

Eugenics Fact Sheet

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Definitions:

Eugenics - Screening the human race for traits that are deemed desirable or undesirable and only allowing those humans to live and reproduce who have the desired traits. Sometimes referred to as “racial hygiene.”

Genocide - “The deliberate, systematic, and intentional destruction—in whole or in part—of a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group. Coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944, it is recognized as a crime under international law, prohibited by the 1948 Genocide Convention regardless of whether it occurs in peacetime or wartime.”¹

Prominent Individuals:

Thomas Malthus - English economist who in 1798 published “An Essay on the Principle of Population.” He predicted rates of population growth against rates of crop and resource growth and concluded that there would be widespread famine, disease and death in the future if the human race reproduced unchecked. His work provided the foundation for virtually all the population control work that has been done, including pushing contraceptives in the US and in countries that receive US foreign aid. Charles Darwin, Margret Sanger, Adolf Hitler, John Maynard Keynes, and Paul R. Ehrlich were all heavily influenced by Malthus.²

Margret Sanger - Founder of the American Birth Control League and later, Planned Parenthood. Sanger was an ardent eugenicist and believed that poverty could be solved by the use of contraceptives, sterilization and later, abortion. She was racist, believing that certain races were less “fit” and produced more “imbeciles and morons.” She did, however, accept those who were educated, wealthy and influential regardless of race because they had “overcome” their genetics. Sanger founded “The Negro Project” to help reduce the population growth of Black Americans. Unsurprisingly, she was disappointed when contraceptives gained popularity among upper and upper middle class white Americans instead of with the impoverished next to whom she planted her clinics.³ Today, 79% of Planned Parenthood clinics are located within walking distance to minority communities.⁴

Adolf Hitler - born in 1889, Austria—died 1945, Berlin, Germany, was the leader of the Nazi Party (from 1920/21) and Kanzler (chancellor) and Führer of Germany (1933–45). His worldview revolved around territorial expansion and racial supremacy through eugenics. Those themes informed his decision to invade Poland, which marked the start of World War II, as well as the systematic killing of approximately two to six million Jews and millions of others during the Holocaust.⁵

¹ <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/defining-genocide-after-world-war-ii>

² Pakaluk, Catherine Ruth. *Hanna's Children*. Skyhorse Publishing, Inc. 2024.

³ Gruber, Seth. *The 1916 Project*. Vindex Media, Inc., 4 Sept. 2024.

⁴ <https://lifeissues.org/article/new-research-shows-planned-parenthood-targets-minority-neighborhoods/>

⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Adolf-Hitler>

American History of Eugenics:

Malthusian-style (see Thomas Malthus above) thinking creates a mindset that says, if resources are limited and getting more scarce, then it makes sense to prioritize who gets them. This leads people to create arbitrary standards for the human race in order to confer value.

The plaque on the East lawn of the Indiana State Library reads: “By late 1800s, Indiana authorities believed criminality, mental problems, and pauperism were hereditary. Various laws were enacted based on this belief. In 1907, Governor J. Frank Hanly approved [the] first state eugenics law in the US making sterilization mandatory for certain individuals in state custody. Sterilizations [were] halted 1909 by Governor Thomas R. Marshall.” Side two: “Indiana Supreme Court ruled 1907 law unconstitutional 1921, citing denial of due process under Fourteenth Amendment. 1927 law reinstated sterilization, adding court appeals. Approximately 2,500 total in state custody were sterilized. Governor Otis R. Bowen approved repeal of all sterilization laws 1974; by 1977, related restrictive marriage laws [were] repealed.”⁶

California followed Indiana’s example in 1909, followed by 26 other states and resulted in the forced sterilization of 64,000 people.⁷

Buck v. Bell -

In 1927 the Supreme Court of the United States upheld the Virginia law that doctors could forcibly sterilize residents of mental health facilities after holding a hearing. In the majority opinion, Judge O. W. Holmes noted: “Three generations of imbeciles is enough.”⁸

By 1934, Germany was sterilizing 5,000 people per month. They used American eugenics laws as the foundation for their strategies. Many ideas were shared internationally and developed at the conferences hosted by Margret Sanger on Birth Control and Malthusian Theory.⁹ Nazis cited *Buck v. Bell* in the Nuremberg Trials as part of their defense.¹⁰

Indiana’s reason-based abortion ban that was tried at the Supreme Court in 2019 in *Box v. Planned Parenthood* temporarily brought the eugenics conversation to the forefront of the abortion debate in the US.

