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a gold mine of information on eugenics

The following article originally appeared under the title "The Road to Abortion" as a two-part series in Human Life Review, Fall 1998 & Winter 1999. Revised and expanded in 2002; some minor changes made in 2007. Copyright © 1998-2007 by Mary Meehan.

How Eugenics and Population Control Led to Abortion

Mary Meehan

Introduction

The typical account of the battle for legal abortion in the United States goes something like this: Brave civil libertarians and women's rights advocates, encouraged by liberating currents of the 1960s, dared to raise the abortion issue in public and to prompt serious debate about it. Some of them pressed for amendment or repeal of state anti-abortion laws, while others challenged abortion restrictions in the courts. The U.S. Supreme Court gave them a huge victory with its 1973 Roe v. Wade decision. Yet that decision resulted in a backlash which has kept the issue in politics, and the country badly divided over it. So the brave civil libertarians and feminists soldier on in their lonely battle.

This version, while including a few truths, leaves out so many others that it is deeply misleading. A wealth of inside information, now available in private and government archives, suggests that the eugenics movement (devoted to breeding a "better" human race) led to population control, which in turn had enormous influence on the legalization of abortion.

Civil libertarians and feminists were certainly in the picture, but in many cases they were handy instruments of the eugenicists and population controllers. Moreover, far from fighting a lonely battle, abortion supporters receive enormous aid from the American establishment or "power elite."

It is important to note the difference between birth control and population control. Birth control, although often used as another label for "contraception," actually includes any method to limit births for any reason. It can be used by individuals or couples, with no involvement by government or private agencies.

Population control, however, involves a public or private program to reduce births within a specific area or group (for example, within China or among African Americans) and/or to increase births elsewhere (for example, within France or among the highly-educated). In other words, those running the program have a specific demographic outcome in mind. While equal-opportunity population programs are theoretically possible, in practice one race or nationality uses population control against another.

Population control may involve any or all of the following: propaganda in favor of smaller families; pressure for legal change such as raising the legal age for marriage or repealing restrictions on

contraception and abortion; widespread availability of contraception, sterilization and abortion (often including public subsidy of them); the use of specific target numbers for birth control "acceptors" and for reduction of birth rates; economic penalties for having more than one or two children; and physical coercion to use birth control.

In democratic theory, governments are made for people. Population control stands this principle on its head, so that people are made for the government and are treated mainly as components of the economy. Government tolerates them as long as they are productive; it even "makes investments" in them to improve their productivity. Viewing them as farmers view their cattle or sheep, it watches their breeding carefully and manipulates it in various ways.

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Major Players in Population Control

Occasional internal disputes among U.S. population controllers have obscured broad areas of agreement. Key figures such as Garrett Hardin and Alan Guttmacher, for example, disagreed over whether it was best to use a radical or a gradualist approach to advance the cause of abortion within the United States.

In 1963 Prof. Hardin, an environmentalist who was also an ardent population controller and a member of the American Eugenics Society, made a radical argument for repealing anti-abortion laws. In an approach that would be copied by many others, he put his population and eugenics concerns in the background and based his argument mainly on the welfare and rights of women. To religious objections based on the commandment "Thou shalt not kill," Hardin responded that the Bible "does not forbid killing, only murder." And murder, he said, means "unlawful killing.... Murder is a matter of definition. We can define murder any way we want to." Later he said that "it would be unwise to define the fetus as human (hence tactically unwise to refer to the fetus as an 'unborn child')." (1) Hardin had learned well the Humpty Dumpty technique:

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean--neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master--that's all." (2)

Dr. Alan Guttmacher, President of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, wrote Hardin that anti-abortion laws could be changed "inch by inch and foot by foot, but not a mile at a time." Later Guttmacher told another correspondent that "I am in favor of abortion on demand, but feel from the practical point of view that such a social revolution should evolve by stages." Publicly he presented access to abortion as a benefit for women; indeed, he had referred women to an illegal abortionist as early as 1941. Yet he also had other motives, ones indicated by his service as vice president and board member of the American Eugenics Society. (3)

He had a fair amount of medical prestige, which he used to advance the abortion cause. But prestige alone was not enough. Substantial amounts of money were needed to promote the kind of change he and like-minded people wanted.

John D. Rockefeller 3rd, his family, and their foundations provided much of the money. JDR 3rd's grandfather and father (that is, oil baron John D. Rockefeller and his son, John D., Jr.) were members of the American Eugenics Society, and JDR 3rd helped keep the eugenics group afloat financially during the Depression.

While he focused especially on population growth overseas, JDR 3rd was happy to squelch it within the United States as well. In 1967 he told his sister that "the matter of abortion is the principal remaining area in the population field which has not been given the attention it should." He suggested

that she join him in giving money to the Association for the Study of Abortion. This sophisticated propaganda group, which pressed for legalization, included major eugenicists such as Guttmacher, ethicist Joseph Fletcher, and statistician Christopher Tietze. JDR 3rd and other Rockefeller sources contributed substantial amounts to the Association. They also gave money to support the winning side in Roe v. Wade.(4)

Another figure in the abortion wars was Frederick Osborn, an immensely talented establishment figure who at various times was a businessman, scholar, army general, diplomat, and foundation executive. Osborn was also the strategist of the American Eugenics Society and the first administrator of a Rockefeller enterprise called the Population Council. Well before surgical abortion became a major issue, Osborn promoted Council research on chemical abortion and Council distribution of abortifacient intrauterine devices (IUDs). In 1974 he suggested that birth control and abortion were a great step forward for eugenics, but added: "If they had been advanced for eugenic reasons it would have retarded or stopped their acceptance."(5)

Frederick Osborn, 1889-1981

(Photo courtesy of: American Philosophical Society.
Permission to publish required.)

What Francis Galton Started

Who are the eugenicists, and why are they so obsessively interested in other people's fertility? When and why did they become involved in abortion?

English scientist Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, invented the term "eugenics" in 1883. Taken from the Greek words for "well born," the term is used to describe the movement to "improve" the human race by encouraging the healthy and well-off to have many children and persuading, pressuring or coercing others to have few or none at all. The eugenics movement took root in many Western nations and also in China and Japan, with results that are very much with us today.

Galton, writing in the heyday of the British Empire, shared the profound bias against non-whites typical of his country and time. In one book, for example, he suggested that the "yellow races of China" might eventually push "the coarse and lazy Negro from at least the metaliferous regions of tropical Africa."(6) Racial bias deeply infected Western eugenics from the start; and in the United States, it reinforced bad attitudes of the slavery and segregation eras. Eugenics encouraged superiority attitudes of the upper class and all too many members of the middle class. They flocked to an ideology that seemed to give a scientific seal of approval to bigotry against the poor, non-whites, the immigrants pouring through the Golden Door, and people with physical and mental disabilities.

Several upper-class people devoted portions of their huge fortunes to promote eugenics. Mary Harriman, widow of railroad baron E. H. Harriman, gave large sums to support the Eugenics Record Office. The Rockefellers and George Eastman (of Eastman Kodak) also backed the cause. They supported not only the efforts of academic eugenicists, but also practical efforts to limit births among

the poor.

Some eugenics supporters, viewing their own heredity as splendid, had the large families that eugenics doctrine said they should have. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., had six children, as did Frederick Osborn. Some later supporters of population control have continued the tradition: Former President George Bush, television entrepreneur Ted Turner, and financier George Soros each has five children.

U.S. eugenics in the 1920s and 1930s sometimes looked like a strange assortment of academics, socialites, crackpots and racists who were going off in all directions at once--a circus in need of a ringmaster. Harry Laughlin and Rep. Albert Johnson were fighting to reduce immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. Margaret Sanger and Clarence Gamble were spreading contraception everywhere they could, but especially among the poor. Paul Popenoe, E. S. Gosney and Harry Laughlin were persuading states to pass laws for compulsory sterilization of "feeble-minded" Americans. Many eugenicists were churning out propaganda, and some were even running "Fitter Families" contests at state fairs.(7)

Late in life, Frederick Osborn would look back upon this era as one that was almost useless in advancing eugenics.(8) Yet there is much to suggest that he was too harsh in his judgment. Eugenics groups recruited many people who remained interested and active in eugenics throughout their careers, often passing on the ideology to children who also became active. Eugenics was firmly established in many prestige institutions, especially Ivy League universities and elite women's colleges. Its influence on the American establishment, through the education of its professionals and politicians and foundation executives, was profound.

