**The Holocaust of Liberalism**

by Akua Furlow

Recently an anti-violence summit meeting was held in Washington, D.C. in which leading African-American elected officials, ministers, community activists and leaders in the entertainment industry participated. The summit was an attempt to find ways to bring order and a sense of value for human life in a hope to stem the rising tide of violence. The astronomical increase of violence often erupts as "Black on Black" crimes and had left many people in the African-American communities asking "Where did we go wrong?" Pictures of young boys and girls gunned down by other youth are commonplace on the evening news. The leading cause of death for young African-American males is homicide. Although noble in its efforts, the summit did not address an important aspect of violence - violence in the womb.

Abortion has decimated African-Americans in genocidal proportions. It has fostered the spiritual decay of what was once a strong religious community. While most polls show conclusively that African-Americans are anti-abortion, too few of us are pro-life activists, opting instead to deal with "bread and butter" issues. Our conscience screams from the unjustice of abortion. Many sit in silent disgust as our "leaders" make unholy alliances with groups who insist on cloaking their liberalized racism in "reproductive freedom".

The future of African-Americans is surely endangered as never before in history. Violence and other social ills facing our communities will continue as long as we do not also seek to protect the lives of our unborn.

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**TABLE I**

| **1988 Induced Abortion Rate per 1000 Live Births - U.S. Black Women** |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| All Ages        | 598             |
| Married         | 261             |
| Unmarried       | 776             |
| Metropolitan Areas | 654         |
| Non-metropolitan Areas | 229     |
| Under 14        | 1477            |
| Age 20-24       | 622             |
| 40 or over      | 851             |

**Repeat Abortion Rates - 1988, U.S. Black Women - All Ages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repeat Abortion Rates</th>
<th>1988, U.S. Black Women - All Ages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Abortion</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Abortion</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Abortion</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th or More Abortion</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
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**Previous Live Births at Time of Abortion - 1988, U.S. Black Women - All Ages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Live Births</th>
<th>1988, U.S. Black Women - All Ages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five or More</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
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**Abortion Attitudes**

Based upon various studies over the past 25 years, it is clear that a substantial majority of African Americans are opposed to abortion. An early study published in 1973 conducted in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Charlotte, North Carolina, concluded that black Americans, especially young black males, are suspicious that genocide is the aim of family planning programs controlled by whites.¹

In a later study published in 1982 by researchers at Howard University on attitudes of unmarried black adolescent fathers in Tulsa, Oklahoma and Columbus, Ohio, it was found that 77-85% agreed with the statement, "If I got a girl pregnant, I would not want her to have an abortion because it's wrong."²

In a study published in 1971, covering six North Carolina census tracts of black females ages 15 to 39 at the poverty level and having at least one pregnancy, 77% were opposed to abortion under any circumstances.³

In a study published in 1970 by the Bowman-Gray Medical School on poverty level blacks, 79% of black females, 86% of their sexual partners and 70% of low to middle income black females were found to be "not in favor of abortions under any circumstances."⁴

In a random study of the U.S. population in 1981 commissioned by the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company, in response to the question, "Do you believe abortion is morally wrong, or is it not a moral issue?", 64% of whites and 73% of blacks thought it was morally wrong.⁵ And according to a 1988 poll taken by the National Opinion Research Center, 62% of blacks said abortion should be illegal under all circumstances.

A May 1991 poll conducted by Wirthlin Group for Readers Digest reported that 34% of whites in the U.S. considered themselves to be Pro-Life while 53% of blacks considered themselves to be Pro-Life. In the same poll 47% of whites and 65% of blacks totally favored amending the U.S. constitution to protect the right of unborn children to live. The same poll also found that 53% of white and 64% of blacks totally opposed using tax dollars to pay for abortions for women who cannot afford to pay them.⁶

**Abortion Incidence**

Despite the widespread opposition to abortion among African Americans, the abortion rate among black women in the U.S. is 2-3 times higher than for white women. In 1988 the Centers for Disease Control reported that of the 1,371,285 legal abortions in the U.S., 35.6% were by black women and other women of color.⁷

