

MEDIA RELEASE

The terrible truth about Marie Stopes' eugenic project.

Stopes didn't merely have eugenic views — she instituted eugenic breeding in Britain to exterminate poverty by getting rid of the poor.

Whiteparish, Wiltshire, United Kingdom | Sydney, NSW Australia | 20 November 2020

In 1921, Dr Marie Stopes set up the *Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress*. Its aim was to transform Britain by creating a race of well-formed, well-endowed, beautiful men and women.

On the one hand, it tried to increase the offspring of the healthy and well-to-do and, on the other, to reduce the progeny of the poor, weak and unemployed. Free contraceptives (“ProRace” and “Racial” brands) were given to poor women who wanted them, and while Stopes campaigned for laws to compulsorily sterilize those who did not.

Stopes was supported by some of the most eminent persons of her time: John Maynard Keynes, Lady Constance Lytton, Bertrand Russell, George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, as well as senior members of the medical and political establishments. Sir James Barr, ex-president of the British Medical Association, congratulated her for inaugurating:

“... a great movement which I hope will eventually get rid of our C3 population and exterminate poverty. The only way to raise an A1 population is to breed them.”

This now-forgotten story has been brought to light by a new book, ***Exterminating Poverty: The true story of the eugenic plan to get rid of the poor, and the Scottish doctor who fought against it***. It is the true story of how a Scottish doctor, Halliday Sutherland, spoke out against Stopes' eugenic project. When he accused her of “exposing the poor to experiment”, she sued him for libel and he was arraigned in the High Court in 1923. Their bitter legal battle lasted for over two years and eventually went to the House of Lords (at the time, Britain's highest court).

Author, Mark H. Sutherland, explained: “The book began when I tripped over an old leather suitcase in a cellar in 2013. In it, I found the papers of my grandfather, Dr Halliday Sutherland, the defendant in the High Court trial.”

“I learned that this ignominious episode of British history had been covered up and was largely forgotten. The biographers of Dr Stopes uniformly denigrated Dr Sutherland, and I felt that it was time that the truth about his brave stand against eugenics was told.”

“I wrote the book because many people don't know the truth about Marie Stopes. They know that she opened a family planning clinic in March 1921 and, almost as an aside, that she had eugenic views. What they don't realise is that you cannot separate the two issues — Stopes set up the Mothers' Clinic in March 1921 because she wanted to institute eugenic breeding in Britain.”

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As Stopes herself told the High Court in 1923:

“The object of the Society is, if possible, to counteract the steady evil which has been growing for a good many years of the reduction of the birth rate just on the part of the thrifty, wise, well-contented, and the generally sound members of our community, and the reckless breeding from the C.3 end, and the semi-feeble-minded, the careless, who are proportionately increasing in our community because of the slowing of the birth rate at the other end of the social scale. Statistics show that every year the birth rate from the worst end of our community is increasing in proportion to the birth rate at the better end, and it was in order to try to right that grave social danger that I embarked upon this work.”

Exterminating Poverty, which was published on 29 August 2020, was a collaboration between two grandsons of Dr Halliday Sutherland, Mark H. Sutherland based in Sydney and Neil Sutherland based in Britain.

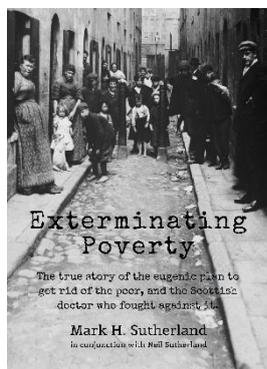
The research for the book led to some shocking discoveries. Halliday Sutherland was a doctor who specialised in tuberculosis, a disease of poverty that killed 70,000 Britons each year. Eugenicians said it was caused by bad breeding rather than infection and thought the “cure” was to breed out the tuberculous. As one doctor put it, TB was “a friend of the race” because it killed only the feeble and not the healthy. In 1918, Sir James Barr said that eradication of TB would be “nothing short of a national calamity” because it did a rough but effective job of killing “undesirables”.

“It was clear that eugenicians regarded TB not as a terrible disease, but as a natural lethal agent to kill off the poor,” Mark Sutherland said. “***Exterminating Poverty*** reveals that eugenic breeding was instituted in Britain 100 years ago. It is vital that Britons know about this dark episode so that history is not repeated.”

The Authors

Mark Sutherland lives in Sydney. Neil Sutherland lives in Wiltshire. The brothers were born in Singapore and lived in Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Yorkshire.

The Book



Exterminating Poverty: The true story of the eugenic plan to get rid of the poor and the Scottish doctor who fought against it by Mark H. Sutherland (in conjunction with Neil Sutherland). Published in August 2020.

355 pages, including 15 photographs and 3 illustrations.

Size: 6 X 9 inches.

Available on [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk), [amazon.com.au](https://www.amazon.com.au) and [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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