Laughlin and his friends, moreover, had great influence on immigration and sterilization policies. Others turned the new birth-control movement in the direction of population control for eugenic purposes.

Charming and Ruthless

Margaret Sanger--the charming, articulate and ruthless champion of birth control--was a eugenicist through most of her long career. She was a member of the American Eugenics Society and also a fellow of England's eugenics group. Her marriage to the wealthy Noah Slee and her enjoyment of the upper-class lifestyle toned down the radicalism of her youth--so much so that she suggested birth control as a solution for unemployment and labor militance during the Depression. After a 1931 demonstration by unemployed marchers in Washington, D.C., she wrote to industrialist George Eastman: "The army of the unemployed--massed before the Capitol yesterday morning--reminded one very forcibly that birth control in practice is the only thing that is going to help solve this economic and current problem."

In one of her early books, Sanger said that eugenicists were showing "that the feeble-minded, the syphilitic, the irresponsible and the defective breed unhindered" and that "society at large is breeding an ever-increasing army of under-sized, stunted and dehumanized slaves." In 1932 she called for a

Population Congress that would "give certain dysgenic groups in our population their choice of segregation or sterilization." She had in mind "morons, mental defectives, epileptics," suggesting that "five million mental and moral degenerates" would be segregated. She also estimated that a second group of "illiterates, paupers, unemployables, criminals, prostitutes, dope-fiends" could be segregated "on farms and open spaces as long as necessary for the strengthening and development of moral conduct." She mentioned numbers casually and in a confusing way, but apparently was speaking of between fifteen and twenty million Americans to be segregated or sterilized.(9)

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, writing for a 1927 Supreme Court majority that upheld a Virginia sterilization law, shared Sanger's cold view of the mentally-retarded when he said: "Three generations of imbeciles are enough." The compulsory sterilization laws, aimed at people in public institutions, victimized many poor whites in the South and elsewhere--and not just the retarded, either. Some officials lied to their victims. A woman who was sterilized as a teenager in 1928, but told she was having her appendix removed, was shocked to learn about the sterilization fifty-one years later. "I wanted babies bad," she said. "Me and him [her husband] tried and tried to have 'em. I just don't know why they done it to me. I tried to live a good life." Her husband, a retired plumber, said that they were "always crazy about kids."

One writer suggests that black people were increasingly targeted for sterilization by the early 1940s, as state institutions in the South were opened to black residents. Targeting poor women--black and white, Native American and Hispanic--continued long after that period. Sometimes it involved mainly the enticement of public subsidy (still offered today), and sometimes pressure or outright coercion.(10)

Abortion was not much discussed in the 1920s, even among eugenicists; for it was a criminal act, widely condemned in the medical profession and the major churches. But there were rumblings of interest in the next decade. In 1933, for example, the Eugenics Publishing Company published a book advocating substantial loosening of anti-abortion laws. At a 1935 high-level meeting of eugenicists and population controllers, Dr. Eric Matsner suggested making abortion law more permissive, but the meeting notes did not mention any discussion of his proposal. Other participants were primarily interested in encouraging births among "good stock" or in spreading contraception. When Mrs. Robert Huse of the National Committee on Maternal Health "suggested getting rid first of the undesirables before trying to stimulate the birth rates of the top strata of society,"(11) she probably had contraception in mind.

Her committee sponsored a conference on abortion problems in 1942, one that indicated ambivalence on the topic but included suggestions for fighting illegal abortion.(12) This was a serious problem in large cities at the time. Had there been more interest in positive solutions among the conference participants, they might have set up a network of crisis pregnancy centers to aid women in need. That, however, would have resulted in the births of many children eugenicists would have viewed as inferior.

Hobnobbing with the Nazis

German eugenicists, including Adolf Hitler, were interested in the American experience with immigration and sterilization. In *Mein Kampf*, published soon after Harry Laughlin and others had persuaded the U.S. Congress to pass immigration restrictions, Hitler suggested that American immigration policy was superior to German policy, although he called American restrictions "weak beginnings" and "slow beginnings." According to Leon Whitney, who had served as executive secretary of the American Eugenics Society and had become a sterilization enthusiast, a Hitler aide "wrote me for a copy of my book, *The Case for Sterilization*, which I sent and which Hitler personally

acknowledged." Whitney showed Hitler's letter to Madison Grant, who chaired the eugenics group's immigration committee. Grant's response? "He smiled, reached to a folder on his desk and gave me a letter from Hitler to read. It was in German. It thanked our chairman [Grant] for writing *The Passing of the Great Race* and said that the book was his Bible." Clarence Campbell, president of another American group called the Eugenics Research Association, attended a 1935 population congress in Berlin, where he offered a banquet toast to "that great leader, Adolf Hitler!"(13)

Frederick Osborn, who was in the process of taking over the American Eugenics Society, realized that hobnobbing with the Nazis had a down side in public relations. In 1938 he remarked that American public opinion was "opposed to the apparently excellent sterilization program in Germany because of its Nazi origin" and warned fellow eugenicists: "We must keep ourselves as Caesar's wife, beyond reproach. And that means the things we do, the people we keep company with, the things we say, and the things other people say about us."(14)

Gunnar Myrdal's Mishmash

Osborn certainly changed eugenics rhetoric for the better, but he did not really reject class and racial bias. He probably contributed some thoughts to a remarkable chapter on population in Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, the classic 1944 study of race relations in the United States. Osborn was a trustee of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which funded the massive Myrdal study. Myrdal included Osborn in his acknowledgments and cited Osborn and many other American eugenicists in his footnotes to the population chapter. Myrdal and his wife Alva, although mainly known in the U.S. as Swedish socialists, were also eugenics sympathizers.

As a whole, the Myrdal study was a strong indictment of white cruelties against the black community in America. But his population chapter might be described as intellectually chaotic, deeply cynical, or both. Earlier he had noted "the confusion, the ambiguity and inconsistency" that lurk "in the basement of man's soul." Perhaps that notion should be applied first to himself.

Myrdal wrote that "the overwhelming majority of white Americans desire that there be as few Negroes as possible in America." He claimed, though, that the desire for "a decrease of the Negro population is not necessarily hostile to the Negro people." He said that it "is shared even by enlightened white Americans who do not hold the common belief that Negroes are inferior as a race. Usually it is pointed out that Negroes fare better and meet less prejudice when they are few in number."

Myrdal remarked that "all white Americans agree that, if the Negro is to be eliminated, he must be eliminated slowly so as not to hurt any living individual Negroes. Therefore, the dominant American valuation is that the Negro should be eliminated from the American scene, but slowly."

