

THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN HISTORY

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January 10, 2005

Mr. Edwin Black
Washington DC

Dear Edwin:

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to address the errors and confusion in the review of your book, *War Against the Weak*, written by the reviewer Barry Mehler and published in the September 2004 edition of the *Journal of American History*.

1. We invited you to publish a letter to the editor and offered you space considerably longer than our review of your book. You did provide a short letter, which we are publishing in the March 2005 edition. Your letter states:

I was happy that esteemed historian and eugenics expert Barry Mehler called my book *War Against the Weak* "a fascinating and well-written book" in his review in the September 2004 number of *JAH*. Mehler is one of our finest minds on the subject, which is why I conferred with him during my book research and was grateful when he was among those who signed my non-disclosure agreement as a pre-publication reader. Unfortunately, through some error, Mehler's printed review asserted that neither I nor my team of some 50 researchers in five countries working in more than 100 archives "came across or utilized" several standard works, including his own. In fact, most of these were among the first works we studied. Anyone checking with me could have determined that. Mehler's own work is listed in the bibliography, just as he emailed it to me, as are some of the leading journals that carried other works cited by Mehler. My Source Notes totaled more than 90 pages and I could not list all works consulted. *War*

Against the Weak was awarded the Best Humanitarian Book of the Year 2003 by the World Affairs Council and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. More information about the book, plus other reviews, can be found at www.waragainstheweak.com. On that site you will still see the link to Mehler's excellent and highly recommend eugenics website.

Edwin Black

2. We are also publishing the following:

Editor's Note: Correction and Clarification.

In his review of Edwin Black's *War Against the Weak* in the September 2004 issue of the *Journal of American History*, Barry Mehler wrote that "there is no indication at all that Black or his team came across or utilized William Tucker's *The Science and Politics of Racial Research* (1994) or any of the works of Garland Allen or of this author." In fact, a work of Barry Mehler, the author of the review, is cited in the book's bibliography, and Mehler is mentioned in the acknowledgements. Furthermore, the bibliography includes references to journals in which works of the other scholars appear, and the bibliography indicates that many other works were consulted that do not appear because of space constraints. Mehler also states in his review that Black wrote the book with "the single-minded focus of writing a popular and controversial history." In fact, there is no evidence that this was the single-minded focus of the author. The *Journal of American History* regrets any errors or confusion.

3. We will post a link to your letter and to our correction and clarification on the web page where the review appears in our online edition on the History Cooperative. The text of the link will indicate that a correction and clarification and letters to the editor have been posted concerning this review. For technological reasons, we cannot provide such a hot link in online versions of the *JAH* that are not on the History Cooperative. *JAH* materials that appear on JSTOR, on ProQuest, and on EBSCOhost are created by scanning pages from our original printed edition.

Let me add here that this will be the first time we will have provided links to letters or corrections to the reviews or articles to which they refer. But we now plan to make this a standard policy. Once more, thank you again for bringing this issue to our attention and for giving us the chance to respond.

Sincerely yours,

David Nord
interim editor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 12, 2005

**Correction and Expression of Regret by Journal of American History
regarding the book *War Against the Weak***

Barry Mehler is a historian I admire. Unfortunately, his review of ***War Against the Weak***, which appeared in the September 2004 issue of *Journal of American History*, while complimentary in many respects, also included, through some error, untrue statements and inferences about my book, my bibliography, my research and reference materials, the dozens of people who comprise my research team and my personal thoughts and motivation. The *Journal of American History* has apologized with an official expression of regret and a correction. They are unable to withdraw the captured version of the original from such databases as Proquest, which employs actual page pdfs, but have linked the correction to their current online pages. The *Journal* has also instituted a new policy that addresses such errors in the future. Throughout the entire discussion, *JAH* editors were friendly, professional and eager to correct the record. At all times, we both agreed that Barry Mehler is an outstanding historian on the topic of eugenics. In fact, his website has been listed on my own as a recommended link, and remains recommended.

War Against the Weak won the World Affairs Council's Humanitarian Award for the Best Book of 2003, and was nominated by editors for the Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, and other awards. The book was blessed with dozens of good reviews and continues to evoke accolades internationally. Further information on this book can be found at the book's site, which is www.waragainstheweak.com.

I thank the *Journal* and Barry Mehler for their professionalism in this matter.



Edwin Black

www.edwinblack.com

January 10, 2005

David Nord, interim editor
Journal of American History
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Dear David:

Thank you for being so responsive the questions I called to your attention regarding Barry Mehler's review of "War Against the Weak." The speed with which you issued the correction was impressive. JAH is a fine publication I enjoy and Barry Mehler one of the nation's finest minds on the topic of eugenics.

Sincerely,

Edwin Black