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# Eugenics In the US. Legal \_ Illegal violence pamphlet.pdf

Aaron Roussell, *Portland State University*



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The Black Panther Party organized community-run healthcare clinics as the gov. could not be trusted with family planning. Discourse that arose out of the Black Power movement as a response to family planning measures in the '64 War on Poverty act.

Without data surfacing as a result of such reports, action to criminalize such injustices is highly unlikely, and eugenics in prisons and ICE detention centers will continue, perfectly acceptable in the eyes of U.S. law.

## Birth Control Pills and Black Children

The Brothers are calling on the Sisters to not take the pill. It is this system's method of exterminating Black people here and abroad. To take the pill means that we are contributing to our own GENOCIDE.

However, in not taking the pill, we must have a new sense of value. When we produce children, we are aiding the REVOLUTION in the form of NATION building. Our children must have pride in their history, in their heritage, in their beauty. Our children must not be brainwashed as we were.

PROCREATION is beautiful, especially if we are devoted to the Revolution which means that our value system be altered to include the Revolution as the responsibility. A good deal of the Supremacist (White) efforts to sterilize the world's (Non-whites) out of existence is turning toward the black people of America. New trends in Race Control have led the architects of GENOCIDE to believe that Sterilization projects aimed at the black man in the United States can cure American internal troubles.

Under the cover of an alleged campaign to 'alleviate poverty', white supremacist Americans and their dupes are pushing an all-out drive to put rigid birth control measures into every black home. No such drive exists within the white community. To some extent, Harlem, Mississippi and Alabama understand this. The white community does not.

## The Sisters Reply

Here is the sisters' reply:

September 11, 1968

Dear Brothers:

Poor black sisters decide for themselves whether to have a baby or not to have a baby. If we take the pills or practise birth control in other ways, it's because of poor black men.

Now here's how it is. Poor black men won't support their families, won't stick by their women -- all they think about is the street, dope and liquor, women, a piece of ass, and their cars. That's all that counts. Poor black women would be fools to sit up in the house with a whole lot of children and eventually go crazy, sick, heartbroken, no place to go, no sign of affection -- nothing. Middle class white men have always done this to their women -- more sophisticated like.

So when whitey put out the pill and poor black sisters spread the word, we saw how simple it was not to be a fool for men any more (politically we would say men could no longer exploit us sexually or for money and leave the babies with us to bring up). That was the first step in our waking up!

Black women have always been told by black men that we were black, ugly, evil, birches and whores -- in other words, we were the real niggers in this society -- oppressed by whites, male and female, and the black man, too.

Now a lot of the black brothers are into a new bag. Black women are being asked by militant black brothers not to practise birth control because it is a form of whitey committing genocide on black people. Well, true enough, but it takes two to practise genocide and black women are able to decide for themselves, just like poor people all over the world, whether they will submit to genocide. For us, birth control is freedom to fight genocide of black women and children.

The legal progression of access to reproductive healthcare can largely be attributed to the interest convergence of eugenicists and the opportunity to enforce birth control as a tool to limit the reproduction of populations that they find undesirable. This can be recognized in United States law as it continually challenges and denies the right to access birth control, while at the very same time its prisons weaponize birth control methods to forcefully sterilize incarcerated persons.

## EUGENICS: WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT ISN'T

### Eugenics:

The pseudoscientific belief that it is possible to perfect the human race and to create an 'ideal' person. This is executed on a systemic level to "improve" entire populations.

In both practice and theory, eugenicists refer to ableist, anti-Semitic, classist, ethnocentric, racist, and anti-LGBTQIA standards of "ideal", and rely on atrocious methods to limit the reproduction of certain groups through forced, compulsory sterilization.

### Reproductive Healthcare:

Abortion is a personal choice to terminate a pregnancy made by an individual who has autonomy over their body.

A person may choose to terminate a pregnancy because they lack the resources, community, psychological or physical capacity; the fetus may be predicted only to live a few months, or to be addicted to drugs; or, for any other reason that owes no explanation to the world.

THE INDIVIDUAL RIGHT TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE, SUCH AS ACCESS TO ABORTIONS AND BIRTH CONTROL, IS NOT EUGENICS.

EUGENICISTS DO NOT SUPPORT CONSENSUAL, PERSONAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE; THEY SUPPORT FORCED, SYSTEMATIC STERILIZATION OF ENTIRE GROUPS.

# HISTORY

## Social Darwinism

- Charles Darwin and Francis Galton coined the term “Eugenics” in 1880’s England to describe an ideal society through selective breeding.

