

# Black Eugenics: How the Black Mis-leadership Class of the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Supported Sterilization of the Black Poor

by Pascal Robert

Throughout African American history, members of the Black elite have blamed the Black poor for "bringing down the race," thus giving aid and comfort to white racists. "Calls by Negro reformers to improve the quality of the race often imbibed eugenic language."

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The Black Mis-leadership Class is a term usually referring to the race management elite that developed out of the Civil Rights Movement to handle the political and social affairs of the Black masses. This group tailors its world view and policy prescriptions to the demands of America's majority power elite to the detriment of those same Black masses. The Congressional Black Caucus, The NAACP, The National Urban League, Black petite-bourgeois membership organizations, and the Black Church all work as the ideological and organizational mechanisms of the Black Mis-Leadership Class.

What few realize is that even before the Voting Rights Act of 1965 there existed a Black Mis-leadership class that worked as race managers for America's power elite. The originator of "race management" as a concept was Booker T. Washington as the tool of the White industrialist class. With the *crie de guerre* issued by W.E.B. DuBois published in 1903 in the "Souls of Black Folk," the Black college educated "Talented Tenth" came together to manage the affairs of the less fortunate Black masses and weaponized the idea of "race management," giving birth to the first generation of the Black Mis-leadership Class.

Folks, "eugenics" refers to societal practices aimed at "improving" the human race by, for example, discouraging reproduction among those groups considered undesirable by the ruling classes (these groups will often be demarcated by race, ethnicity, class, and the like). At times, in the past, extreme versions of the policy of eugenics have even led to forcible sterilization of women and men (in the U.S., for example), and even worse, genocide (as in Nazi Germany). Eugenism refers to the ideology behind these barbaric practices.

Though in Black America this first generation of Black Misleaders is much revered by many African Americans today as visionaries and vanguards, many were just as duplicitous, treacherous and damaging to the lives of the Black masses as our current version of Black Mis-leaders.

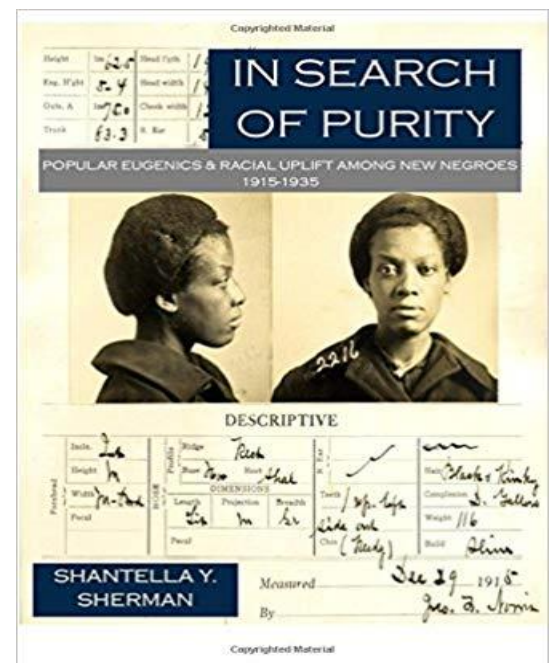
Eugenics (the theory that people with desired traits should out-breed the less desirable) was normal part of American thinking in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and was supported by both intellectuals and government institutions. Not surprisingly, these theories were almost always steeped in racism and used to explain the socio-economic problems of the Black Community as genetic. What many don't know is that DuBois' Talented Tenth, who made up the first Black Mis-leadership class, were often Black Eugenicists who believed in selective breeding and Black population control through birth control techniques including forced and voluntary sterilization of poor Black women. These techniques would be used to purify the race of its "dysgenic" types as a means of racial uplift.