Myrdal genuinely wanted to improve the living standards of the black community, but believed that until reforms could be made, "and as long as the burden of caste is laid upon American Negroes, even an extreme birth control program is warranted by reasons of individual and social welfare." He said that

many Negroes "are so destitute that from a general social point of view it would be highly desirable that they did not procreate." Many, he said "are so ignorant and so poor that they are not desirable parents and cannot offer their children a reasonably good home." He suggested that expanding birth control and lowering the black birth rate could relieve "the poverty of the Negro masses" and improve black women's health.(15)

This mishmash of eugenic and humanitarian motivations became standard fare among population controllers in the decades after Myrdal wrote. By no means were all population controllers liberals. But some who were apparently made a bargain with their own consciences: they supported civil-rights laws and programs to fight poverty in the black community, while also supporting birth-control programs to contain or reduce the black population. Many of them probably believed the humanitarian rationale yet also had, deep down, a fear of growing numbers among non-whites.(16)

Myrdal also stressed the problem of sexually-transmitted disease in the black community, suggesting contraception to prevent its transmission to children and adding: "A case could also be made for extending the scope of the circumstances under which physicians may legally perform therapeutic abortions." His native Sweden had already done this.(17)

Targeting the Black Community

Myrdal was familiar with Margaret Sanger's "Negro Project," although he did not use that term in describing it. Sanger was trying to spread birth control to Southern Negroes in pilot projects that featured black doctors and nurses as well as endorsements by black ministers and other leaders. According to her defenders, Sanger was genuinely concerned about the health and welfare of black women and felt that too-frequent childbearing harmed them. Dorothy Roberts, an African American law professor who has studied the Negro Project, says that black women wanted birth control and that many were already using it at the time. Black leaders, she notes, thought it was needed for the advancement of their community. Yet Roberts also remarks that W. E. B. Du Bois "and other prominent Blacks were not immune from the elitist thinking of their time" and "sometimes advocated birth control for poorer segments of their own race in terms painfully similar to eugenic rhetoric."(18)

Possibly some black leaders had a bias against poor members of their own community that started in the house servant/field servant division of the slavery era. But Sanger, who was white, had both class bias and racial prejudice of the paternalistic variety. By dealing with doctors of their own race, she suggested, Negroes could more easily "lay their cards on the table, which means their ignorance, superstitions and doubts." She told another white eugenicist, Dr. Clarence Gamble: "We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population," adding that "the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members."

Earlier, Dr. Gamble had suggested buying black support for the project. He told a Sanger colleague that "relatively minor contributions to local churches might be made which would result in continuous backing of the project by the local ministers." He added: "If colored newspapers are found to be

influential it might be found effective to exchange cash for editorial and news support."(19) It would be hard to overstate the cynicism and opportunism of these suggestions, for Gamble was speaking of communities that were desperately poor.

Sanger's friend and birth-control colleague, Mary Lasker, won large contributions from her wealthy husband for the Negro Project and other Sanger ventures. Lasker was a talented strategist in her own right. She and Sanger lobbied relentlessly to get federal and state governments involved in birth control for both blacks and whites. With help from their mutual friend in the White House, Eleanor Roosevelt, they had some success. The initial federal efforts were relatively small, and quietly arranged,(20) but they provided a precedent when Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon decided to expand federal involvement in a dramatic way.

Frank Notestein Had a Plan

In the early 1940s, while Sanger worked on her many projects, U.S. troops were fighting in World War II and U.S. policymakers were making plans for the postwar era. Much of the planning was done through a secret project called "Studies of American Interests in the War and the Peace," which was financed by the Rockefeller Foundation and conducted by the private Council on Foreign Relations for the U.S. State Department. Major concerns included postwar access to the rich natural resources of colonial areas and the possibility of finding markets everywhere for American products.

Frank Notestein--a eugenicist, an economist/demographer, and a friend and colleague of Frederick Osborn--wrote a paper on population for the project. Rapid population growth in colonial areas, he suggested, would result in great hardships for some of them, including hunger, disease and war. Such areas, he said, "will be increasingly expensive and troublesome to administer, and unsatisfactory to do business with." He proposed a program of modernization for the colonies, including the development of industries that would "draw a surplus and ineffective agricultural population into effective production," the use of popular education "to create new wants for physical and material well-being" and "propaganda in favor of controlled fertility as an integral part of a public health program."(21) Notestein's proposals for manipulating entire societies had profound effects on other population experts and eventually on government policy.

Jacob Viner, a noted economist, also wrote a paper for the war/peace studies in which he remarked that "higher-standard-of-living populations" made better trading partners for the West than did "low-standard populations even if greater in size." Lower birth rates in the "backward areas," Viner suggested, were "very much to the interest of the United States."(22) These points were important to the businessmen who participated in the Council on Foreign Relations and had great influence on U.S. foreign policy.

As American private and public agencies developed programs of population control over the next several decades, they stressed humanitarian objectives such as fighting poverty and famine and improving the status of women. Some of the population controllers, such as Notestein, actually believed the humanitarian rationale, at least in an abstract or paternalistic way. They did not, however, sit down with poor people as equals to discuss the matter; instead, they decided what poor people should have and then manipulated the poor to accept it.

For many population controllers, the humanitarian rationale was a cover for other motivations: (1) the

eugenicists' desire to breed a "better" human race by suppressing the birth rate of poor people and non-whites; (2) the goal of retaining access to the natural resources of the old colonial areas and of developing markets there; and (3) as the Cold War intensified, a decision by U.S. leaders to use population control as a way of keeping the lid on poor nations so they would not fall victim to Communist take-overs. These three motivations reinforced one another; all of them were oriented toward keeping the industrialized West, and especially the United States, dominant in the world.

After the Second World War, eugenicists started two private organizations to promote population control in ex-colonial nations, where populations were increasing rapidly because of improved disease control. Margaret Sanger, C. P. Blacker of England's Eugenics Society, and others formed the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). John D. Rockefeller 3rd and Frederick Osborn launched the Population Council, a foundation that first convinced government leaders in poor nations that they had a serious population problem and then showed them how to solve it through population control.

Osborn, who was the key administrator of the Population Council in its early years, wanted it to keep a low profile in order to avoid charges of U.S. imperialism. At the Council's 1952 founding conference, he had asked, "Supposing a perfect contraceptive should be developed. Should it be announced by the University of Chicago, or Bellevue Hospital...or should it get its final development in Japan or India, so it would appear to spring from there?" Using grants and fellowships, he started building in the poor nations a network of population experts with career interests in population control. "We were trying to help foreign countries with large grants," he said years later, "and it was far better to do it quietly, without the public in the foreign countries knowing that this was an American effort."(23)

Slipping Abortifacients into the Mix

Osborn, Rockefeller, and their colleagues were eager to develop birth-control drugs and devices that could be distributed on a massive basis both at home and abroad. They were interested in chemical abortifacients; for example, they funded research by Dr. J. B. Thiersch on "anti-metabolites" to induce early abortion. Documents on this project show a remarkable lack of concern about its ethical problems--not only abortion itself, but also the occasional disguise of the project as one involving only "the rat litter and fetus in utero" and the use of "institutionalized patients" for toxicity studies. Osborn was concerned about legal problems, though, at a time when abortion was illegal in all states with limited exceptions. Noting that an early Thiersch grant application did not "say explicitly that the people he is going to experiment on will be exclusively women certified for therapeutic abortion," Osborn asked, "Shouldn't we be so protected in making the grant?"(24)

The Century Club, New York City, where Frederick Osborn dined with colleagues and discussed eugenics strategy

The Population Council also put great effort into developing and distributing intrauterine devices, or IUDs. (An IUD can either prevent conception--that is, fertilization--or prevent implantation of the

embryo in the womb, thus causing an early abortion.) In 1966 Osborn told a correspondent that the Council was spending major sums on IUDs, adding: "We have felt this could be done far more effectively in the name of the Population Council than in the name of eugenics...Personally, I think it the most important practical eugenic measure ever taken."(25)

Possible medical complications of IUDs include cramps, heavy bleeding, anemia, uterine perforation, pelvic infection, infertility, ectopic pregnancy, and even septic abortion and death. Feminist writer Betsy Hartmann emphasizes that IUDs can "cause or exacerbate reproductive tract infections, which are rampant in many parts of the Third World." She notes that the infertility sometimes caused by IUDs can lead to "social ostracism, abandonment, and ultimately destitution" for women there.(26)

Long ago, population controllers worked out a way to deflect criticism of abortifacient drugs and devices. At a 1959 conference, one expert suggested "a prudent habit of speech," hinting that it would be wise to consider implantation--rather than fertilization--the beginning of pregnancy. In 1962, in its "model penal code" project, the American Law Institute recommended legalizing the use of "drugs or other substances for avoiding pregnancy, whether by preventing implantation of a fertilized ovum or by any other method that operates before, at or immediately after fertilization."

