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Melinda Gates Talks Eugenics

By [Andressen Blom and James Bell](#)

This July, we will be celebrating the centennial anniversary of London's First International Eugenics Conference of 1912. One century later, on July 11, 2012, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (the largest private foundation in the world) and the British government will co-host a new London conference on eugenics with global coalition partners such as American abortion chain Planned Parenthood, British abortion chain Marie Stopes International, and the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA). The only difference is that the July 2012 London conference will never acknowledge that eugenics is its driving idea. Melinda Gates has claimed that the conference, which is officially dedicated to "deliver[ing] more modern family planning tools to more women in the world's poorest countries," should involve "no controversy."

But what is eugenics and what has forced it to go incognito over the last century?

Eugenics is the infamous idea that governments should decide which kinds of citizens ought to be considered desirable (the 1912 consensus was that these tended to be white, athletic, intelligent, and wealthy) and which kinds of citizens ought to be considered undesirable (these tended to be black, Jewish, disabled, or poor) and employ the power of the state to encourage increases of desirable citizens (positive eugenics) and encourage decreases of undesirable citizens (negative eugenics). The founder of eugenics, Sir Francis Galton, a half-cousin of Charles Darwin, formulated the idea that the protection afforded by civil society had prevented the kind of natural selection occurring in Darwin's *Origin of Species* from happening in humans, thus perpetuating the existence of weak and feeble-minded people who would have been unable to survive in the state of nature.

Eugenicists differed on whether eugenics should be practiced in a soft manner, with taxpayer-underwritten incentives, or in a hard manner, using coercive and often deadly force. The movement claimed many adherents. Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger and her British counterpart Marie Stopes were both involved in their national eugenic societies. Margaret Sanger viewed her activism as a way to "assist the race towards the elimination of the unfit." Marie Stopes lobbied for "the sterilization of those totally unfit for parenthood [to be] made an immediate possibility, indeed made compulsory."

The public appetite for open eugenics greatly waned after the fall of Nazi Germany and the Nazis' attempt to use eugenic justifications for the Holocaust at the Nuremberg Trials.

Unfortunately, the idea lives on. Melinda Gates, wife of Microsoft founder Bill Gates, [said](#) recently, "Government leaders ... are now beginning to understand that providing access to contraceptives is a cost-effective way to foster economic growth ... Governments should provide all women with access to family planning tools that are safe and effective and meet the needs of all women." This is a succinct summary of soft negative eugenics: for economic reasons governments should use taxpayer dollars to underwrite the decisions of citizens to pursue recreational sexual activity. The underlying economic assumption is that the prospective children of the poor citizens likely to utilize such government-funded programs would be likely to hamper economic growth if they are born.

However, the "no controversy" mantra on the soft eugenics push has been complicated by the fact that hard eugenics has recently been making resurgent splashes in the news. China's One Child Forced Abortion

Policy has been [highlighted](#) by the heroic escape of Chen Guangcheng, a blind dissident sentenced to four years in prison by the Communist government for exposing the brutality of its forced-abortion policy, to the US embassy. Governor Romney has [made](#) the One-Child Policy an issue on the campaign trail by vowing to discontinue funding to the United Nations Population Fund, which the Obama Administration has helped finance in spite of its support of the One-Child Policy. The Guardian Newspaper has [exposed](#) the fact that the British government has spent millions of pounds funding a policy of forced sterilization of the poor in India as part of an effort to reduce human population to help combat climate change.

The governments of China and India -- underwritten by American and British tax dollars -- practice hard eugenics, coercive measures undertaken by governments to decrease citizen population. The exposure of support for hard eugenics causes denial and backtracking. UNFPA claims to support "voluntary family planning" in China. They assume that women who know that conceiving a second child will result in a forced abortion have the liberty to be "voluntary." The British government claims its support of forcible sterilization is "about to change."

Hard eugenics is the ideology that dare not speak its name. But soft eugenics is based on the same disturbing belief -- that government should spend its resources to prevent the propagation of those whom the government believes to be detrimental to society and economic growth.

And that should be deeply controversial.

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