

“A Pregnancy Must not be Terminated!” (1933)

Abstract

The Nazi regime controlled access to abortion and contraception in accordance with its philosophy of racial hygiene. “Pure-race,” hereditarily healthy women were supposed to be completely denied access to abortion, whereas women deemed inferior on the basis of race or health were allowed, or even forced, to terminate their pregnancies. Jewish women, for instance, could have legal abortions starting in 1938. This was not the case, however, for “Aryan” women, and doctors, nurses, and midwives who performed abortions on them exposed themselves to the severest punishment. As of 1943, performing an illegal abortion could lead to the death penalty. The image reproduced here was part of an exhibition titled “A Healthy Woman, A Healthy People,” which first opened in 1932 at the German Hygiene Museum [*Deutsches Hygiene-Museum*] in Dresden and after 1933 was shown in several other cities. The warning on the image reads “A pregnancy must not be terminated! Beware of counseling and treatment by unqualified persons!” It is telling that the older woman who obviously performs abortions is portrayed as a witch-like figure of “non-Aryan race” in contrast to her “Aryan” client.

Source



Source: © Stiftung Deutsches Hygiene-Museum

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