



development of womanhood must precede motherhood in every individual woman. Then and then only can the mother cease to be an incubator and be a mother indeed. Then only can she transmit to her sons and daughters the qualities which make strong individuals and, collectively, a strong race.<sup>4</sup>

In another Sanger book, the plan for birth control to play a role in the eugenics program is defended:

Birth Control which has been criticized as negative and destructive, is really the greatest and most truly eugenic method, and its adoption as part of the program of Eugenics would immediately give a concrete and realistic power to that science. As a matter of fact, Birth Control has been accepted by the most clear thinking and far seeing of the Eugenists themselves as the most constructive and necessary of the means to racial health.<sup>5</sup>

Mark H. Haller, author of *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought*, wrote:

Margaret Sanger began increasingly to speak like an orthodox eugenicist. From the beginning she had urged birth control for those with presumed heredity ailments like insanity and epilepsy. By the 1920's she advocated sterilization for the unfit, pointed to the Jukes as the sort of tragedy that birth control might halt, and stated that "it is a curious but neglected fact that the very types which in all kindness should be obliterated from the human stock, have been permitted to reproduce themselves and to perpetuate their group, succored by the policy of indiscriminate charity of warm hearts uncontrolled by cool heads..."

Birth control and eugenics, then, were two closely related movements. Birth control advocates used eugenics as a source of arguments and as a method of attracting scientific support; eugenists, on the other hand, became aware that in birth control they had a weapon with which to manipulate the birth rate for eugenic purposes.<sup>6</sup>



Sanger primarily sought to control the reproduction of certain groups: the poor, immigrants (especially people of color), and religious groups (primarily Catholics and fundamentalists), which were proving to be a hindrance to her goals. Sanger viewed these groups as reckless breeders who were "unceasingly spawning class of human beings who never should have been born at all..."<sup>7</sup>

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## THE IMPOVERISHED

Sanger believed giving charity to the poor, particularly immigrants, served only to expand social problems for they would cease to exist without assistance. Besides, allowed to breed unchecked, these "defectives" would

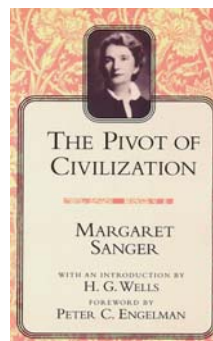
eventually produce enough people to rise up and take over the world. As a result, the world will face "biological destruction." Sanger feared "the gradual but certain attack upon the stocks of intelligence and racial health by the sinister forces of the hordes of irresponsibility and imbecility..."<sup>8</sup>

Sanger believed philanthropy to be the problem:

It [charity] reveals a fundamental and irremediable defect. Its very success, its very efficiency, its very necessity to the social order, are themselves the most unanswerable indictment. Organized charity itself is the symptom of a malignant social disease.

Those vast, complex, interrelated organizations aiming to control and to diminish the spread of misery and destitution and all the menacing evils that spring out of this sinisterly fertile soil, are the surest sign that our civilization has bred, is breeding and is perpetuating constantly increasing numbers of defectives, delinquents and dependents. My criticism, therefore, is not directed at the "failure" of philanthropy, but rather at its success.

These dangers inherent in the very idea of humanitarianism and altruism, dangers which have to-day [sic] produced their full harvest of human waste, of inequality and inefficiency, were fully recognized in the last century at the moment when such ideas were first put into practice...<sup>9</sup>



Sanger wrote that those who provide free maternity care to the poor and others deemed unfit do nothing but encourage "the healthier and more normal sections of the world to shoulder the burden of unthinking and indiscriminate fecundity of others; which brings with it, as I think the reader must agree, a dead weight of human waste. Instead of decreasing

and aiming to eliminate the stocks that are most detrimental to the future of the race and the world, it tends to render them to a menacing degree dominant."<sup>10</sup>

Sanger believed that spending fewer tax dollars on the needy would appeal to taxpayers. Sanger believed tax relief would allow those who are rich and intelligent to produce more children. She wrote, "There is only one reply to a request for a higher birth rate among the intelligent, and that is to ask the government to *first* take off the burdens of the insane and feeble-minded from your backs. Sterilization for these is the remedy."<sup>11</sup>

## PEOPLE OF COLOR

In an October 1939, letter, Sanger wrote of her desire to neutralize any opposition to birth control that would likely be posed by African-Americans. Sanger and her supporters were interested in hiring three or four "col-

ored Ministers, preferably with social-service backgrounds, and with engaging personalities” to travel throughout the South and propagate the birth control philosophy.<sup>12</sup> The “Negro Project,” as it was called, was described by Sanger in a letter to an associate, Dr. Clarence J. Gamble. Sanger had supported hiring a “Negro physician” to do her organization’s bidding among African-Americans—an idea Gamble initially opposed:

It seems to me from my experience...that while the colored Negroes have great respect for white doctors they can get closer to their own members and more or less lay their cards on the table which means their ignorance, superstitions and doubts. They do not do this with the white people and if we can train the Negro doctor at the Clinic he can go among them with enthusiasm and with knowledge, which, I believe will have far-reaching results among the colored people. His work in my opinion should be entirely with the Negro profession and the nurses, hospital, social workers, as well as the County’s white doctors. His success will depend upon his personality and his training by us.

