

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

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P.P.P.  
Population  
Birthright, Inc.

FROM: AG

DATE: January 7, 1947

TO:

JHW		JHW

COMMENTS:

JHW writing Read 1/28/47  
to Colclough

JUL 2 1947

**SUBJECT:** About 1939 Frederick Osborn told me that he hoped the Carnegie would get behind human genetics. Not much was done before and very little (e.g. Allen in North Carolina) during the war. I doubt if it will be undertaken by the new group there. The Milbank Fund has steadily maintained grants in the field of population studies.

MS aided for three years the National Committee for Maternal Health which represented the Birth Control interests minus the group that press for legislation and quarrel with Catholics. We stopped because I lost confidence in the quality of the management. NS has supported a good deal of work in genetics in plants and animals.

When the Germans began to sterilise persons applying at the clinics of the University of Bonn for relief of nervous disease, the number of such persons promptly declined to zero. In other words, sterilization is a legal question not wisely confused with curative medicine.

One of the great advantages of socialized medicine will be that it will record and later reveal the fantastic cost to us all of preventable hereditary defects and disease - which the policy of "laissez faire des bébés" ignores or defends. Much of past attitudes is condensed in the word cretin. It is the word Chrétien, or Christian and was used as a reminder that cretins must be treated as though they had immortal souls.

I am convinced that the infertility of the educated is a far more serious fact than the fertility of the uneducated or defective. In fact, there is some doubt whether giving money and effort to a system of education that satisfies the curiosity and rewards the ambitions of a vanishing class is much less stupid than allowing the morons to spawn and call for welfare. And it seems a bit odd for a group that will not renew its ranks to be troubled at the different behavior of a less educated but more fecund part of the population. Is there anything really wrong with a culture in which cultural success is obtained at the price of obvious extinction? Or does

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anyone believe with the earlier American farmer that human heredity, like the American soil, possesses inexhaustible resources and can be exploited always? We shall witness the same unreflective exploitation until it is very late to recoup the loss. I have never seen any question of what the celibacy of the Catholic orders has done to the genetic resources of Catholic countries over the past thirty human generations. But there is no doubt that the abilities that make higher education possible are not finding conditions favorable to their renewal. Just after the birth of his third child, a young doctor of my acquaintance was offered a \$2,000 a year assistantship at one of our richer medical schools.

I think population problems of first importance to us all, but as much in the directions indicated above as in the more lurid aspects illustrated in the pamphlets attached. And much more knowledge is needed.

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