Eugenics As It Relates to Other Pro-Life Issues:

Genetic Screening of Embryos - The In Vitro Fertilization industry in the US is proud of its progress in the area of genetic screening of embryos before attempting implantation.¹¹ Embryos are graded on a scale of A-F following screening. Parents can rank their embryos based on predicted features and implant those with the most desired characteristics in the first round. Typically, embryos ranked lower are discarded as medical waste, left frozen or “donated” to research labs.

Use of Egg and Sperm “Donors” in IVF and Surrogacy - The IVF industry is very transparent in this regard. On their websites and in their brochures, the IVF clinics encourage parents to choose carefully who they use as egg and sperm “donors”. They have lists of characteristics to consider including education and disposition as well as the usually thought of appearances. Some “donor” catalogues also supply videos of the men and

⁶ <https://www.in.gov/history/state-historical-markers/find-a-marker/1907-indiana-eugenics-law/>

⁷ <https://www.nature.com/scitable/forums/genetics-generation/america-s-hidden-history-the-eugenics-movement-123919444/>

⁸ Gruber, Seth. The 1916 Project. Vindex Media, Inc., 4 Sept. 2024. p52

⁹ Gruber, Seth. The 1916 Project. Vindex Media, Inc., 4 Sept. 2024. p51

¹⁰ Gruber, Seth. The 1916 Project. Vindex Media, Inc., 4 Sept. 2024. p52

¹¹ <https://mynucleus.com/embryo/press>

women so that prospective parents can get a better sense of what personality traits might come through in their commissioned baby. Men and women who are young, attractive, athletic, educated and musical are paid more by the IVF industry for their gametes than “donors” who are not.

Abortion - The most common place we see abortion used for eugenics is when children are diagnosed with “lethal fetal anomalies” or life-limiting anomalies. All but 12 states in the US allow abortion in these cases.¹² This is one of the three exceptions in Indiana law - extending till the baby is 22 wks gestation. Often these situations are talked about in terms of alleviating suffering, compassion for the baby and family and concerns about quality of life. However, killing someone is not compassion, nor does it motivate our nation to find real solutions and cures for these diseases and disabilities. Asking parents to choose when their child’s life ends instead of leaving it in the hands of the Creator leaves parents with complex grief and heavy guilt.

Euthanasia and Physician Assisted Suicide/Medical Aid in Dying - Groups allowed to access euthanasia as well as the people who tend to be pressured into MAiD are typically people suffering with terminal illnesses and mental diseases. The utilitarian mindset of today’s first world nations drives us to promote ending the lives of people who “are a burden on society” and who don’t seem to be capable of ever “contributing to society” what they used while they were ill. Only those who “net zero” or above are valued in society, everyone else should be offloaded.

Surrogacy - The intersection between surrogacy and eugenics is less direct and more interesting for it. Often, the arguments in favor of surrogacy contain stories of people who are suffering from a physical ailment that makes it impossible to carry a child themselves. What we see in reality is those situations, plus heavy usage by people who simply do not want to carry a child. It is not eugenics in the aspect of who will live and who will not (though that appears in the beginning of surrogacy during IVF, noted above) but in who will do the “menial” or risky work of carrying a child. The vast majority of surrogates are under significant financial stress and are surrogates because it pays the bills. In the United States, the largest group represented in surrogate mothers are military wives whose husbands are low on the pay scale.

Core Moral Concerns:

Who decides which traits are desirable and undesirable? Historically, eugenics has always been a tool wielded by the powerful against the weak.

Genocide is can be a direct result of the practice of eugenics.¹³

We cannot cure the human race by eliminating those who need the cure. Consider Iceland and their 0% birth rate for kids with Down Syndrome¹⁴. What motivation do their doctors have to find a cure for Trisomy 21 or even to find ways to better their patients' lives who have it, if the solution on the table is to simply abort them? What happens if they “miss” a baby with Down Syndrome in their prenatal screening practices? What does this practice communicate to people who have Down Syndrome and escaped being aborted? Iceland is an excellent example of something voluntary becoming required socially.

¹² <https://www.kff.org/womens-health-policy/exceptions-in-state-abortion-bans-and-early-gestational-limits/>

¹³ <https://www.eugenicsarchive.ca/encyclopedia?id=54cbb7a4b40f65dda4000001>

¹⁴ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-05-01/iceland-prenatal-testing-down-syndrome-ethics/103781058>

Medical advances such as eugenics screening are presented as optional right now, but what starts as optional quickly becomes suggested and then expected.¹⁵ As public pressure grows, individuals do not feel free to refuse the screenings and buckle under the social pressure and persistence of their doctors.