In a 1964 Population Council conference, eugenicist Dr. Christopher Tietze pointedly reminded his colleagues that theologians and jurists do listen to doctors and biologists. "If a medical consensus develops and is maintained that pregnancy, and therefore life, begins at implantation, eventually our brethren from the other faculties will listen," he said. A committee of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists soon obliged Tietze by defining conception as "the implantation of a fertilized ovum."(27)

With that kind of support, the population controllers were off to the races, developing more and more abortifacients, which they usually referred to as "contraceptives" or simply "birth control." The IUDs and the later Norplant devices have proved useful in coercive population control, since it can be difficult and dangerous for non-physicians to remove them.(28)

Lethal Discrimination

While they encouraged research on abortifacients, eugenicists also turned their attention to surgical abortion as a tool that could be combined with prenatal testing to eliminate the handicapped unborn.

The Nazi era had given compulsory sterilization a bad name, but eugenicists had never lost their interest in preventing births of the handicapped. Frederick Osborn and others in the American Eugenics Society had long promoted "heredity counseling," which they once described as "the opening wedge in the public acceptance of eugenic principles." Scientists were developing prenatal testing for fetal handicap in the 1950s,(29) but that would not have meant much had abortion continued to be illegal. A Rockefeller Foundation-supported project came to the rescue. The foundation was funding the American Law Institute's production of a "model penal code" (noted above) for states to use as a guide when amending their criminal laws.

Dr. Alan Guttmacher's twin brother Manfred, a psychiatrist, was a special consultant to the model code project, and Alan himself took part in one or two meetings about it when he was vice president of the American Eugenics Society. (Later he would lead the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.) Another special consultant was a British legal scholar and eugenicist, Glanville Williams. The model code, as adopted by the American Law Institute in 1962, allowed abortions for "substantial risk" of

serious handicap in the unborn child, as well as in other hard cases. In the final debate, attorney Eugene Quay declared, eloquently but to no avail, that "the state cannot give the authority to perform an abortion because it does not have the authority itself. Those lives are human lives, and are not the property of the state."(30)

Some states changed their abortion laws along the lines suggested by the model penal code. The new laws did not make as much difference as their supporters had hoped--and their opponents had feared--probably because many "respectable" doctors were already doing abortions for hard cases. While abortion supporters were disappointed and soon pressed for abortion-on-demand, the exceptions approach actually had helped their cause in several ways. It had prompted public debate on a "taboo" subject, had softened up the public to the idea of abortion as a "humanitarian" action, and probably had led many of the public to believe that the debate was about hard cases only.

Meanwhile, population experts were increasingly viewing abortion as another tool to control population numbers. They knew that legalized abortion had sharply reduced population growth in Japan after the Second World War. They were particularly interested in the abortion suction machines used in China, and they worked to spread knowledge of this method. C. Lalor Burdick, a foundation executive and eugenicist, pressed the suction-machine method with great energy because it could be done on an outpatient basis and was cheaper than other methods. His Lalor Foundation helped finance a training film on suction abortion that was produced by British doctor Dorothea Kerslake and shown widely to doctors in the U.S. and elsewhere.

In 1970 Burdick told a correspondent that some day it might be accepted "that bum pregnancies of whatever character should ipso facto be terminated. And so would come the next step, namely, that the lowest grade people (as determined by performance factors) are not to have children either." He asked, "Isn't an intelligent black or mulatto a lot better than the dippings from the bottom of the white barrel?" Earlier, though, he had told population-controller Hugh Moore, "All channels with which I come in contact speak of the fecklessness of the Indians and of the hopeless inabilities of the Africans." Burdick had also complained that Americans "seem to be deifying our scruffy and unfit by putting them in temples (welfare housing)" and "re-creating some ancient fertility cult where we provide breeding pads and free sustenance for the proliferation of a kind of people that hate us and would destroy us, if they could." This lover of humanity also remarked: "The 'maternal impulse' is partly bunk. De-bunking of this might get some females off their fat duffs and into useful endeavor."(31)

Burdick was not unique. Retired army general William H. Draper, Jr., a leading figure in Planned Parenthood and the Population Crisis Committee, suggested population control as a solution to urban riots. Referring to 1967 riots in Detroit and elsewhere, he told a business executive that "it is pretty obvious that a great many unwanted children have added fuel to the fire." He said that "to cure the present ghetto problems and deal with the population question among the poorer parts of our own population...will require valiant and much greater efforts than any exerted in the past." If the executive decided to support Planned Parenthood, Draper added, "you could do no better."

In 1966 Dr. Alan Guttmacher, apparently trying to be witty, wrote from Africa to a U.S. colleague: "My trip has been great. I believe I converted the Jews in Israel and now I am working on the pigmented savages." This private comment from Guttmacher (who was Jewish, but not observant) came soon after his Planned Parenthood group gave an award to the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.(32)

Cold-War Motives

Wrapped in Humanitarian Language

Population controllers started winning major and publicly-trumpeted government funding of contraception in the 1960s. Hugh Moore, a Pennsylvania businessman, had done much of the groundwork with a series of "Population Bomb" booklets mailed to prominent Americans in the previous decade. "We are not primarily interested in the sociological or humanitarian aspects of birth control," Moore and two colleagues said in a 1954 cover letter for the booklet. "We are interested in the use which the Communists make of hungry people in their drive to conquer the earth." A top New York Times executive who received the mailing passed it on to his Princeton classmate, Allen Dulles, who happened to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Timesman suggested that population control "is a project which officials of our government may not want in any way to promote, but to me it seems to have merit if followed up by some private sources." The archives file containing this letter does not have a reply from Dulles.(33)

Several months earlier, though, Dulles had been informed that CIA economic analyst Edgar M. Hoover was "leaving to go with the Office of Population Studies which is an operation of Princeton University." But Hoover would be "located in Washington," Dulles was told, and would be "an intermittent consultant to the Agency" (the CIA). Hoover and demographer Ansley Coale then produced a major study for the Princeton office (actually called the Office of Population Research, Frank Notestein's fiefdom). Their study was partly financed by the Population Council (the Osborn-Rockefeller empire) and the World Bank. They reached this conclusion about low-income nations: "...to postpone the reduction of fertility is to forego the opportunity for a more rapid rise in immediate wellbeing, and to shrink the potential growth in incomes per capita for the indefinite future." The Coale-Hoover study, widely distributed by the Population Council, had enormous impact. As one expert later remarked, it "held the field for most of 20 years. It was explained in every population textbook and was the rationale for large population programs by the United States and other countries." Although later challenged effectively by economist Julian Simon and others, the Coale-Hoover theory won the public-policy debate early and firmly--as one suspects it was designed to do.(34)

Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University,
Princeton, N.J., where researchers can find papers of
early CIA director Allen Dulles and population
controllers Hugh Moore and Frank Notestein

President Dwight Eisenhower, whom Allen Dulles served as CIA Director, was interested in population and asked a foreign-aid study panel to look into it. The panel, headed by retired General Draper and prodded by Hugh Moore, recommended that the U.S. assist other nations with population programs. After U.S. Catholic bishops blasted that notion, though, Eisenhower quickly retreated. "I cannot

imagine anything more emphatically a subject that is not a proper political or governmental activity or function or responsibility.... We do not intend to interfere with the internal affairs of any other government....," the President said in 1959.(35)

Before John F. Kennedy's 1960 election to the presidency, a Senate colleague had asked Kennedy how he, as a Catholic, viewed the issue of making "family planning information" available at home and abroad. Kennedy responded, "It's bound to come; it's just a question of time. The Church will come around. I intend to be as brave as I dare." As President, Kennedy cautiously gave encouragement to those who wanted to involve both the U.S. government and the United Nations in population control. He did not, however, share with the public his views on abortion. According to journalist Benjamin Bradlee, a friend of Kennedy's, in 1963 JFK privately "said he was all for people solving their problems by abortion (and specifically told me I could not use that for publication in Newsweek)..."(36)

Lyndon Johnson and his immediate successor, Richard Nixon, were the first U.S. presidents who publicly advocated population control abroad and made it a major part of U.S. policy. They also intensified population-control efforts in the United States, partly to demonstrate to leaders of poor countries that the U.S. was willing to restrain its own population growth. But the domestic efforts, like those abroad, primarily targeted poor people and non-whites.