In 1987 the Alan Guttmacher Institute reported 1,559,110 abortions in the U.S. 65.2% were white women, and 34.8% were women of color. Abortion rates were 2-3 times higher at
all ages among women of color compared to white women. Married women of color were 4 times more likely to abort than married white women. Since 1980 abortion rates have increased among unmarried minorities aged 15-19 and among married minorities aged 20-24.8

Based upon 298,719 abortions reported by 14 states in 1988 to the National Center for Health Statistics, the overall abortion rate was 266/1000 live births for white women compared to 598/1000 live births for black women. Married white women had an abortion rate of 68/1000 live births compared to 261/1000 live births for married black women. Unmarried white women had an abortion rate of 1131/1000 live births compared to 776/1000 live births for unmarried black women. 39.6% of white women reported a repeat abortion compared to 53% of black women. (Table I)

Among black women age 15-17, 18-19, 20-24, and age 25 and older, the percentage repeating abortion was 21.2%, 35.4%, 53.7%, and 65-67% respectively. Among black women 36.6% had abortions in the absence of a previous live birth compared to 57.2% of white women. The incidence of abortion among black women increased as the number of years of attained education increased, although this was not true for white women.9 (Table II)

This incidence of abortion has resulted in a tremendous loss of life. It has been estimated that since 1973 black women have had about 10 million abortions. Michael Novak had calculated "Since the number of current living blacks (in the U.S.) is 31 million, the missing 10 million represents and enormous loss for, without abortion, America's black community would now number 41 million persons. It would be 35% larger than it is. Abortion has swept through the black community like a scythe, cutting down every fourth member."10

**Pregnancy Decision Making**

The higher incidence of abortion among black women may be at least partially due to a lack of social and/or economic support. In a study of primarily black women with incomes at or near the poverty level from the neighborhood around the hospital at the University of Pennsylvania, it was found that the variable most closely associated with the predicted pregnancy resolution decision was the availability of another person to help care for an unplanned child. If “someone” usually the woman's own mother, was available, the woman tended to predict she would carry the child to term.11 A study of unmarried black urban adolescents in Baltimore during 1972-73 who were pregnant for the first time found that those most likely to deliver attached greater importance to religion, had a greater degree of emotional support from their moth-
ers, and had a stable, long-term relationship with their boyfriend. Among those who delivered, boyfriends were also more likely to be working fulltime. A 1984 study using multivariate analysis of various social and economic correlates of young black women in New York City found that those receiving Medicaid and those who were married were much less likely to abort.

Counselors or other professionals may also be more likely to encourage a black woman to abort. A study of women in the New York area (1973-1976) found that black mothers were much less likely to have planned their pregnancies and were more likely to have terminated unplanned pregnancies. However, white mothers were no more likely than black mothers to hold negative attitudes toward abortion. Many mothers who opposed having abortions subsequently terminated pregnancies. The data suggested that medical personnel may act as barriers to birth or abortion. The study concluded: "the findings support a social structural, rather than attitudinal or values interpretation of racial differences in pregnancy outcome among mothers."14

There is evidence that black males are less involved in pregnancy decision making than males of other races. A Chicago study interviewed 345 women seeking abortions at two clinics prior to their abortion and 2-3 weeks thereafter. It was found that black women claimed the least intimate relationships with their male partners compared to whites or Oriental women. Oriental women were the most likely to inform the father whereas black women were least likely to inform him. In a 1987 survey by the Alan Guttmacher Institute of women at 38 abortion facilities across the U.S. it was found that white women (26%) were more likely than black women or other women of color (17-18%) to say that they were influenced by their partners desire for them to have an abortion.16

**PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURIES**

The following articles, scattered throughout the medical and social literature, are studies in which African American women represent 50-100% of the sample. Most of the studies were conducted in large urban areas along the east coast of the U.S. and therefore may not be representative of African American women in the U.S. as a whole.