The minister’s work is also important and also he should be trained, perhaps by the Federation as to our ideals and the goal that we hope to reach. We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members.<sup>13</sup>

Gamble had written of a “great danger” that Sanger’s efforts would be in vain because “the Negroes think it a plan for extermination.” Gamble suggested a solution to the problem. He argued Sanger’s legion should “appear to let the colored...run it...”<sup>14</sup>



In a 1941 letter, Sanger argued that her plan was to “carry on a personal educational program” that would be administered “by a Negro minister or sociologist and a Negro physician to follow up the former’s activities.” Sanger wrote that, “Only when this type of work is done, will the Negro problem ever be solved, as far as our objectives are concerned. They still believe—large numbers of them—that God sends them children...”<sup>15</sup>

One of Sanger’s speaking engagements in her quest for legalization of birth control was to the women’s branch of the Ku Klux Klan. “Always to me any aroused group was a good group...”<sup>16</sup> she wrote to justify accepting the invitation. Sanger was glad she had accepted the chance to speak to the group. “In the end,” she wrote, “through simple illustrations I believed I had accomplished my purpose. A dozen invitations to speak to similar groups were proffered.”<sup>17</sup>

## AFRICAN-AMERICAN LEADERS



Advocates of legal abortion sometimes come to recognize the fear of genocide within the African-American community. Loretta J. Ross wrote an article for *On The Issues*, a magazine which describes itself as a, “Progressive Woman’s Quarterly: a feminist humanist magazine of critical thinking, dedicated to fostering collective responsibility for positive social change.”<sup>18</sup> The author admits that “black reproductive rights activists often face a double challenge. They work to mobilize a black community that is still haunted by the idea of abortion as acquiescent genocide.”<sup>19</sup>

Ross remarked on Sanger’s work in the article. “Margaret Sanger, in her drive to establish birth control clinics throughout 20th-century America, touched a responsive cord in African American women, many of whom were middle-class like most of their white counterparts...,” wrote Ross. “The dominant view of the times was that African Americans needed to control family size in order to integrate, through education and jobs, into the American mainstream. During the same period, European immigrants and their descendants were being encouraged to breed.”<sup>20</sup>

Even the role of eugenics in African-American birth control was acknowledged by Ross and she did not overlook the part “The Negro Project” played in the effort:

Alongside the birth control movement, the pseudo-science of eugenics, which aimed to limit the reproduction of “undesireables,” grew into a movement in America and Britain. It was part of the white American frenzy against the African American progress during Reconstruction...President Theodore Roosevelt made dire predictions about “race suicide” if America continued to tolerate rising birth rates of black Americans and “non-Yankee” immigration. In fact, the birth rate of black Americans was slower than that of whites at the time, but it suited the purposes of the racial alarmists to distort the facts. Blacks, Catholics and others were singled out for planned population reduction through both government and privately financed means.

In 1939, a Negro Project designed by the Birth Control Federation hired black ministers and nurses to travel the South recruiting black doctors. Designed with blatantly racist intent, the project equated southern rural poverty not with racism or with Jim Crow, but with the black birth rate, which was only slightly higher than whites. “The mass of Negroes,” read the project report, “still breed carelessly and disastrously, with the result that the increase among Negroes...is from that portion of the population least intelligent and fit.”<sup>21</sup>

Ross noted that while some supported population control programs, “not all African Americans followed suit.” She wrote that, “A strong black nationalist movement, led by Marcus Mosiah Garvey, a ‘Back to Africa’ proponent from Jamaica, opposed fertility control for black women.” Such leaders argued that African-Americans needed to increase their numbers in order to “succeed in erasing the remnants of slavery and regaining the heritage and power of ancient Africa.”<sup>22</sup>

Margaret Sanger’s involvement with the eugenics movement was acknowledged by Ross:

The black nationalist movement monitored the growing relationship between the eugenics movement and Margaret Sanger who, in her zeal to promote the birth control movement, allowed it to fall under the onus of racism perceived in the eugenics movement. In *The Pivot of Civilization*, published in 1922, she urged applying stock breeding techniques to society in order to avoid giving aid to “good for nothings at the expense of the good.” This linkage of two very different concepts of birth control and population control created enduring suspicions in the minds of African Americans.<sup>23</sup>

## Today’s PLANNED PARENTHOOD

One would think that any organization founded by Sanger would attempt to eradicate her memory and escape any association with her ideas. To the contrary, Planned Parenthood eulogizes Sanger. Its leaders continue to praise Sanger as a heroine and the pioneer of reproductive rights.

African-Americans make up about 12 percent of the U.S. population, but account for nearly 33 percent of abortions. It does not take a genius to realize that these people are being offered dead children as a substitute for addressing the real needs of education, housing, employment and nutrition.

Today’s Planned Parenthood utilizes the same methods designed by its founder to destroy “unwelcome” groups of people. Yet its leaders and allies now claim the very same methods are actually going to “free” these groups of people. Which is it? Was Sanger grossly mistaken or is there something today’s Planned Parenthood is not telling us?



The Ku Klux Klan has started to use the same approach as Planned Parenthood. The Klan of today is wearing suits and ties and speaking of “hating no one.” The public message is changing to achieve its original ends.

If a bigot really wanted to make sure there are fewer people of color, he would not join the Ku Klux Klan’s crusade; he would join Planned Parenthood’s. After all, Planned Parenthood is much more effective than the Klan was at the height of its terror. Planned Parenthood is killing more people than the Klan ever did—and doing it in the name of “freedom of choice” and the “betterment” of minority populations. Consequently, Christians and other people of good will must fight Planned Parenthood deadly agenda with all of their strength.

—Douglas R. Scott, Jr. is president of Life Decisions International and author of *Bad Choices: A Look Inside Planned Parenthood*.

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