Population control was so carefully wrapped in humanitarian language that most Americans probably thought it simply involved opening birth-control clinics and serving everyone who showed up at the door. But internal government documents from the Johnson administration show: 1) a carefully-orchestrated campaign to pressure governments of poor nations to adopt population control, and 2) enormous interest in manipulating cultural attitudes and motivating women to use birth control.

This required a careful approach, since it involved much meddling in the internal affairs of other nations. Thus in 1968 the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) asked U.S. missions abroad "to discreetly investigate" the possibility of having "indigenous social scientists" do research on motivation for fertility reduction. A.I.D. also arranged for the Pathfinder Fund (established years earlier by eugenicist Clarence Gamble) to help "in the establishment of national voluntary associations which would later become members of the International Planned Parenthood Federation." But this, too, had to be done discreetly, and A.I.D. gave its troops information to "deflect any charges" that the Planned Parenthood group was "a creature of A.I.D. and the U.S. Government."(37)

Our Access to Their Resources

Soon after his 1969 inauguration, President Nixon asked White House urban affairs aide Daniel Patrick Moynihan to "develop a specific program" in population and family planning. Moynihan was a brilliant choice for the job--a Catholic, a Democrat, a Harvard professor, and a charming fellow who could handle difficult personalities.

The State Department's top population officer, Philander P. Claxton, Jr., already had such a strong program in place that Moynihan did not have to add much in the international area. Claxton, in fact, helped draft Nixon's 1969 population message to Congress, which stressed rapid population growth in the Third World and suggested that it aggravated problems of malnutrition, poor housing and unemployment.(38)

Of course, there were--and are today--areas of great poverty abroad; but population controllers often ignore the productive and energizing force of a young and growing population. As one Pakistani

legislator remarked, a newborn child "comes with one mouth and two hands to earn his livelihood and is gifted with a fertile mind." Population controllers, during the Nixon administration and since, think only of the mouth to be fed; they forget the two hands to raise the food and the mind to devise better ways to raise it. Population controllers also tend to believe that they bear major responsibility for everyone else's lives. They rarely, if ever, ask themselves, "Who appointed me to be General Manager of the Universe?"

In its robust pioneer era, America had very rapid population growth; and many of its pioneer families (the parents of Abraham Lincoln, for example) were just as poor as many Third World families are today. Thomas Malthus himself, in an 1830 essay, said that population increase in the United States apparently "has been more rapid than in any known country..." With its huge territory and its current population of 77 persons per square mile, the United States is relatively sparsely-populated; yet many countries--including most in South America and many in Africa--have even fewer persons per square mile. Gabon has only 12; Bolivia has 21; Algeria has 34; Brazil has 53; Peru has 54. It is true that China has 347; but the United Kingdom (with 637 persons per square mile) and the Netherlands (with 1,023) are far more densely populated than China. All of this should give pause to Westerners who casually talk about "overpopulation" in low-income nations.(39)

Some nations do, indeed, have too few (developed) resources to meet all the needs of their people. But some archival records suggest that U.S. leaders have been mainly concerned about our access to their resources. One document in the Nixon White House files, for example, included the usual boilerplate language about humanitarian concerns, but also noted that the U.S. "is in danger of losing markets, investments and sources of raw materials" as less-developed nations "seek ways to increase their resources."

Population control took giant leaps forward
under President Richard Nixon

A high-level population study, commissioned by President Nixon and Secretary of State/National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, said that the United States, "with 6 percent of the world's population, consumes about a third of its resources" and that "the U.S. economy will require large and increasing amounts of minerals from abroad, especially from less developed countries." Population pressures in such countries, it suggested, could lead to expropriation, labor troubles, sabotage or civil unrest, so that "the smooth flow of needed materials will be jeopardized."

Nixon's Special Representative for Trade Negotiations suggested that restraining population growth in poor nations could help U.S. trade there. He remarked that "a people living on a bare subsistence level cannot be a prosperous market for the wide range of goods available in the modern world....Even a modest improvement in incomes in Latin America would no doubt be reflected in a greater demand for U.S. products not available at home, notably the products of our advanced industrial technology."(40)

"If You Can Send In a Colorful UN Force..."

Philander Claxton, with support from Moynihan, pressed ahead with his ambitious effort to harness

every possible agency of the U.S. government and the United Nations for the cause of population control. By fiscal year 1969, the Agency for International Development was already spending over \$45 million per year on population and giving direct aid to 31 countries. The Peace Corps was also involved; more than 200 of its volunteers had done population work in 1966-69. But criticism of such work in South America had signaled a need for discretion; "we have learned the need for caution in approaching this very explosive topic," the Peace Corps told President Nixon. Yet it soldiered on. In Tonga, a tiny island-nation in the Pacific that "has no acute population problem at this time" but reportedly could have one in two generations, Peace Corps volunteers taught contraception and organized village meetings on the subject. "They also introduced sex education into the schools," according to the Peace Corps report, "and it is now an accepted part of the Ministry of Education curriculum."(41)

The U.S. Information Agency was churning out propaganda to encourage "changes of attitude which will lead to effective family planning programs abroad"; but it added more emphasis on issues such as health, education and human rights. This broader approach, the agency said, "attempted to offset allegations that the U.S. was practicing a kind of 'demographic imperialism' in seeking only to impose population controls on less-developed countries."(42)

Using the United Nations to spread population control was another way to avoid resentment against the United States. In 1967, for example, the State Department had cabled the American embassy in Indonesia: "We feel it is important to involve UN agencies in support of family planning programs in Indonesia and elsewhere to avoid appearance of sole support by USG [U.S. Government]." But it suggested that the right calibration of funding sources was a tricky matter: "UNICEF role should be possible in manner which would dilute USG visibility without raising total visibility of foreign contribution to unacceptable degree."

The State Department and its allies understood the need to have non-Americans and people of color in up-front population jobs at the UN. In 1969 an American highly-placed in the international agency recommended Rafael Salas of the Philippines for the top UN population job. According to an American diplomat, the UN official thought Salas "has advantage of color, religion (Catholic), and conviction." Salas was chosen.

As Planned Parenthood's Alan Guttmacher told an interviewer, "If you're going to curb population, it's extremely important not to have it done by the damned Yankee, but by the UN. Because the thing is, then it's not considered genocide." He added: "If the United States goes to the black man or the yellow man and says slow down your reproductive rate, we're immediately suspected of having ulterior motives to keep the white man dominant in the world. If you can send in a colorful UN force, you've got much better leverage."(43)

A 1995 critique of population control
by the Information Project For Africa

At the White House, Moynihan tried to boost State Department efforts partly by finding more money for birth-control research at the National Institutes of Health. He told another White House aide that "if

the Indians and Pakistanis are going to have workable, inexpensive contraceptives ten years from now, it will only be if we pay for the research now." Moynihan also encouraged legal scholar Luke Lee, who was promoting the notion that "legal reforms in such areas as abortion, taxation, sex education, etc., could not fail to produce significant impact on population growth." That sounded like a great idea to Moynihan and Claxton, and Lee soon received A.I.D. money to develop a Law and Population Program at Tufts University. It was a major boost to "policy development," the process by which U.S. officials pressure Third-World governments to change their laws and administrative policies to discourage childbirth.(44)

Abortion Promotion by A.I.D.

