

Treating Embryocide With White Gloves

by

Thomas J. Davis, Jr.

Published online in Crisis Magazine, 6/28/2018 at

<https://www.crisismagazine.com/2018/sanitized-genocide-white-gloves-embryocide>

Pope Francis recently commented on the practice of prenatal testing to identify developmental defects *in utero*, which, if positive, typically results in abortion. “The murder of children. And to have a nice life, they do away with an innocent.” He recounted how he learned at school that the Spartans of ancient Greece took deformed babies up a mountain and threw them to their deaths in order to preserve the purity of the race. His classmates and he were stunned: “poor babies! It was an atrocity.” But the Pope had another message to deliver, one directed as the greatest genocide in history:

Have you wondered why you do not see many dwarves on the streets? Because the protocol of many doctors - many, not all - is to ask the question: “Will it have problems?” It pains me to say this. In the last century the entire world was scandalized over what the Nazis were doing to maintain the purity of the race. Today we do the same, but with white gloves.¹

The Pope is reminding us of something every child knows from the Dr. Seuss’ classic *Horton Hears a Who*: “a person’s a person no matter how small.” Human value is not bound to utility or beauty but to creation in the image and likeness of God.

Contempt for inherent dignity has a long pedigree. In addition to the notorious death camps, the Nazi’s euthanized the mentally ill and the physically disabled and perused a designer society in *Lebensborn* breeding houses in Germany and several occupied nations. In northern Europe today more than 90 percent of *in utero* babies identified with Down syndrome are aborted. Iceland has eradicated the condition and Denmark is on track to share the dubious honor. In the United States the abortion rate following a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome is nearly as high. And this common practice is now extended to untold millions of frozen human beings engineered through in vitro fertilization (IVF). Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) is standard in IVF reproduction and the mere suggestion of an anomaly is almost always a death sentence. Production of human embryos destined for death dealing scientific research, paid for by tax dollars in leading American academic institutions, is lauded as

progress. State governments as distant from one another as Connecticut and California champion embryocide, claiming their laws prohibit cloning when in fact they are intentionally designed “clone and kill bills” promoting Altered Nuclear Transfer (“ANT”, a/k/a cloning) but mandating the destruction of cloned embryos before they reach certain developmental markers.²

But it did not begin the Nazi’s. Their methods, primitive by today’s standards, followed a path blazed by more respected voices. It began here, with American advocates of social Darwinism.

The last half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the Twentieth saw the development industrial world movements that advocated a eugenic development of population. As early as 1914 America eugenicist Harry Laughlin published his *Model Eugenic Sterilization Law* that proposed sterilization of those “maintained wholly or in part by public expense” including the “feebleminded, insane, criminalistic, epileptic, inebriate, diseased, blind, deaf, deformed, and dependent” and specifically targeted “orphans, ne’er-do-wells, tramps, the homeless and paupers.”³ Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, championed the elimination those marked by “insanity, epilepsy, criminality, prostitution, pauperism, and mental defect.”⁴ Her solution to “this dead weight of human waste” was forced sterilization and massive segregation:

Every feeble-minded girl or woman of the hereditary type, especially of the moron class, should be segregated during the reproductive period ... The male defective are no less dangerous. Segregation carried out for one or two generations would give us only partial control of the problem...we prefer the policy of immediate sterilization, of making sure that parenthood is absolutely prohibited to the feeble minded.”⁵

Sanger saw her advocacy as righteous and was dismissive of philanthropy, which she attributed to corrupt Christian ideas about the sanctity of life, lamenting relief efforts following World War I as “a general orgy of international charity.” In 1923, Fritz Lenz, who later became a leading advocate of Nazi racial hygiene, lamented the absence in Germany of eugenic research institutions similar to those in England and the United States.⁶ In 1920 Bindling and Hoche proposed medical killing of “the incurably ill ... large segments of the mentally ill, the feeble minded, and retarded and deformed children” as a therapeutic action.⁷ Sanger’s *Birth Control Review* advocated the sterilization of the feeble-minded *and their relatives* as a prophylactic and enthusiastically published Laughlin’s opinions which asserted the “now proven legal right of the

American state to prevent reproduction by those ... poorly endowed with hereditary qualities.”⁸

Laughlin’s reference to the “now proven legal rights of the American state” was an embrace of eugenic sterilization laws sweeping the country in the 1920s. Virginia was but one of thirty-five states that adopted legislation aimed at elimination of the “mentally defective,” asserting “heredity plays an important part in the transmission of insanity, idiocy, imbecility, epilepsy and crime.” Seventeen-year-old Carrie Buck, unmarried and having recently given birth to a child, was the first selected for the procedure. Her mother was a resident in a state mental asylum, and “experts” certified Carrie as sharing her mother’s traits for immorality, prostitution, and untruthfulness. The County Superintendent opined that her family was shiftless, ignorant, and worthless, and Laughlin himself determined that she was “feebleminded” and morally delinquent. Famed sociologist Arthur Estabrook testified that her baby was “below average” and “not quite normal.”⁹ On that record she was ordered sterilized. She appealed to the Supreme Court, the guardian of the Bill of Rights, but received instead the haughty superiority of pure breed men:

We have seen more than once that the public welfare may call upon the best citizens for their lives. It would be strange if it could not call upon those who already sap the strength of the State for these lesser sacrifices, often not felt to be such by those concerned, to prevent our being swamped with incompetence. It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, 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.