**Physical Injury Following Abortion**

Among 50 women (86% black) who obtained legal abortions after being denied abortion at Grady Memorial Hospital, Atlanta, Georgia in 1978-79, 12% subsequently reported at least one complication including retained placenta, hemorrhage, pelvic infection, or cervical or uterine injury in 1980-81. A small study of women in a predominately black population who had abortions at Grady Memorial hospital in 1975-79 found that the crude risk ratio of placenta previa was 1.4 for women with a history of one or more legal abortions compared with controls but it was not statistically significant. A narrow definition of placenta previa was used in the study.18

In a study at Johns Hopkins hospital of 399 adolescents (57.4% black) aged 17 or less who had abortions matched with 399 women aged 20-29 who also had abortions, it was found that adolescents had a statistically significant relative risk of 2.5 for endometritis following abortion compared to women aged 20-29. (7% v. 2.7%). Adolescents also had more cervical lacerations (1.25% v. 0.5%). The incidence of hemorrhage (greater than 500 cc) was 1.75% for both groups.19

Very little research has been done on physical injury of African American women following induced abortion and it is clear the subject has been neglected. Placenta previa is a major cause of fetal malpresentation at birth (breech or transverse lie) and is a threat to the life of the child and may be a threat to the life of the mother.

**Family Violence Following Abortion**

A Baltimore study during 1975-77 by researchers at Johns Hopkins University on mothers of 532 children (2/3 black) found that 18.2% of the abused mothers previously had one or more stillbirths or abortions com-
pared to 12.4% of the control group of non-abuse mothers. 4.3% of the abused mothers had two or more stillbirths or abortions compared to 2.4% of the non-abuse mothers. The authors called the findings "provocative" and concluded that "reproductive history and the circumstances surrounding past pregnancies may provide important clues in eliciting more precisely what family dynamics may be related to subsequent maltreatment."20

Continuing bereavement and pathological mourning following pregnancy loss has been identified as a factor leading to marital difficulty. If there is familial difficulty in containing violence, a child may be battered. Two Hidden Predisposing Factors in Child Abuse; E Lewis, Child Abuse and Neglect, 3:327-330, 1979; E Lewis, Letter, Child Abuse and Neglect, 11:589, 1987.

In a study of 1243 pregnant women recruited from Boston City Hospital during 1984-87, 7% reported physical or sexual violence during pregnancy. Participants in the study were 55% North American black and 19% foreign born black, 8% white and 19% Hispanic. Victims were more likely to have had an elective abortion compared to non-victims (50% v. 38%). The relative odds of a prior elective abortion compared to no abortion were 1.68 which was statistically significant (1.01-2.57, 95% C.I.).21

A man may have guilt feelings or anger during his wife's pregnancy which may occur if his wife had had a previous miscarriage or abortion. The male may feel somehow responsible and, if so, he will resent the baby and his wife that much more. Expectant Fathers, S Bittman SR Zulk, New York: Ballantine Books, 1978, p 134.

Psychological Injury Following Abortion

In a study at the University of Pennsylvania, 413 women between age 14-40 who underwent first trimester abortions during 1977-78 were rated on emotional symptoms on pre-abortion and post-abortion test. 35% of the women were repeating abortions. 70% of the women having a first abortion were black. 93% of the women repeating abortion were black. Post abortion scores of emotional distress of repeat abortion patients compared with women who had a first time abortion were significantly higher on interpersonal sensitivity, paranoid ideation, phobic anxiety and sleep disturbance.22

Psychological injury in African-American women following abortion has been little studied. This study is consistent with other studies demonstrating that women repeating abortion have more severe psychological and social problems than women aborting for the first time.

Loss of Religious Affiliation

In a small study of 22 women (81% black) who obtained abortions at Grady Memorial hospital in Atlanta, Georgia in 1974, there was a 25% increase in women not reporting a religion between women with one abortion and women repeating abortion. (19.1% v. 23.8%)23

Many women believe abortion is a sin and feel alienated from God following their abortion which may result from in their disaffiliation from churches.