While documents intended for public consumption rarely, if ever, mentioned abortion in connection with population control, Luke Lee was not alone in talking about it privately. In fact, Dr. Reimert Ravenholt, who headed the A.I.D. population program, was promoting abortion aggressively. He, like Lalor Burdick, was an enthusiastic proponent of abortion suction machines. In 1970 Ravenholt and an A.I.D. colleague outlined five tiers of birth-control technology. They included all of the usual methods--plus surgical abortion and a self-administered abortifacient. They reported that A.I.D. had earmarked over \$10 million to develop the latter, and they suggested that prostaglandin drugs could be the magic-bullet abortifacient. Ravenholt sent a batch of material on prostaglandins over to Moynihan at the White House, commenting that the prospect "for fairly rapid resolution of world excess fertility problems is now far better than it was one year ago."(45)

By 1973 A.I.D. contractors were training Third World doctors in abortion techniques. "We want to elevate the reproductive well-being of the human race," said an A.I.D. official. So aggressive was Ravenholt in his promotional activity that Senator Jesse Helms, the North Carolina Republican, tried to put A.I.D. out of the abortion business in 1973. The original Helms amendment would have forbidden any use of foreign-aid funds to pay for abortifacient drugs and devices, as well as surgical abortion. But a House-Senate conference committee watered down the amendment, so that it simply barred paying for abortions "as a method of family planning or to motivate or coerce any person to practice abortions."

Ravenholt and his colleagues viewed the Helms Amendment as a major nuisance, and population controllers have complained about it ever since. But A.I.D. continued to fund research on abortifacients and massive distribution of drugs and devices that were partly-abortifacient, and private groups promoted abortion suction machines. Some distributed abortion equipment even in nations where abortion was illegal.(46) Later they used the problem of illegal abortion in poor nations--a problem they had made far worse--as a reason to legalize abortion.

Meanwhile, Back in the States

Population controllers also worked to legalize abortion within the United States. Here they had much assistance from feminists and civil libertarians (although some within each group strongly opposed abortion) and from lawyers such as Roy Lucas and Sarah Weddington, who had been personally involved in abortion.(47) The lawyers and feminists focused on the up-front, public battles. The population controllers did some of that; but they excelled in quiet, behind-the-scenes efforts where they could count on friends in high places. They arranged government promotion and funding of abortion through a series of administrative decisions, rather than through the constitutional route of authorization by Congress. This was done so quietly and effectively that, when some members of Congress realized what was happening and decided to fight it, they found themselves in a very difficult,

uphill battle.

Nixon's domestic population-control programs, like Johnson's, targeted low-income women. In his 1969 population message to Congress, President Nixon suggested that five-million poor women had insufficient access to birth control and said that "no American woman should be denied access to family planning assistance because of her economic condition." Whatever Nixon's own motivation, the targeting of poor women continued the old eugenics tradition.

When Congress passed a major domestic "family planning" bill in 1970, it provided that money appropriated for it could not "be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning."(48) But the Medicaid law, providing medical aid to poor people, had been passed several years earlier, before abortion was even a national issue, and it did not have a similar provision. Apparently operating under the notion that whatever is not specifically forbidden is permitted, one or more officials responsible for Medicaid started paying for abortion on a state-option basis. (Abortion was still illegal in most states then.)

Because some key records are missing from the National Archives, it is extremely difficult to find just when this practice started and whether the President (Johnson and/or Nixon) knew about it. A 1970 paper by two interns at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) indicates that the government was funding some abortions then. "The primary fear of the family planning services," the interns wrote, "has been that Congress might cut their appropriations if it were to become known that taxpayer's money was being used to give abortions." They suggested that "for the next two or three years, the primary thrust of the Administration and of HEW officials must remain relatively covert."(49)

Was Congress snookered?

The abortion subsidy did remain "relatively covert," partly because HEW officials sometimes gave misleading answers when asked about abortion funding and partly because news media were, to be charitable, less than alert about the issue. But in April, 1971, HEW official John Veneman said that under the Medicaid law, "in those states where abortions are legal and approved as one of the services provided by the states, there are federal funds going in."

This was similar to a states' rights policy that President Nixon recently had ordered military hospitals to follow. "If the laws in a particular state restrict abortion," the President announced, "the rules at the military base hospitals are to correspond to that law." But on the other side of the coin, if the laws of a particular state were permissive toward abortion, then those laws were to be followed by military hospitals in the state. But because Nixon's order changed an earlier Defense Department policy that was more permissive toward abortion, abortion foes viewed his action as helpful. They apparently were distracted, too, by his rhetoric about abortion as "an unacceptable form of population control" and about "my personal belief in the sanctity of human life."(50)

President Nixon may have been inclined to oppose abortion in a general way, at least rhetorically, but he was unwilling to let that inclination overcome his states' rights position. Possibly he, or at least

many of his subordinates, wanted to have it both ways. He received political credit among abortion foes for speaking against abortion, at the same time that he (or they) advanced population control by allowing abortion funding.

Another Eugenics Fiefdom

While funding battles went on behind the scenes, abortion supporters were waging a vigorous fight to legalize abortion nationwide. A population commission, appointed by President Nixon and congressional leaders, did its best to advance that cause by calling for abortion "on request."

Nixon selected John D. Rockefeller 3rd to chair the 24-member commission. An ardent advocate of population control and a Depression-era donor to the American Eugenics Society, Rockefeller was using family money and prestige to depress birth rates through his Population Council. He and other Rockefellers also were helping to fund the Association for the Study of Abortion, which promoted the legalization of abortion. And they were helping to finance the federal court case, *Roe v. Wade*, which would soon strike down state laws against abortion.

JDR 3rd had lobbied for establishment of the population commission and had conferred with Moynihan on its membership and assignments. Moynihan described a conversation in which Rockefeller "assured me that, while until recently most persons concerned with population growth had directed their attention to the problem of 'unwanted children,' there is now wide agreement that in the United States, at all events, it is the wanted children who are going to cause the problem."

Another member of the population commission, sociologist Otis Dudley Duncan, was vice president of the American Eugenics Society. Other members included population-control hawks such as Sen. Robert Packwood (a Republican from Oregon) and Sen. Alan Cranston (a Democrat from California), and Population Council president Bernard Berelson. The commission's executive director, Charles Westoff, was a eugenicist; so were many professors who wrote papers for him. Anyone aware of these connections might have predicted that the commission would do what, in fact, it did: endorse legalized abortion and call for public funding of it; ask for more research on fertility control and more subsidy of contraception and sterilization; support sex education and "population education" in the schools; and recommend a national average of two children per couple.(51)

Reynolds Farley of the University of Michigan, in a paper for the commission, suggested how the black birthrate might be restrained. Noting the high abortion rate of Negro women in New York after a permissive law was passed there, Farley commented: "Liberalized abortion laws may speed a decline in Negro childbearing, although we cannot be certain that the experience of New York City will be duplicated elsewhere." He said that if then-current fertility and mortality rates continued, then the black community, which in 1970 made up 11 percent of the U.S. population, would grow to a 17-percent share by 2020--and that it could go as high as 29 percent if black fertility increased. But with low fertility for both races, the black share of the population would rise to only 12 percent of the population by 1980--and stay there through 2020.

Eugenicists have not been able to suppress the black birth rate quite as much as they wanted, but the black share of the U.S. population is still only about 13 percent and projected to be about 14 percent in 2020. The industrial-strength birth control aimed at the black community in recent decades has done much to suppress the birth rate--and the potential political power--of that community. Abortion kills nearly one-half million African American children each year.(52)

In the early 1970s, some eugenicists were so concerned about over-all numbers of people that they favored a decline in white fertility, too. Frederick Osborn, the key strategist of the American Eugenics Society, had long advocated that people of good heredity have large families, and he himself had six children. But in 1970 he was surprised to find that Otis Dudley Duncan, the eugenics society vice president who served on the Rockefeller commission, agreed with "the two-child slogan." Rockefeller, too, seemed to be on the other side of the issue from his old friend Osborn. And Chester Finn, Jr., an aide to Moynihan at the White House, referred to "the extraordinary fecundity of the American middle class--in light of its 'allotted' 2.1 children per couple." (The middle class was overwhelmingly white.) Finn also remarked that if "the government can subtly influence social mores such that families want to have fewer children, so much the better. But it isn't something we want to talk about."(53)

At first sight, this may suggest that population control was a revolution that turned on its own children. Yet it has always been a hobby of upper-class people. They are happy to use middle-class experts when needed, but do not necessarily have a high opinion of the middle class as a whole. Members of the middle class who support population control might ponder a remark attributed to Winston Churchill: "An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile--hoping it will eat him last."(54)

War Against Humanity

Population control marched on triumphantly during and beyond the Nixon Administration. After the Supreme Court legalized abortion nationwide in 1973, population controllers pressed hard, and often successfully, for public subsidy of abortions for poor women. Because they presented this as a humanitarian good, eugenicists were able to get credit for doing what they had always done: suppressing the birth rate of poor people and non-whites.

