. Christians (or neutrals), in particular, have been pressured in some way to take sides and the conflict has escalated in secular universities, once centers of tolerance and diversity (with many truths) that have unfortunately been taken over by a handful of vociferous people who embody a pathetic version of the totalitarianism of the 1930s (there are university faculties that have cancelled or boycotted the work of Jewish professors, or those who have related relatives). Even though almost no one includes the

word eugenics in their argument, which seems more like a museum concept, remnants of the past, as I mentioned before, sometimes do change their name, and opportunists take advantage of certain moments in history to relaunch or insert an old concept, adorned with plumage that is ad hoc for the times. Ideological radicalism not only defends a single truth, but it also does not allow legitimately dissonant opinions to be expressed. If one disagrees, one is subjected to violence or cancellation, whether at work or on social media. And it is the same social media that behaves like a digital aerosol, spreading a myth, prejudice or false truth [7].

There are some false truths that monopolized the world, it is true. For example, that the earth was flat or the Galenic dogma that said that the heart pumped spirit. Man, with critical thinking, altered that course for the better. Sometimes the change took a while to happen, that is also true. But, what cannot happen is that an idea or concept (whether old or new) is captured by an ideology that ferments its truth at will and total whim, thereby phagocytizing or crushing other options or opinions.

The historical record tells us that, in relation to the prevalence of specific prejudices, when it was not one reason, it was another; or both of them together..., that is, when the religious dispute subsided, the Jew was accused once again, no longer for his creed, but because he was a rich oppressor, colluded by interests. The latter has now become concrete as the progressive anti-elitist discourse of those who want to dust off those old prejudices and who most likely have the desire to rename Israel as an elite-colonialist-expansionist.

Today, modernity means that we have more information than ever, but much of it is questionable. With questionable motives as well. There are plenty of “pro-something” websites (Jewish or Palestinian, even New Age Christianity); articles or pages with a single truth, from the trenches, but which, deep down, have supporters who are not really interested in the conflict, but in likes or subscribers or simply funding. They call it vested interests.

### **Are we condemned to repeat mistakes? Do we want to impose a truth at all costs?**

Humanity has survived two world wars, the atomic bomb, the Holocaust and countless other disasters. Is it that we learn nothing, or only what is convenient? The historical complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should cause us to make an extra effort to know, read, unravel and understand. Surely there is no single truth, and it cannot be found only in the Koran, the Tanakh or the New Testament [8].

If the ideology of extremes threatens every collective dream of a better humanity, it must be confronted with

responsibility, with the search for a harmonious change forward, with agreements that allow a better life, to have a better Genesis in the future. How far are radical groups (whatever their flag) from embodying what a Holocaust survivor, Dr. Victor Frankl, said: giving meaning to life, of discovering in it the best, the most honest and genuine of man. In short, to live a responsible life (as Dr. Freud tells us in his creation: Logotherapy) [9]. And responsibility starts by questioning information, a myth or a “truth” written in stone by some, with a critical and collaborative spirit. Speaking of notable men, Sigmund Freud was a famous Austrian doctor and he discovered almost at the end of his professional career, a bitter truth: life can be something difficult to bear. (Especially with the range of relationships and realities, ideas and prejudices) [10].

And this is how we want to dominate machines in the future? Taking the subject with a laxity, with short-term forgetfulness or worse, going backwards... (a century?) [11]. It wouldn't be impossible for a cybernetic triumvirate, in the near future, to take information from the cloud and applies eugenics, a new and greater racial cleansing, to the entire human race, without distinction of country, religion or class. Wolfgang Von Goethe said that life is light and darkness. And yes, humans know about darkness.

### Conflict of Interest

I declare that I do not have financial/commercial conflicts of interest.

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