A 16-year-old girl from a Black Muslim family who screamed in terror during the abortion had the following pre-abortion dream- "I dreamed the devil performed the abortion. He just reached up his black hand, pulled it out, and then danced around me with it in his hands while laughing and yelling." This girl felt "my mother would kill me" when she became pregnant but that abortion was "a sin, for which God will punish me."24

Breast Cancer Following Induced Abortion

A Howard University case-control study of African American women seen at their hospital from 1978-87 found an increased odds ratio for breast cancer if women had a history of induced abortions. Multiple logistic odds ratios were 1.5, 2.8, and 4.7 for women under age 40, 41-49, and 50 years or more respectively.25

This study is consistent with the majority of other studies which have also shown a correlation between history of induced abortion, particularly abortion of the first pregnancy, and breast cancer.

Increased Welfare Incidence

A study by Yale Medical School researchers among women having a first or repeat abortion at Yale-New Haven Hospital during 1974-75 found among black women
that 55.6% of the first abortion group were on welfare vs. 65.6% of those having repeat abortions. Women on welfare were likely to engage in unprotected sexual intercourse and remain exposed to repeat abortions.26

Women may become pregnant following abortion as an attempt to replace or "atone" for the earlier loss via abortion. Women are also more likely to be separated or divorced or have weaker relationships with males as abortion is repeated, and therefore receive less economic support. Thus repeat abortion contributes to a "feminization of poverty".26

**Increased Birth Defects**

A case-control study at the Yale University School of Medicine in 1974-76 found that black women under 30 who delivered babies with a congenital malformation had a significantly increased likelihood of induced abortion (odds ratio 1.7), although this was not true for white women (odds ratio 0.7). Overall, the odds ratios which were above unity were inquinal hernia (1.4), anencephaly (1.3), poly-syndactyly (2.7); downs (1.5). Black women had higher rates of prior induced abortion than white women.27

Although this study appeared in the literature in 1979, there have been no follow-up studies published. It is of considerable importance to know whether abortion increases the likelihood of birth defects, particularly since abortion incidence increases over time.

**Substance Abuse Following Abortion**

A study of 697 Boston inner-city women during 1984 to determine the extent of cocaine use during pregnancy found that a history of two prior abortions doubled the rate of cocaine use (19% v. 9%), and a history of three or more abortions tripled the rate of cocaine use (9% v. 3%) compared with non-cocaine users. 62% of the cocaine users were North American blacks and 4% were identified as other blacks. 47% of the non-cocaine users were North American blacks and 19% were identified as other blacks.28

A study of 253 inner-city Boston adolescents served at Boston City Hospital during 1984-86 found that a history of a prior elected abortion increased by twice (33.0% v. 16.3%) the likelihood that the adolescent mother was using alcohol, marijuana or cocaine. 67.9% of the drug or alcohol users were American black. 8.9% were foreign-born blacks, 44% of the non-users were American blacks, 14.9% of the non-users were foreign-born blacks.29

Women may use alcohol or drugs following abortion to overcome nightmares or insomnia and to repress the abortion experience. Alcohol and drug abuse which frequently follows induced abortion is a risk factor for HIV/AIDS in women. In a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control, drug abuse was an associated cause of death in 26.5% of the HIV/AIDS deaths of black women aged 15-44 in New York and New Jersey during 1987. This was the leading cause of death for this population. Impact of the HIV Epidemic on Mortality of Women of Reproductive Age - U.S. Chu et al., JAMA. 264(2):225. July 11, 1990.

**Death of Women from Abortion**

Black women are more likely to die in childbirth and also die as a result of abortion compared to white women in the U.S. The overall maternal death rate among U.S. women from 1979-86 was 9.1 deaths per 100,000 live births. The maternal mortality ratio was 3.4 times higher for black women than for white women. (22.0/100,000 v. 6.5/100,000). Maternal deaths which totalled 2644 included 1363 from live births, 263 from stillbirths, 343 from ectopic pregnancy, 124 from abortion (induced and spontaneous) and 24 from molar pregnancy.30 The Centers for Disease Control also reported that the rate of mortality from legal abortions and abortion related deaths from 1977-82 was 0.6 per 100,000 abortion procedures for white women and 1.8 per 100,000 abortions procedures for women who were black or other races.31