Although the Ronald Reagan and the George H. W. Bush administrations tried to hold the line against surgical abortion, they supported widespread contraception and sterilization and the distribution of birth-control methods that are partly-abortifacient--both at home and abroad. The William Clinton administration worked unceasingly for more population control abroad, helped introduce the French abortion pill called RU-486 to the United States, and defended even the horrific "partial-birth" or D & X abortions. The George W. Bush administration returned to the pattern of the Reagan and the senior Bush administrations.

Private groups continued to press population control, often as government contractors and often on their own as well. They received massive funding from the Rockefeller, Ford, Mellon, Packard, and many other foundations. Eventually they received major support from the new foundations of multi-billionaires such as Warren Buffett, Bill Gates (William H. Gates III), Ted Turner (R. E. Turner III), and George Soros.(55)

Home of the Rockefeller Foundation, New York City

Population controllers fought hard to defend and expand abortion to the point where it now takes the lives of an estimated 46 million unborn children around the world every year. In sheer numbers, that is like destroying the entire populations of Chile, Zimbabwe, Jordan and Cambodia in one year; killing everyone in Canada, Bolivia and Sierra Leone in the second year; and so on down through the years. (56)

Population programs often look like war against women and children, and sometimes men as well. Thus in 1978 the Population Crisis Committee speculated about possible future methods of fertility control such as:

Ethanol (ethyl alcohol) abortions, to be done by injecting ethanol through the cervix
Prostaglandin suppositories for early abortion
Chemical sterilization of women by "permanent scarring" with the quinacrine drug
Investigation of "the possible use of industrial chemicals such as the pesticide DMCP" as male contraceptives
Experiments with male sterilization using "a mixture of ethanol and formalin," that is, ethyl alcohol plus a solution of water and formaldehyde(57)

1997 manual published by the
Institute for Development Training, Chapel Hill, N.C.

If this calls to mind the Nazi sterilization experiments, the resemblance is not entirely coincidental. Those who try to breed "better" people -- whatever their definition of "better" -- eventually find themselves in a war against humanity.

The war's many casualties include Victoria Esperanza Vigo Espinoza, one of many women sterilized during an aggressive campaign in Peru. In 1996, when she had an obstetrical emergency and "a huge amount of pain," she signed--without reading--a release for what she thought was only a cesarean section for delivery of her third child. When she got up to see her baby the next day, "they told me that my child had died." Soon learning that she had been sterilized, she felt "very sad and very defeated, because I wanted to have this child and other children." She had to be treated for depression. In a campaign that involved targets and quotas, government workers deceived and pressured many other Peruvian women, some of whom were injured or killed by sterilization.(58)

Other casualties include Indonesian women who had IUDs inserted at gunpoint when they resisted other pressures. Also in Indonesia, some doctors were taught how to implant the Norplant birth-control device, but not how to remove it. There and in Bangladesh, when women sought removal of Norplant because of its side effects (which can include headaches, nausea and severe eye problems), they met great resistance from population controllers. An analyst in Bangladesh rightly protested the "coercion built into the contraceptive technology itself."(59)

There are many casualties in Africa, too. Reporting her 1999 interviews in Kenya and Tanzania, U.S. writer Elizabeth Liagin described deaths due to an IUD and to Depo Provera injections and also noted "coercion by non-removal" of Norplant and IUDs. A University of Nairobi teaching physician told her "in gory detail how doctors in Kenya routinely cut women's fallopian tubes during cesarean section operations--without even seeking permission to do so in advance," Liagin said. "When word got out that this was happening, women started explicitly telling doctors not to do it. So they didn't cut the tubes. Instead, they would take an instrument and crush them."(60)

India's aggressive sterilization campaign has been a house of horrors for women. A Washington Post reporter who observed the campaign in 1994 said that most of the women sterilized in India "are poor and illiterate, and most are lured to government clinics and camps with promises of houses, land or loans by government officials under intense pressure to meet sterilization quotas." She described the "recovery room" of one camp, "a dim ward where dozens of women lie side by side on the concrete floor, filling the room with the low moans and quivering wails of excruciating pain." In a "health clinic," she saw a doctor who "worked three tables in conveyor belt fashion" and noted that his "instruments were not sterilized between operations, and the sheets covering the tables were never changed." Women who were "found to be pregnant were offered an abortion before sterilization." This "'saves on drug consumption,' said one doctor attending the women. 'You only have to use one dose of anesthesia.'"

In the first camp, the reporter saw prizes for government workers who recruited women to be sterilized. A worker who brought in three women received only a wall clock, but one who recruited ten received a bicycle, and twenty-five recruits meant a television set.(61)

The Population Council sent teams to observe some Indian sterilization centers and camps in 1994-95. They, too, found unsanitary conditions and an assembly-line approach. In the state of Madhya Pradesh, they saw operating staff who did not change gloves between operations; needles (including suture needles) that were not changed or sterilized between operations; and women who had received inadequate anesthesia and who "were crying from the acute pain of the surgery."

In the state of Gujarat, a team observed operating rooms with peeling paint, poor ventilation and lighting--and one with "pigeon nests on the light fixture above the surgical table." There were wash basins outside of operating rooms, but "most had no water; even if they did, the surgical staff did not scrub after each operation." The observers thought that "clients who are next in line must be frightened by what they see and hear, especially if the woman being operated on cries in pain--which is common as the operation is done with local anesthesia." One woman waiting for surgery felt uncomfortable and asked for water; a nurse told her to "shut up and go to sleep."

How about "informed consent" to the surgery? Women "were simply told to sign a printed form or, in the case of the large number of illiterate women, put a thumb impression on it. Nobody explained to them what was written on the papers."(62)

In short, the Indian women were treated much like cattle in a round-up. Some cattle, though, may receive better care.

China has coercive IUD insertion, sterilization and abortion; tearing down of peasants' houses for having "unauthorized" children; and draconian fines for the same offense. Parents in rural areas often try to resist or evade official policy, but often fail. In 1991 a Chinese woman accompanied ten government workers on a village raid at two o'clock in the morning--and then described the experience

for a British newspaper. She said the workers' aim was to make all village women who were "expecting a second or later baby have abortions, and then be sterilized." At one house, the husband did not respond when asked to tell his wife to dress and go to the abortion center. So four women on the government team entered the house, struggled with his wife, and then carried her out "in a folded quilt." Two other team members held the husband back when he tried to rescue his wife and unborn child.

