

**THE
CIRCUIT
RIDERS**

**Rockefeller Money and the
Rise of Modern Science**

GERALD JONAS

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cation, through legislation and otherwise, to economic and social betterment.

Despite Fosdick's personal involvement and the family's previous generosity, the Rockefeller philanthropic boards had so far proved unresponsive to the importuning of the eugenicists. The trustees showed no inclination to take up a burden that Senior had relinquished with his last Founder's Designation in 1915.

In 1920 and again in 1921, Harry Laughlin tried to get a Rockefeller subsidy for publication of his book *Eugenical Sterilization in the United States*. Each time he was turned down. The Rockefeller advisers, including Fosdick, found nothing wrong with the bulk of the manuscript, which they described as "material relative to the history of sterilization, legislation in various states, court decisions, etc." There is some indication that Laughlin might have got his subsidy if he had agreed to delete, as requested, several chapters containing "direct propaganda favoring sterilization." But Laughlin refused, and the Rockefeller advisers backed away.

It was not so much the eugenicists' ideas that cost them Rockefeller backing as their tendency to confound research with advocacy. Nothing was more highly valued in the Rockefeller camp than fact-finding pursued without conscious bias. Only after all the facts were known could the proper action be taken. The Rockefeller model for bias-free social research was Abraham Flexner's 1910 report on American medical schools, which had been funded by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning. In 1913, after completing a similar report on European medical schools, Flexner was asked to join the General Education Board, to organize a campaign to bring about the reforms that his reports had so eloquently called for.

There was irony in the fact that Madison Grant and Charles Davenport has chosen to name one of their research-and-advocacy groups after Francis Galton, a British geneticist (1822-1911) who coined the word "eugenics" but specifically warned against mixing research and advocacy. Eugenics in both England and America offered two faces to the public: as an objective science dedicated to finding out the facts about heredity, and as a social movement dedicated to improving the human race through influence on its breeding practices. Although Galton himself believed in "improving the breed," he had a healthy