1.	Record Nr.	UNINA9910825620703321
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	Titolo	Charles Edward of Saxe-Coburg : the German Red Cross and the plan to kill "unfit" citizens 1933-1945 / / Alan R. Rushton
	Pubbl/distr/stampa	Newcastle upon Tyne, UK : , : Cambridge Scholars Publishing, , 2018
	ISBN	1-5275-1843-4
	Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (viii, 211 pages)
	Disciplina	943.2207092
	Soggetti	Nobility - Germany - Saxe-Coburg-Gotha
		People with disabilities - Nazi persecution
	Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
	Formato	Materiale a stampa
	Livello bibliografico	Monografia
	Nota di contenuto	Intro; Table of Contents; List of Tables; List of Illustrations; Abbreviations; Introduction; Chapter One; Chapter Two; Chapter Three; The Pro-Nationalist Opposition; Hitler's Rise to Power; Hitler and the Nobles; The Volk and Race before 1933; Eugenics and Political Reality 1930-1933; The NSDAP and Eugenic Policy 1930-1933; The Development of the 1933 Sterilization Law; Planning and Implementation of the 1933 Law; The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute and the Eugenic Law of 1933; Chapter Four; Children's Euthanasia Organization; The Killing Centers; Chapter Five; The Children's Euthanasia Program Food Rationing and Local Starvation P Chapter Six; The Transport Process; Chapter Seven; Dissemination of Euthanasia Knowledge in Germany; The Swiss Connection; The von Galen Sermon; The Swedish Connection; International Implications; An Omen; Chapter Eight; The Accomplishment of Charles Edward; Individual Protest and Personal Responsibility; Notes; Bibliography; Index
	Sommario/riassunto	Charles Edward was ruler of the German Duchy of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, president of the German Red Cross, and the grandson of Queen Victoria. He was closely allied with the rise of Adolf Hitler and the implementation of eugenic policies designed to improve German racial health. When war began in 1939, Hitler ordered a secret program of murder by poison gas and starvation to eliminate the mentally and physically handicapped ""ballast people""; approximately 250,000 people were eventually killed.