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*"In Search of Purity: Popular Eugenics and Racial Uplift Among New Negroes 1915-1935,"* by Dr. Shantella Y. Sherman illustrates the tragic history of how some of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Black Mis-leadership class fully supported eugenic theory using racial sterilization couched in language supporting birth control to limit the ability of poor Black women to have children. A veritable who's who of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Black history from W.E.B. Dubois, Mary McCloud Bethune, Charles Drew and more were supporters of this widely supported Black Eugenics movement to basically rid America of the Black poor. One must realize, in 1966 55% of Black America lived below the poverty line. We can only imagine how high that number was in the 1920s and 30s, particularly during the Depression years. This Black Eugenics policy was not merely a plan for race purity but if implemented to the full desires of that Black Mis-leadership class, it could have meant race genocide.

As Dr. Sherman states:

"The use of sterilization as a method of birth control was a reality for thousands of New Negroes between 1915 and 1935. Calls by Negro reformers to improve the quality of the race often imbibed eugenic language. Thomas Garth, for instance, wrote in a 1930 Opportunity magazine article that Negroes could have no race pride in substandard members of the race. He posited that the race "should seek to eliminate them weed them out and thereby obtain by means of selection a better stock." Terms



like "weeding out" and "eliminating" speak directly to the identification of dysgenic members of the race, and their segregation from larger society through reformatory or prison commitments."

These Eugenics sentiments were shared by a man who is considered one of the greatest intellectuals in Black American History. W.E.B. DuBois was fully vested in these horrid Eugenics schemes:

"[Negroes] are led away by the fallacy of numbers. They want the Black race to survive. They are cheered by the Census return of increasing numbers and a high rate of increase. They must learn that among human races and groups, as among vegetables, quality and not mere quantity really counts."--W. E. B. Du Bois"

The Black Eugenics movement worked in tandem with racist white eugenicists who had less than pleasant goals in their advocacy of population control techniques. Yet these White racists were institutionally supported and given the ability to speak at functions by organizations like the National Urban League. As Dr. Sherman explained, "Reformers, like Margaret Sanger, connected eugenic better breeding to a larger movement to regulate the poor and stop the rise in crime and illegitimacy." Furthermore, Dr. Sherman states, "Black and white eugenicists alike linked the "Negro Problem"; however, to black female fertility, which white religious figures rarely afforded divine status."

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Black children did not escape from having Black Eugenicists categorize them as "defective," usually out of spurious reasons related to their poor economic status. The language of the Black Misleaders among that Talented Tenth cadre demonstrates the sheer hatred they had for poor Black Children. For example, as Dr. Sherman illustrates:

"Even among respected Black reformers and educators, eugenics factored into how they classified Black students' mental aptitude, behavior, and character. Lone Peak, a black public health and hygiene teacher, made such links between eugenic defects and learning abilities, writing for the NAACP Crisis magazine. Having observed Negro School children, she noted that classroom performance problems grew out of childhood accidents, disease or malnutrition. Yet, Peak used eugenic language and terminology in describing these children as "mental defectives" and determined that they fell "into groups ranging from idiocy to high type morons."

There are many in the Black community who argue even today that class is not relevant to issues of Black folk, and all the problems stem from racism. Racism is a serious problem without a doubt. However, these statements are often made by college educated Blacks themselves to mask their role in the carnage. The farcical thinking that "it's all us Black folk against the evil

White man," is merely a con game the Black Mis-leadership Class has used to hide their duplicity and complicity with the White power structure to ensure their ascendance while working to ground the Black poor and working class to dust. Though they may not use eugenics language publically today, the Black middle class and Black elite often hate the Black poor more than many Whites. They hate the stigma of being associated of those "dysgenic" types that make up the Black poor.

Class is a major issue in the Black community as this history illustrates. Only those who still want to play the "blame the White man game," are unwilling to expose the Black elite complicity in the destruction of the Black masses. The history of Black Eugenics should serve as just one of the myriad of examples of how the Black Mis-leadership Class has worked to subjugate the Black poor. When seeing this history we realize that perhaps we should be extolling "Black Lives Matter," to those Black Mis-Leaders and Black Elites who have been a cancer to Black America for over a century.

Note: This is a modified version of material sourced here:

[https://blackagenda.com/black\\_eugenics\\_sterilization\\_black\\_poor](https://blackagenda.com/black_eugenics_sterilization_black_poor)