

# The History of Cruel Ideas

© 2017 Barrie and Jack Ritter

1400's: The spectacle known as the *Epic Expansion of Europe* occurred when those with sufficient funds for travel, desire for adventure and power set out to explore, taking control over the lands of every other continent. Contact, conflict, colonization and slavery predated racist ideology. The Bible was supplanted by rationalizations of racial superiority only in the past 150 years.

"The dominant personality traits of those who colonized are the byproducts of dominance status: smugness, superiority, omnipotence, arrogance, and insensitivity" (Daniels and Kitana in Schaefer, 1979).

1400's thru 1800's: Very few cases of multiple murder were recorded for the 15th through the 18th centuries. There were only slightly more throughout the 19th century. The primary reason was poverty. This was a time of bare subsistence levels in Europe and America. The aristocrats and wealthy tyrants, and later, their American counterparts, had the *leisure, the money and the power to be cruel*. Everyone else had very little.

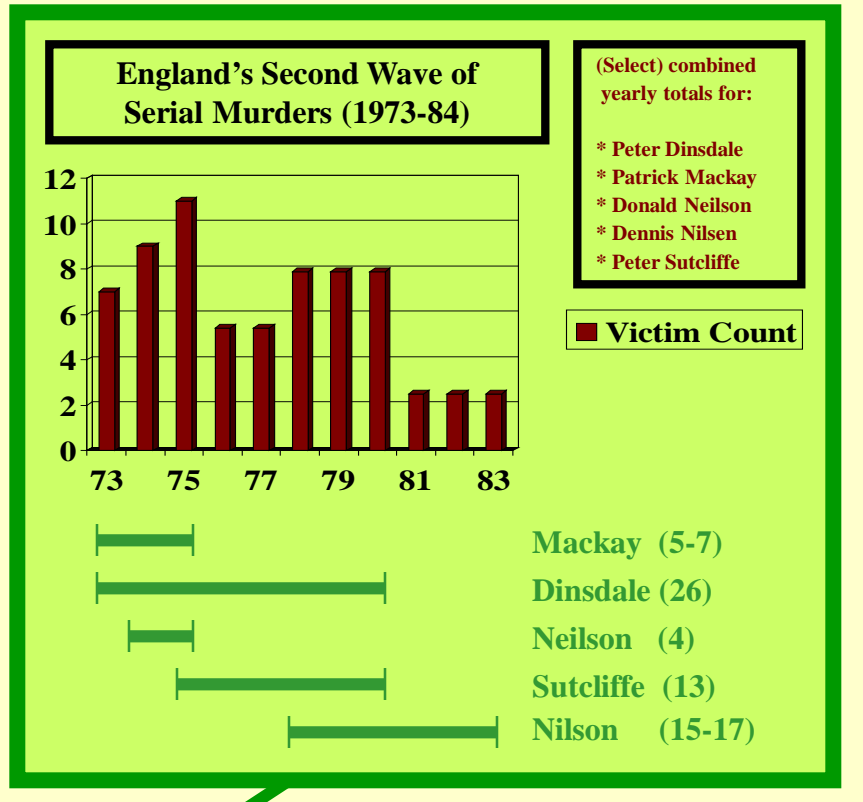
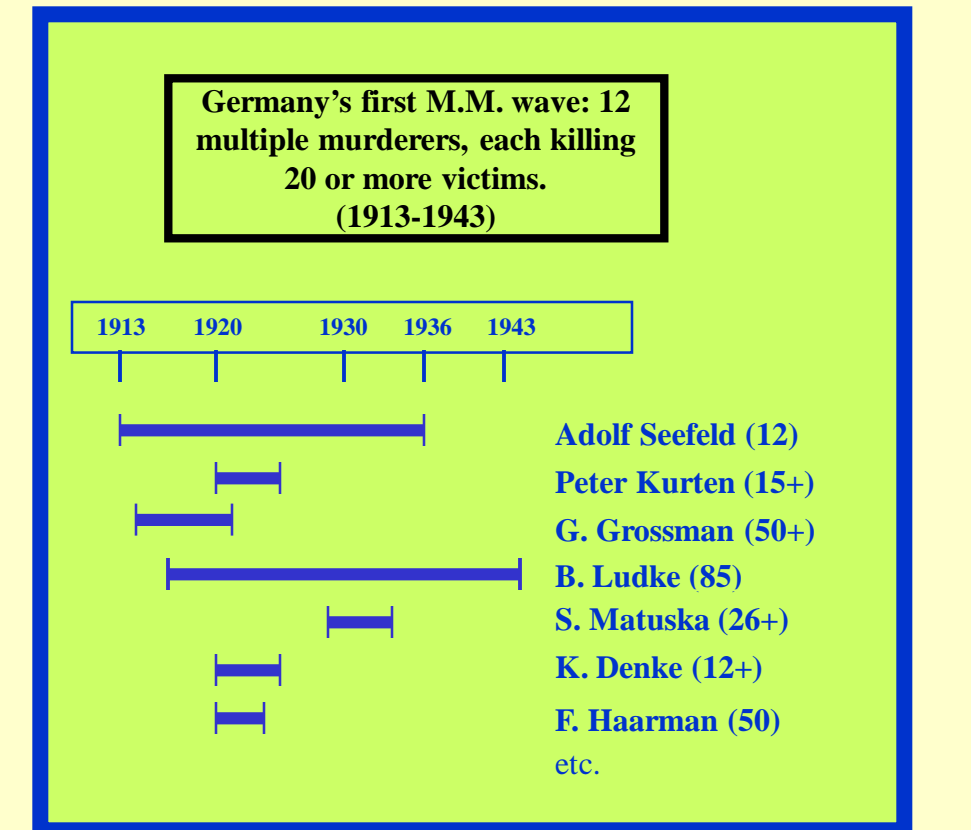
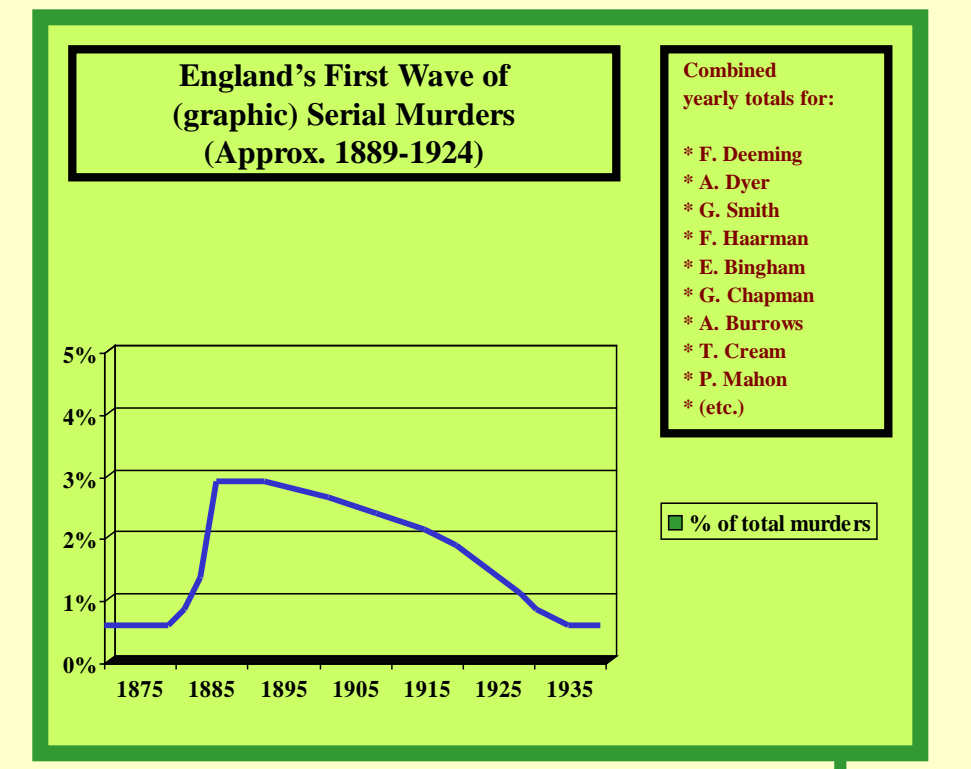
1400's thru 1500's: The primary motives for murder among the wealthy were profit and the furtherance of power. This was true even of *Gilles de Rais*, as his murders were motivated by greed (he believed that the blood of children was a valuable ingredient in the making of gold.) Among the ruling classes of the 16th and 17th centuries in Italy and France, murder by poison, whether for profit or political power, was so common that poison was called "Succession powder," or "The weapon of statesmanship."

The world's first cases of cruelty and slaughter were political tyrants of great wealth and power. 15th century serial murderers were those born to power and wealth, without limits on their behavior. The first serial murderer in history (Gilles de Rais) was stimulated by having access to a book about these tyrants. After his reading of the Lives of the Roman Emperors he went into his war, then returned home to fulfill his fantasies.

1404-1440: Gilles de Rais: One of the richest men in Europe, and Marshall of France. In his 20s, he was a lieutenant who fought bravely beside Joan of Arc. But when he returned home, he began a lifetime of supreme self-indulgence. All his victims were children, and according to some estimates, 200 were sexually assaulted and killed. His murders were also motivated by greed (he believed that the blood of children was a valuable ingredient in the making of gold.)

## Positivism

"The results have come in, gone back out and come in again: the children of the Leave-It-To-Beaver generation are being desensitized to violent acts, by television's stupefying glut of explicit programming. The television industry responds with the 'reflection of social norms' argument."