The author was famed jurist and civil war hero, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. He had the enthusiastic support of seven other justices including William Howard Taft, the former President of the United States; James Clark McReynolds, the former attorney general of the United States; George Sutherland, a former senator and congressman; Harlan F. Stone, former dean of Columbia Law School and later Chief Justice of the Court; and the darling of the progressive school of legal theory, Louis Brandeis. The sole dissenter was Justice Pierce Butler, a devout catholic, who surely recognized the horror of the majority opinion. The finest minds of their day had no hesitation in embracing the statist demand for control and the inhumane eugenic practices of the day. All with “white gloves.”

The generations since have seen more of the same. In 1933 the *Humanist Manifesto* declared that the “universe is self-existing and not created,” that “modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human value,” and rejected the notion that the human person has any transcendent destiny.¹⁰ It demanded “a socialized and cooperative economic order” and declared that the “distinction between the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained.” A new understanding of what it meant to be human was emerging in mainstream thought. Among those signing the *Manifesto* was acclaimed philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey and the Rev. R. Lester Mondale, the influential humanist and Unitarian minister. Writing in the *Journal of the American Journal of Psychiatry* in 1942 Foster Kennedy, professor of neurology at Cornell University and president to the American Neurological Association, opined that guardians of defective children over five years of age should present them to a medical review board to assess whether the child had “no future or hope of one” and if not then “kindly ... relieve that defective ... of the agony of living.”¹¹ An editorial in the same issue of the *Journal* endorsed his opinion and urged psychiatrists to counsel parents that keeping such children alive is inhumane.¹²

In 1973 *Humanist Manifesto II* appeared, declaring that there was “insufficient evidence for belief in existence of a supernatural”; that “promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful”; that “[e]thics is situational, needing no theological sanction”; the “[t]he right to birth control, abortion and divorce should be recognized”; and that civil liberties requires the “right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide.”¹³ Signers included Isaac Asimov, Nobel laureate Francis Crick, Planned Parenthood President Alan Guttmacher, Soviet dissident and activist Andre Sakharov, well known behavioral scientist B. F. Skinner, Sir Julian Huxley, the former head of UNESCO, and Betty Freidan, founder of the National Organization of Women.

By the end of the last century an endowed professor at Princeton University argued that an unborn child had no greater value than any non-human animal at a similar stage of development and that, if severely disabled, killing it “cannot be equated with killing normal human beings” or killing “a person.”¹⁴

It is now common, indeed expected, that respected leaders in political, social, cultural and religious settings advocate for abortion and physician assisted suicide as basic human rights. This “white glove” eugenic culture

threatens us all. The day is not far off when parents who refuse to abort “defective” children will be denied resources to care for their child. Those opting for IVF will face irresistible demands that PGD and its logical consequence be accepted; an outcome not likely resisted by those who embrace the dehumanizing practice of IVF in the first place. Untold millions of tiny human beings are routinely discarded without the slightest quom. Massive embryocidal genocide is taking place, hidden by the sterile setting of clinics and the voicelessness of its victims. The demands of efficiency and health care economics now threaten to overwhelm the baby boomer generation in its twilight years. Seniors with incurable illnesses, facing the prospect of disease, dementia, and countless maladies of body and mind, will be pressured to execute living wills without adequate attention to the nuance demanded by sound moral assessment of the benefits and burdens of particular treatment modalities in a given circumstance. A quarter century ago proposals were already circulating in the New York Times op-ed page advocating mandatory living wills as a condition of government benefits.¹⁵ Homicidal assisted suicide, masquerading under euphemisms of compassionate care and death with dignity, will gather steam as younger populations shutter their parents in institutions and the realization of abandonment shrouds the psyche of the victim.

Echoes of the Nazi mantra that some lives are unworthy of life rings loudly. The choice Moses placed before the people remains: “I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life.” Deut. 30:19.

¹ Speech to the Delegation of the Forum of Family Associations (16 June 2018), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180616_forum-associazioni-familiari.html

² K. Semataska, Truth and Cloning: Political Ideology, Scientific Integrity, and the Advent of Three Parent Children, <https://www.holyapostles.edu/wp-content/uploads/Semataska-12-26-16-TD.pdf>.

³ The DNA Learning Center, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, <http://blogs.dnalc.org/2012/01/18/sterilization-laws/>.

⁴ M. Sanger, The Pivot of Civilization, Chapter IV, 1922.

⁵ Ibid, Chapter V.

⁶ R. Lifton, The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide, at 22.

⁷ Ibid at 23, 46.

⁸ E. Skogland, Life on the Line, 117-118.

-
- ⁹ See No More Babies, <https://pages.stolaf.edu/medinavi/2016/02/29/documentary-no-more-babies-no-mas-bebes/> and source linked therein. Trial testimony in *Buck v. Bell* accessible at www.eugenicsarchive.org.
- ¹⁰ *Humanist Manifesto*, The New Humanist, Vol. VI, No. 3 (June, 1933).
- ¹¹ Kennedy, The Problem of social control of the congenital defective: education, sterilization, euthanasia, Am. J. Psychiatry, 99:13-16 (1942).
- ¹² Ibid at 141-43.
- ¹³ *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, Prometheus Books, 1973
- ¹⁴ P. Singer, Practical Ethics, Cambridge University press (1993), p. 182-86, 188-91.
- ¹⁵ Joseph d'Oronzio, *Good Ethics, Good Health Care Economics*, New York Times, June 8, 1993.