The government team could not find all of its targets in the village, so it warned families of the missing women that their houses would be destroyed if the women did not report for abortions. The observer commented: "This was no bluff. On the way back from the raid, I saw six collapsed houses. No family in the village is allowed to provide shelter for the people whose houses have been destroyed." In the public toilet at the county abortion center, she saw "a line of waste-bins: the aborted babies-- some as old as eight months--were put there, then dumped somewhere else."(63)

Gao Xiao Duan, a former Chinese population control official, said that many resisters in her part of Fujian Province "were crippled for life"; that many "were victims of mental disorders resulting from their abortions"; and that many families "were ruined or destroyed." When she enforced the Chinese policy, she said, "My conscience was always gnawing at my heart." After escaping China in 1998, with the help of the redoubtable Harry Wu, Mrs. Gao testified about her work before a U.S. congressional subcommittee. She said that she was "sincerely sorry" for what she had done and that "I want to be a real human being." She hoped that members of Congress would "extend your arms to save China's women and children."(64)

Population-control defenders later claimed that the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was having some success in weaning the Chinese away from their coercive approach.(65) The UN agency was running a project in 32 Chinese counties which it said were not using birth quotas and coercion. But leading critics of the Chinese program, including Steven Mosher and Harry Wu, were highly skeptical about that claim. In the fall of 2001, Mosher's Population Research Institute sent an observation team to Sihui County, one of the 32 counties UNFPA was supposed to be improving. After interviewing "more than two dozen victims or witnesses," the team reported that: "Coercive family planning policies in Sihui include age requirements for pregnancy; birth permits; mandatory use of IUDs...crippling fines for non-compliance; imprisonment for noncompliance; destruction of homes and property for non-compliance; forced abortion and forced sterilization." In what was supposed to be a "model family planning village," two residents told the observers "that local family planning workers receive benefits and promotions based on their compliance with targets and quotas."

The observers spoke with a woman who had hidden from authorities after they ordered her to have an abortion. By hiding, she was able to save her child. But authorities punished both the woman and her relatives by damaging or destroying several of their homes. They also imprisoned nine family members, who had to borrow money to pay fines so they could leave prison. The woman also faced more fines in order to make her baby "eligible for medical care, schooling or employment in the future." Her child was "an unregistered and illegal person" who did "not exist in the eyes of the state."

Such children "are punished for being born without a permit."(66)

Let's return for a moment to the Nazis. Adolf Hitler's use of sterilization, euthanasia and the death camps against people he despised has been documented many times. Less well known to the public is his interest in other techniques of population control now used by the West against Third World nations. In July, 1942, when German troops were advancing in Russia, Martin Bormann sent this message to fellow-Nazi Alfred Rosenberg: "The Führer wishes you to see to it that the following principles are applied and observed in the Occupied Territories of the East...1) When girls and women in the Occupied Territories of the East have abortions, we can only be in favor of it; in any case, German jurists should not oppose it." He added: "The Führer believes that we should authorize the development of a thriving trade in contraceptives. We are not interested in seeing the non-German population multiply...."(67)

German bureaucrat Alfred Wetzel earlier had suggested practical ways to reduce the Russian birthrate. The Wetzel proposals are remarkable in their resemblance to what population controllers--from nations that fought the Nazis--have done to Third-World countries in recent decades. Wetzel declared: "Every propaganda means, especially the press, radio, and movies, as well as pamphlets, booklets, and lectures, must be used to instill in the Russian population the idea that it is harmful to have several children." He added: "We must emphasize the expenses that children cause, the good things people could have had with the money spent on them. We could also hint at the dangerous effect of child-bearing on a woman's health."

Wetzel realized that propaganda alone would not be enough. He said that "a large-scale campaign should be launched in favor of contraceptive devices. A contraceptive industry must be established." But that would not be enough, either. "It will even be necessary to open special institutions for abortion, and to train midwives and nurses for this purpose. The population will practice abortion all the more willingly if these institutions are competently operated." Medical ethics could not be allowed to stand in the way: "The doctors must be able to help out without there being any question of this being a breach of their professional ethics...."(68)

American population controllers today do not advocate other Wetzel proposals, such as refusing to fight infant mortality and keeping mothers ignorant of child care and childhood diseases. On the other hand, many of them support the brutal population control program of China--a program worthy of the Nazis.

Those who say they support population control for humanitarian reasons should know that Hitler claimed to do the same. In *Mein Kampf* he declared: "The demand that defective people be prevented from propagating equally defective offspring is a demand of the clearest reason and if systematically executed represents the most humane act of mankind."(69) In a private conversation after he gained power in Germany, Hitler said that he intended a depopulation program for the Slavs, "an inferior race that breeds like vermin!" He remarked: "There are many ways, systematical and comparatively painless, or at any rate bloodless, of causing undesirable races to die out." In the past, he noted, "it was the victor's prerogative to destroy entire tribes, entire peoples. By doing this gradually and without

bloodshed, we demonstrate our humanity."(70)

If population control were on trial today, this would be the time to say, "Your Honor, the prosecution rests."

Sources

Here are the locations of manuscript collections cited in the notes below:

American Eugenics Society (AES) Archives, American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, Pa. Quotations published with permission of the American Philosophical Society.

Carnegie Institution of Washington Archive, Washington, D.C.

Allen W. Dulles Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. Quotations published with permission of the Princeton University Library.

Clarence J. Gamble Papers, The Harvard Medical Library in the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Boston, Mass. Quotations published with permission of the Countway Library.

Alan F. Guttmacher Papers, The Harvard Medical Library in the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Boston, Mass. Quotations published with permission of the Countway Library.

Norman E. Himes Archive, Boston Medical Library in the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Boston, Mass.

Ellsworth Huntington Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

Hugh Moore Fund Collection, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. Quotation published with permission of the Princeton University Library.

National Committee on Maternal Health Archive, Boston Medical Library in the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Boston, Mass.

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Rockefeller Family Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC), Sleepy Hollow, N.Y. Quotations published with permission of the Rockefeller Archive Center.

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Statements about membership in the American Eugenics Society (later called the Society for the Study of Social Biology), unless otherwise indicated, are based on the 1930 membership list in the Margaret Sanger Papers, microfilm reel 41; the *Eugenics Quarterly* (especially the membership list in the Dec. 1956 issue); or issues of *Social Biology*.

Statements about membership or fellowship in England's Eugenics Society are based on 1928 and 1944 lists in the Norman E. Himes Archive, box 7, folder 78; an Aug. 1957 list bound with 1957 issues of *Eugenics Review*, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Md.; and *Eugenics Watch*, "The British Eugenics Society, 1907 to 1994," on the Internet (www.eugenics-watch.com).

Notes

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2. Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (New York: Morrow, 1993), 124.
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4. Typed copy of John D. Rockefeller 3rd (hereafter JDR 3rd) to Frederick Osborn, 30 June 1936, Huntington Papers, Group 1, Series III, box 77; Rudolph Bertheau to Robert C. Cook, 12 March 1942, *ibid.*, box 88; JDR 3rd to Mrs. Jean Mauze, 12 Jan. 1967, Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter RAC); folder on "Association for the Study of Abortion," *ibid.*; "John D. Rockefeller 3rd Contributions in the Area of Abortion, 1966-1978," 24 April 1978, *ibid.*; and Series 200A folders on "Madison Const. Law

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68. [Alfred] Wetzel, 27 April 1942 memo, excerpted in Poliakov (n. 67), 273-274. A copy of the original Wetzel memo is in Record Group 238 (World War II War Crimes Records), Entry 170, box 48, Doc. No. NG 2325. I am indebted to Seattle writer Mike W. Perry for drawing my attention to the Bormann and Wetzel documents through his paper, "The Nazi View of Abortion" (Seattle, 1988).

69. Hitler (n. 13), 255. He said this in the context of urging a campaign against syphilis. But later he complained that (in the 1920s, when he wrote *Mein Kampf*), it was illegal to sterilize "sufferers from syphilis, tuberculosis, hereditary diseases, cripples, and cretins." He said the state "must declare unfit for propagation all who are in any way visibly sick or who have inherited a disease and can therefore pass it on..." (emphasis in original), *ibid.*, 402 & 404.

70. Quoted in Hermann Rauschning, *The Voice of Destruction* (New York: Putnam's, 1940), 137-138. The only specific method of depopulation which Rauschning quoted from this Hitler conversation was keeping Slav "men and women separated for years" (*ibid.*, 137). But in fact Hitler also used other methods that were neither painless nor "bloodless." Rauschning quit the Nazis and wrote explicit warnings about Hitler's plans. Poliakov (n. 67), 2-3, n. 1.