1972: The Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee in which Surgeon General Steinfeld states: "There is a *causal* relationship between televised violence and subsequent antisocial behavior, and that evidence is strong enough that it requires some action on the part of responsible authorities" (p. 28).

1973: Bandura comments that *the scientific evidence* in his mass media models are as effective as live models in teaching social behavior and its consequences.

1976: AMA House of Delegates: "The House declares that TV violence threatens the health and welfare of young Americans, ..."

The lesson learned from Tuskegee: "While conducting experiments, scientists might focus on statistics & abstractions, forgetting their subjects are human beings. Scientific investigators must learn that exercising 'moral judgment should always be a part of any human endeavor,' including the scientific search for knowledge."

In the 6 weeks following the *Richard Speck* and *Charles Whitman* cases, imitative killings claimed the lives of 48 victims. Murder in general went up in 40 cities. These rates never really returned to pre-1966 levels.

1958: Wolfgang offers the highly-contested view that most murderers are poor, black and commit most other crimes (Silver's Introduction, p. 23).

1940's: Americans demonstrate the ability to do the right thing: "At a time when the public had been shocked by reports of Nazi racism, A broad coalition of civic leaders emerged and united to encourage improved race relations," (Morris, 1976).

1931: The Wickersham Commission condemns police brutality & unexplained variance in reporting practices among cities.

1915-1919: Extreme urban violence: 22 of the century's 33 riots occur. "With the exception of Harlem (1935)," riots, until 1964, are interracial, with Whites being "the main aggressors, and the bulk of the casualties [being] Negroes".

Early 1920's: Emilio Marinetti articulates the nature of fascism: "Love of danger, heroism, glorification of force and war, and violence considered as an argument."

(1934): Andre Gide writes: "[Hitler] behaves like a genius, I particularly admire the diversity of his methods. ... Soon even those he vaquishes will feel compelled, while cursing, to admire him."

Darwin's writings and letters heavily influence writers like Spencer, Galton, and Wallace. He sums up their shared belief that: "The weak members of civilized societies propagate their own kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man ... but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed."

- Descent of Man, P. 134.

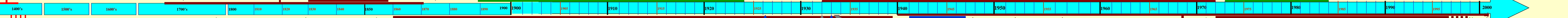
1830-1842: Comte, the founder of Positivism, and one of the founders of Sociology, writes prolifically about Social Evolution Theory. He articulates his highly influential law of the 3 successive stages of civilization: theological, metaphysical, and "the positive."

(1830-1850s): Expanding police force able to control 35 major riots throughout Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston. American law enforcement controlled by local officials given great discretion with few institutional controls.

(1736-1871): Many U.S. riots involving anti-abolitionists; anti-Negro, anti-Catholic & pro-labor groups; & violent volunteer firemen in Philadelphia (AA).

18th Century: The first Romanian poem appears, celebrating Vlad ("The Impaler") Dracul as a national hero, rather than a villain. His image is remade in literary form.

-Fonseca, 1995, p. 170.



Vlad the Impaler ("Dracula") - his torture becomes increasingly perverse & indiscriminate. He combines his torture-killings with religion, militarism, sexual perversion, & profit. When he runs out of enemies, he impales his fellow Romanians. As the numbers grow into the thousands, he changes from a ruler to a serial murderer who happens to rule. This leads to his overthrow and murder.

There is no public outcry, so long as victims are limited to gypsies.

Another Gypsy importer is Vlad's Crusader cousin Stefan the Great, dubbed "Abdole of Christ" by Pope Sixtus IV. The 1st to employ impalement through the naval in a form of punishment for warring enemies.

Vlad Dracul captures thousands of Gypsies and becomes the 1st wholesale importer of Gypsies as slaves.

Serial/multiple murder begins in legitimacy, becoming a type of perpetrator that can't be captured statistically.

(1791): The Classical School. Beccaria suggests the possibility of initiative violence. He articulates 3 key ideas:

- 1) The Pleasure-Pain Principal: Man runs away from pain & towards pleasure.
- 2) The most tenable way for a government to deal w/ crime is consistent, certain, foreseeable, & proportional punishment; he frames *deterrence theory* in terms of pain avoidance. Arrives at these 2 ideas intuitively, not analytically. They prove to be prescient: resurfacing much later as tenets of Ideal Democracy.
- 3) Human rights and equality of justice for all.

Darwin articulates the popular Theory of Evolution.

(1829): Urban riots in England lead to formation of modern police systems, with divergent statistical programs.

1802: Andre Gide publishes *The Immorialist*, the first known, fictional work premised on the commission of a motiveless murder.

Hungary becomes the first fascist regime, exhibiting a combination of bureaucratic & sadistic violence, as a form of persuasion.

