



Margaret Sanger Gets Canceled

Planned Parenthood disavows her 'racist legacy' but continues carrying it out.

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Margaret Sanger has been morally promoted to the rank of Confederate general. It comes courtesy of Planned Parenthood of Greater New York, which will remove Sanger's name from its Manhattan clinic because her "racist legacy" and "deep belief in eugenic ideology" can no longer be denied.

"The removal of Margaret Sanger's name from our building is both a necessary and overdue step to reckon with our legacy and acknowledge Planned Parenthood's contributions to historical reproductive harm within communities of color," wrote Karen Seltzer, the chapter's chairman.

What might that "reproductive harm" include? During a National Day of Mourning last summer, Catherine Davis of the Restoration Project, a black organization dedicated to promoting the sanctity of life and rebuilding families, offered some perspective. The estimated 20 million African-American abortions since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, she noted, is more than America's entire black population in 1960.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that non-Hispanic black women account for the greatest share of all U.S. abortions, 38%, despite being only 13% of the population. New York City's Bureau of Vital Statistics reports that for 2017, the most recent year for which it has data, there were almost as many black abortions as live births. This disparity remains an issue polite society won't touch—so outside the pro-life community it breaks through only when someone like Kanye West brings it up.

In 2009 Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg kicked up a storm when she said that behind the *Roe* decision she thought "there was concern about population growth and particularly growth in populations that we don't want to have too many of." She later clarified, saying she wasn't endorsing the eugenic motivation she ascribed to *Roe*—just pointing to concerns about overpopulation at the time. Whatever the intentions, abortion's consequences have manifestly affected different populations differently.

"Planned Parenthood does a large percentage of its abortion business in minority neighborhoods," says Kay James, president of the Heritage Foundation and founder of Black Americans for Life. "Some employees may believe they are helping women, but whether they

know it or not, they are doing the work of white supremacists, which is eliminating an alarming number of black people before they are born.”

African-American women such as Mrs. James have featured prominently in the pro-life movement from the beginning. Mildred Jefferson, the first black woman to graduate from Harvard Medical School, was a founder of the National Right to Life Committee. Alveda King, founder of Civil Rights for the Unborn, is a niece of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Democrat Katrina Jackson is a pro-life leader in the Louisiana Senate. The same press that fawned over Faye Wattleton when she was heading Planned Parenthood (and famously refused to debate Mrs. James) ensures that women like these remain invisible.

And what about Clarence Thomas? The Supreme Court last year let stand a lower-court ruling that threw out an Indiana law prohibiting abortions done solely for reasons of race, sex or disability—in other words, for eugenic reasons. Justice Thomas was derided for an opinion pointing out that “Sanger’s arguments about the eugenic value of birth control in securing ‘the elimination of the unfit’ apply with even greater force to abortion.” He went on to say how abortion has proved a “disturbingly effective” eugenic tool: not only in the disproportionate number of black abortions in the U.S. but in the hundreds of thousands of pregnancies terminated in Asia because they were girls and the near elimination of Down syndrome births in Iceland. The court, he warned, can’t dodge the issue forever.

As it turns out, neither can Planned Parenthood. Its removal of Sanger’s name raises all sorts of awkward questions. Will Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi return their Margaret Sanger Awards? Will Bill de Blasio insist on keeping a Manhattan square named for Sanger? What about the bust of Sanger in the National Portrait Gallery?

No one can expect Planned Parenthood to reconsider its support for abortion. But if it means what it says about holding “long overdue dialogues” with “communities of color,” how about a public conversation with African-Americans who believe that black women struggling with unintended pregnancies ought to have more hopeful options than simply getting rid of their unborn children?

Plainly the cancel culture that has now taken down Margaret Sanger is not up to the job, because canceling is less about coming to terms with history than erasing it.

“I believe many African-American pro-lifers share my view that removing Sanger’s name from buildings isn’t the way for Planned Parenthood to reckon her legacy,” says Mrs. James. “It should be about reckoning with the ongoing part of her work, in terms of the Planned Parenthood clinics in our neighborhoods. If we’re being honest about legacies, isn’t that the conversation we should be having?”

