

# Marie Stopes and eugenics as 'racial progress'

SIR – Given that University College London is to remove the names of Francis Galton and Karl Pearson from lecture theatres (report, June 20) because of their views on eugenics, it is surprising that it continues to celebrate the name of Dr Marie Stopes.

Galton and Pearson provided the theory for eugenics, but it was Stopes who applied eugenic breeding practically in Britain by opening the Mothers' Clinic in Holloway in 1921.

As Sir James Barr (the vice president of the clinic and former president of the British Medical Association) put it: "You and your husband have inaugurated 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."

Stopes's eugenic intent was reflected in the clinic's slogan: "Joyous and Deliberate Motherhood, a Sure Light in our Racial Darkness." It figured in the tenets of her Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress, and even in the branding of her contraceptive devices – the "Pro-Race" and later "Racial" cervical caps. On her death, she left her clinic in Whitfield Street to the Eugenics Society.

While Stopes's contemporary disciples spin her work as giving women "reproductive choice", in the case of those she deemed "parasites" who should face compulsory sterilisation, the choice would have been made by the state.

**Mark Halliday Sutherland**  
*Annandale, New South Wales, Australia*

Daily Telegraph 23.6.2020