After The Civil War, mobs of as many as 4000 people torch, burn, and/or emasculate 2000 blacks. A lawless order was kept by vigilantes, policemen, and "pillars" of the community.

"... every second family in Germany was hit by unemployment or semi employment." -Werthan, A Sign for Cain.

1933: *The Journal of Psychiatry*, under Carl Jung, urges psychiatrists to study *Mein Kampf*, & "to recognize it as a basic work."

1941-47: Gypsies are targeted by the Nazis as "unworthy of life." -Fonseca, '95, p. 170

1933: Fearing labor protests will upset the status quo, conservative industry leaders fund Hitler, and he becomes chancellor of Germany. Then, absolute ruler.

1938: In *Patterns of Criminal Homicide*, Wolfgang uses police reports from Philadelphia for 1948-1952. He argues that police are house bound & nonbiased in their treatment of blacks, providing due process in their reporting practices.

Televised hearings (Kefauver Committee) expose millions to corruption in government and by police.

Post World War 2: strong public reaction to interracial violence. Beginning of support for police-community relations programs.

1971: D.H. Lawrence writes: "the essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer." - American Violence, Richard Hofstadter.

1940-Present: FBI finding: Murder is up - but not in big cities (Sutherland & Cressey, 1978).

The Race Relations Act of 1976: "Act establishes a Commission for Racial Equality to help enforce the legislation and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups generally."

1999: A statistical study released by The Commission for Racial Equality reports: "An estimated 15% of all offences against Asians and blacks during '95 were seen as racially motivated, compared to 1% against white people."

2001: The Campaign Against Racism and Fascism: "CARF reviews 3 months of racist campaigning and asks, what can be done?"

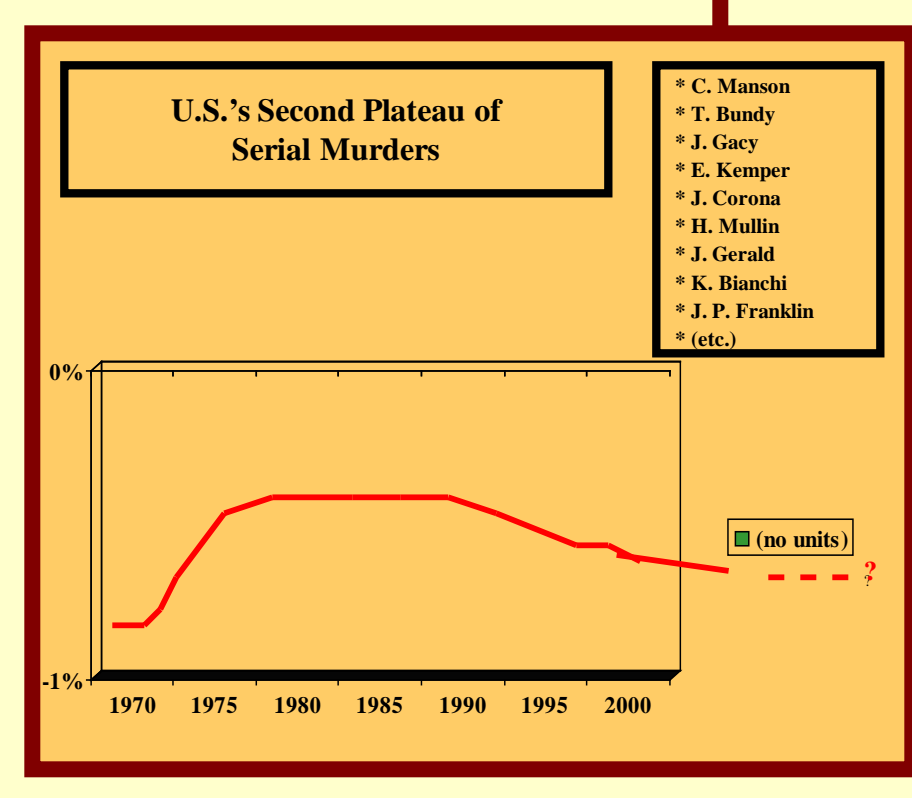
Feb, 1999: The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry is presented to parliament by the Home Dept.

England's will to respond to its own racism and racial violence is made evident by the many detailed investigations by proactive local and national agencies. No such equivalent action-oriented government agencies in the U.S. were apparent in 2001.

Positivism mutates into a collective form, and makes the worst mass murder spree of the century legal.

America's view of police, and authority, begins to evolve.

In slave-holding nations, slaves are not necessarily thought of as victims of murder, because they are viewed as property.



**LEGEND**

- The U.S.
- England
- Germany
- Other Countries
- History-shaping Ideas or Literature

Event happening at point in time.

Event happening over span of time.

Over-arching theme or pattern.