

Cripps's Corner,  
Forest Row,  
Sussex.

Sept. 27 - 22

Dear Fisher,

I have been thinking over your letter of the 10th. inst., with the following effects. The point you urge is much the same as what you originally put forward, and I am in substantial agreement with you. You say that the richest stratum is in fact and a fortiori by constitution less fertile than the poorest stratum. I hardly follow the a fortiori; because environment does account largely for this difference in fertility; e.g., the fact that the maximum wage is obtained earlier in life by the poor. I put the ideal conditions as follows, following your lead in some of them.

I. There should be a sharp general check on fertility. If there were no such check, the population would double itself in less than 15 years, and the system would break down in half that time.

II. The fertility of the less fit individuals or classes should be checked more than the fertility of the more fit. This will obviously promote racial progress.

III. The fertility of the more fecund should be checked more than the fertility of the less fecund. If not there will be a racial increase of fecundity. Fecundity is measured by the relative sizes of families in like external conditions.

IV. The progeny of the more fecund should pass from class to class with the same facility as the progeny of the less fecund. This is to produce an equal distribution of fecundity. It would be better if the more fecund passed more readily into the superior strata.

Of the above, No. IV is the one you regard as more important. This may be so if we look to the ultimate effect on the race. But all the same No. I may be the most immediately pressing need.

To consider Utopias is sometimes useful. How could these conditions best be fulfilled without any reference whatever to practicability, moral questions being also at first entirely neglected?

(A) An allowance of children per couple to be authorized, and the parties to be sterilized after the allowance had made their appearance. Condition II not realized if the allowance is on a flat rate. Fecundity would increase and finally all married couples would be sterilized, if no further steps were taken. Moreover the improvident or less fit would at first still breed most. Condition IV not realized.

(B) Parents to be graded by examination, and the allowance of children to vary accordingly. Fecundity would still increase till all came to be sterilized. Condition IV not satisfied.

(C) If the full allowance of children appeared two children of the family to be killed!! This would meet condition III.

(D) All the cost of rearing children to be covered by the State, and an allowance given to parents to cover any loss through the more extended education of superior children. This would satisfy condition IV.

It should be noted that, to fulfil these conditions, the pressure must be put directly on to the parents and not through the effect on children. To enforce payment for the education of children as long as that education is compulsory would be at all events less harmful than when it is voluntary.

Now let us go one step nearer to reality.

(L) If a couple cannot fulfil their duties towards their children properly (i.e. in regard to housing, clothing, food, &c.) they should be given the choice of sterilization or segregation. Only advantageous as regards conditions I and II.

(M) A charge to be made on the parents for every child above a certain allowance when such child is attending an elementary school during the compulsory period. Useful as regards conditions I and III; harmful as regards II.

(N) After the age of say 12, as many selected children as finances permit to be placed in boarding schools at the public expense till 17 years of age; the selection to take note of moral, mental and physical qualities. These children not to count in the size of family under M. This would partially meet IV. For racial purposes it would be best for large numbers to take short steps than for a few to go right up.

(O) Parents to have a legal right to draw 10% of the salary of any child from its employer, provided the salary was above a certain minimum. Some graded system would be preferable.

(P) Income Tax reforms on lines usually advocated.

(Q) The Australian scheme to be adopted, the payments per child being, however, proportionate to the average payments made up to date. No payment to be made for children above a certain number in family.

These, conditions are doubtless somewhat contradictory and unsatisfactory. I want to see a better scheme! I have not given the matter enough time.

Yours sincerely,

*L. Darwin.*

*The main reason why I put 1, A, & T first is that the main fault of all socialist legislation is to put the pleasant things first and the disagreeable — to share.*