## The American Breeders Association (1903)

- Created in order to begin research on how to implement eugenics in the United States.
- (1911) John Kellogg created the **Race Betterment Foundation** along with other less notable foundations whose goal was to research breeding patterns within families in order to uncover how certain traits were passed on.

## World War I (1914-1918)

- The idea of eugenics reached countries around the world as they began to ponder what the “ideal” person should look like.

## The American Eugenics Society

- Meant to educate the American public on what eugenics would do to a society.
- Considered abortion to be murder.

## World War II (1939-1945)

- Catastrophic Nazi rulership in Germany relied on eugenics theory to justify the state-sponsored extermination of six million Jews, as well ethnic and racial minorities, people with disabilities, and those who were queer.

## The Indian Health Service (1960s and 70s)

- Documented by **Jane Lawrence**
- Indigenous women seeking healthcare, such as a tonsillectomy, were being sterilized without their consent or knowledge.
- At times, they were lied to and told that tubal ligation was reversible.

# LEGAL THEORY & COURT CASES

- "Feeble-minded, moron theory"** unfair tests by psychologists in the early 1900s were constructed to conclude that immigrants and prisoners in the U.S. had low IQs, manufacturing a correlation between “feeble-mindedness” and criminality.
- Suggests that criminality and feeble-mindedness is hereditary and that such “defects” could be distinguished along racial and ethnic lines.

## Smith v. Wayne (1925)

- Justified eugenics as an exercise of state police power “based on the growing belief that, due to the alarming number of degenerates, criminals, feeble-minded, and insane, our race is facing the greatest peril of all time”

## Buck v. Bell (1927)

- In a 1-8 decision, the Supreme Court approved the constitutionality of forced, compulsory sterilization.
- Carrie Buck**, accused of having a feeble-minded mother and daughter, was involuntarily sterilized.
- “[...] society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind. The principle that sustains compulsory vaccination is broad enough to cover cutting the Fallopian tubes. Three generations of imbeciles are enough” -**Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes**

- This decision propelled the Eugenics Movement. By 1933, 28 states adopted compulsory sterilization laws.

## Roe v. Wade (1973)

- Ruled that restrictive regulation and criminalization of abortion is unconstitutional.
  - While this case is celebrated as a landmark for women’s rights, its roots are deeply racist and eugenic.

- “At the time Roe was decided, there was concern about growth in populations and particularly growth in populations that we don’t want to have too many of. So that Roe was going to be then set up for Medicaid funding of abortion” -**Justice Ginsburg**

## Margaret Sanger (1879-1966).

- Known for founding the Birth Control movement and organizations that later became the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.
- Rallied support for social policy in favor of reproductive rights by weaponizing birth control methods as tools for racial eugenics.
- Presented this method in a speech to the KKK.

**"There are few better examples of the interplay of race and law and the ways our preconceptions about race get naturalized as biological fact and inscribed in social policy. No matter that the theory was so glaringly defective as science [...] it formed the basis for eugenics policies, immigration restrictions, and criminal justice practices for decades[...]" -Kitty Calavita**

# CONTEMPORARY, DOMESTIC EXAMPLES OF EUGENICS

Between 1997 and 2011, approximately 250 female inmates were sterilized in **California** prisons. At least 39 inmates did not consent, however that number is

likely to be larger, and it has also been argued that informed consent in a prison setting is almost impossible due to the severe disparity of power found within an inmate-prison staff dynamic.

Offenders in Tennessee were offered 30-day sentence reductions if they agreed to a vasectomy or birth-control implant in 2017. These reduction offers followed plea deals made in Nashville between 2010 and 2015 involving permanent sterilizations as a prerequisite for inmates’ parole or early release.

Contemporary examples of eugenics at the hands of the U.S. government can be found outside of prisons, inside ICE detention facilities. As of November, 2020 57 detainees held in the Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, Georgia have spoken out on their experiences of being urged to submit to unnecessary gynecological surgeries. One woman described a hysterectomy for which she was not anesthetized. Many women reported being told by medical staff only that their procedures were necessary, without any further explanation as to why.

In each of the settings described above, most patients undergoing these procedures come from marginalized communities, a fact that only solidifies the claim that these are blatant instances of eugenics. The only reason we have data on these violences in the first place is either because of female offenders who were brave enough to speak out, also having access to lawyers willing to advocate for them, or because a whistle blower reported these medical abuses. Knowing that these truths being uncovered are exceptions, it can be assumed that in states where inmates don’t have legal support to report their experiences, these coerced sterilizations and birth control implementations continue.