In the US, eugenics followed slavery - a logical step down in American culture. Eugenics was widely accepted by the general public going into the 1930s and Hitler's tactics were birthed in the US, specifically California. It is of no surprise then, that America wanted to stay "neutral" in the war. It would appear that most Americans were actually in favor of or at least comfortable with what the 3rd Reich was doing. Few Americans are aware of our history of genetic screening and it seems this lack of knowledge allows them to be both horrified by the Holocaust and excited by the screening available for embryos conceived through IVF. This is cognitive dissonance - the issues are the same.

IVF eugenics is a driving force in the development of the artificial womb and its growing acceptance by the American public. The genetic screening done during IVF has become widely accepted and praised as a way to stop negative traits from being passed to future generations. It is illogical to spend tens of thousands of dollars creating the most perfect embryo you can (and to an even greater degree if CRISPR is released for this use) only to implant her in the womb of a human woman who could have any number of issues or tragedies befall her. The risk is too great. They see gestating these genetically superior babies in an artificial womb as the next scientific achievement to help human kind flourish.¹⁶ The more technology we accept, the more we remove ourselves from the human experience.

Alternatives:

- Continue funding research for cures that uphold the dignity of the patient.
- See imperfections as a chance to increase our fortitude for patience, compassion and empathy.
- Creatively find ways to increase individuals ability to achieve their personal goals - holding a job, living independently, learning to cook, etc.
- Raise our children with eyes to see the beauty that God has embedded in each person.
- Recognize the role of necessity in the development of inventions. Innovation has always been part of the American spirit. Counter to Malthusian Theory is the reality that when humans are faced with scarcity, they innovate to fill the need and the result is that the community is better off than before the scarcity was experienced.
- Be mindful of the phrases we use in everyday conversation. Referring to people as "better off dead," "worthless," etc. Saying, for instance, that someone "should have never been born," shows a mindset that doesn't recognize the dignity of every person.
- Pull funding from embryonic stem cell research and award it instead to ethical research projects such as those using adult stem cells.
- Change US laws that allow for experimentation on embryos up to 14 days post fertilization to make human embryo experimentation illegal.

Discerning Questions:

Are we working with and inside of God's Design for human life and dignity or asserting ourselves over and against it? Are we displaying God's created order?

¹⁵ Johnson Dahlke, Laura. Outer Origin: A Discourse on Ectogenesis and the Value of Human Experience. 25 April 2024.

¹⁶ Johnson Dahlke, Laura. Outer Origin: A Discourse on Ectogenesis and the Value of Human Experience. 25 April 2024.

Are we seizing power that is God's alone or are we acting within the sphere of influence He gave us? Has something become an idol (we think we are dependent on it for our wellbeing and/or happiness)?

Are we treating each individual involved with dignity? As an "end" in and of themselves and not as a means to an end?

Whose life, if anyone's, am I justified in ending?

Is the human body property? If so, who is the owner?

Who decides each person's worth?

Is what I am considering permanent and/or irreversible for the people affected?

Would I accept for myself what I am proposing for others?

Does this pattern create the kind of society I want to live in? that I want my children to live in?

Right to Life of Northeast Indiana Official Stance:

Right to Life of Northeast Indiana (RLNI) opposes the practice of eugenics. We recognize the desire to prevent suffering and improve quality of life, however, eugenics leads to the devaluation and destruction of human life, targets the most vulnerable, and assigns worth based on arbitrary traits rather than inherent dignity.

General ProLife Position:

The prolife movement opposes the practice of eugenics and genetic screening of human embryos which results in the termination of the embryo.

Eugenic practices ignore the dignity of the human person and instead place value on certain traits, sentencing to death those who have traits deemed "undesirable". Eugenics is an injustice wielded by the powerful against the weak, consistently targeting and sacrificing the vulnerable in society. In upholding the dignity of all human persons, Right to Life stands in opposition to the eugenic screening done on human embryos and instead champions innovation and creativity which find cures and better ways of living for the entire human race.

Suggested Reading:

[The 1916 Project: The Lyn', the Witch, and the War We're In by Seth Gruber](#)

[Hannah's Children: The Women Quietly Defying The Birth Dearth by Catherine Ruth Pakaluk](#)

[American Life League's Culture of Life Studies Program: Who Was The Real Margaret Sanger](#)

[Bioethics: a Primer for Christians by Gilbert Meilander](#)

[Holy People Holy Lives: Law and Gospel In Bioethics by Richard C. Eyer](#)

[Some Black Lives Matter: Racism, Abortion and Reproductive Injustice by Ryan Scott Bomberger, The Radiance Foundation](#)