Black women are also more likely to die from abortion by dilation and evacuation or from a concurrent ectopic pregnancy at the time of abortion.32 Teenagers of black and other minority races have a rate of death from ectopic pregnancy almost 6 times that of white women in the same age group.33
Abortion Not Necessary For Advancement of Black Adolescent Women

African American adolescents with an out-of-wedlock pregnancy carried to term need not have their education unduly interrupted, nor result in chronic dependence on welfare. These were the findings of a long term study started in 1966-68 when abortion was illegal by researchers at the Population Studies Center at the University of Pennsylvania on black inner-city adolescents. The study found that 70% resumed high school after delivering and one-half had completed high school after 5 years. Two out of three completed high school within 10 years, while 30% of the women had at least some education at secondary levels and 5% had graduated from college.

Researchers found after 5 years that the responses of the women to the out-of-wedlock pregnancy varied greatly. Some women had hastily married the father. When these marriages were successful, they closely resembled that of former classmates who had delayed marriage and childbearing until their early twenties. Others developed innovative styles of coping, put off marriage and resumed their education. These women, when they restricted further childbearing and made child care arrangements (often with relatives), often managed to achieve economic independence. Still others were not so successful and by age 20-21 had become resigned to a life of economic deprivation (ultimately this was about 1/4 of the group).

At the time of the follow-up interviews in 1984, 71% of the black Baltimore mothers had graduated from high school and the entire group of women had attained an average of 12 years of education. However, in contrast to the 5 year follow-up when nearly 2 out of 3 of the mothers had married it was subsequently learned that half of those early marriages were dissolved and among those that were intact, a substantial portion were reported to be severely troubled. Many of the women who were single at the 5 year follow-up despaired of their chances of finding a partner. Many of the women ended up with fewer children than they said they had wanted (they averaged 2.3 children). One reason for the relatively low incidence of child birth was due to the high incidence of sterilization. By 1984, 56% of the black mothers had been sterilized.

In 1984, slightly fewer than one-quarter of the women had received public assistance in the previous year. Although 70% of the women had received welfare assistance sometime over a 17 year period, only 12% of those who went on welfare during the first 5 year of the study (1967-1972), were still receiving public assistance in 1984.

Women who were not married at the 5 Year follow-up were over 3 times more likely to be receiving public assistance in 1984. The authors concluded "marriage itself appears to contribute little to a women's economic chances... only those who married early and stayed married escaped economic disadvantage". Children living with their biological father or with a surrogate father were far better off economically than those living in female-headed households. 66% of those living with a biological father had a family income of over $25,000, compared with 41% of those living with stepfathers, 12% of those whose mothers were living with a boyfriend, and 8% of those whose mothers were not living with any partner.

At the 20 year follow-up in 1987 it was found that nearly two-thirds of the daughters of adolescent mothers delayed their first birth until age 19 or later. However, (based on limited data) it was concluded that their unmarried daughters with children had bleaker economic and educational prospects than their mothers. For example, the daughters were more likely to believe they would not marry before age 25. The unmarried fathers in the older generation were more likely to have been furnishing economic support and continued contact with their children than males in the younger generation. The younger generation had greater reliance on
welfare than the older generation. The authors also thought that access to abortion would tend to filter out the more ambitious and talented teenagers who would have become parents a generation ago.

It was concluded that extensive educational and social services would be necessary lest the current generation of teenage mothers be trapped in poverty.35

Thomas W. Strahan, Editor, compiled the research in this newsletter.

Footnotes


6. For Richer, For Poorer, Jack Fowler, Human Life Review, XVIII, No. 4, pp 29-40, Fall, 1992


15. Predicting the Psychological Consequences of Abortion, LR Shusterman, Social Science and Medicine, 13A:683-689, 1979


23. The Repeat Abortion Patient, J Leach, Family Planning Perspectives, 9(1):37, Jan/Feb, 1977


27. Induced Abortion and Congenital Malformation of Offspring of Subsequent Pregnancies, MB Bracken, TR Hoford, Am. J. Epidemiology, 106(4):425, 1979


29. Drug Use Among Adolescent Mothers: Profile of Risk, H Amaro, B Zuckerman, H Cahal, Pediatrics, 84:144-150, July 1988


