Race, Maternity, and the Politics of Birth Control in South Africa, 1910–39
Frontispiece 1  “The Viljoen family,” a poor white family in rural Transvaal. Mrs. Viljoen is an example of the poor white mothers that the birth-control movement attempted to reach in the 1930s. The portrait was taken in 1929 by E.G. Malherbe during his work for the Carnegie Commission of Investigation on the Poor White Question (1929–32).

Source: E.G. Malherbe Manuscript Collection, Killie Campbell Africana Library, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Durban.
Frontispiece 2  “Angela with her daughter,” in Rooiyard, an African slumyard in Doornfontein, a neighborhood near central Johannesburg. The portrait was taken in the 1930s by Ellen Hellmann in the course of research for her study, *Rooiyard: A Sociological Survey of an Urban Native Slum Yard* (not published until 1948). In 1937 the Race Welfare Society began to offer birth-control services through a clinic for African and Coloured women on Buxton Street in Doornfontein in hopes of attracting women like Angela.

*Source:* Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
Mother and baby, St. Monica’s Home, Cape Town, in the 1930s. In 1917 the Anglican Church in Cape Town established St. Monica’s Home as a maternity home for poor women, and in 1921 expanded its services to include an ante-natal clinic. St. Monica's served poor “Coloured,” Muslim and white women in Cape Town, including Woodstock and Salt River, two neighbourhoods also served by the Cape Town Mothers’ Clinic. Thus, this mother represents the many Coloured women who visited the Mothers’ Clinic in the 1930s.

Source: Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
Race, Maternity, and the Politics of Birth Control in South Africa, 1910–39

Susanne M. Klausen
To Brian Egan
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List of Abbreviations

ACVV  *Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging* (Afrikaans Christian Women’s Union)
CAVS  Cape Association for Voluntary Sterilization
CBC  Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress
CHO  Chief Health Officer
CYL  Congress Youth League
DPH  Department of Public Health
DRC  Dutch Reformed Church
ESSA  Eugenics Society of South Africa
GNP  *Gesuiwerde* (Purified) Nationalist Party
ICU  Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union
MC  Mothers’ Clinic
MCC  Mothers’ Clinic Committee
MOH  Medical Officer of Health
MP  Member of Parliament
MPH  Minister of Public Health
NBCA  National Birth Control Association
NEUM  Non-European Unity Movement
NP  National Party
OFS  Orange Free State
PPASA  Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa
RWS  Race Welfare Society
SAIRR  South African Institute for Race Relations
SAAAS  South African Association for the Advancement of Science
SAMJ  South African Medical Journal
SANCBC  South African National Council for Birth Control
SANCMFW  South African National Council for Maternal and Family Welfare
SAP  South Africa Party
SPH  Secretary of the Department of Public Health
TB  Tuberculosis
UP  United Party
VD  Venereal Disease
WFAVS  World Federation of Associations for Voluntary Sterilization
List of Birth-Control Clinics
Established in South Africa
in the 1930s

Benoni

- A birth-control clinic established in 1933. In 1938 it was taken over by the municipal health department.

Cape Town

- The Mothers’ Clinic opened at 234 Main Road in Observatory on February 15, 1932 and moved to 354 Main Road the following year.
- In 1936 a birth-control clinic was established in the Divisional Council VD and TB clinic in Grassy Park.
- In 1938 the Cape Town City Council established a birth-control clinic in Maitland under the supervision of the Mothers’ Clinic Committee (MCC).
- In 1939 a birth-control clinic was established in a Divisional Council clinic in Hout Bay.

Durban

- A birth-control clinic, the Mothers’ Clinic, was open for a few months in 1936.

East London

- The East London birth-control clinic opened in 1936.

Johannesburg

- The Women’s Welfare Centre opened in Sauer’s Building on Loveday Street on February 4, 1932. It was renamed the Central Clinic in 1937 and moved to Welfare House on Fox Street in 1940.
- The Traveling Clinic for white women opened in Vrededorp and Jeppe in 1937.
• A birth-control clinic for Coloured women opened in the Methodist Church in Ferreira in August 1935. It closed in January 1936.
• A birth-control clinic for Coloured and African women opened on Buxton Street, Doornfontein, in January 1937.
• A birth-control clinic for Indian women was opened by July 1935, location unknown. In June 1939 the clinic was moved to Crown Road in Fordsburg.

Pietermaritzburg

• The Pietermaritzburg Mothers’ Welfare Society opened the Mothers’ Welfare Clinic in October 1933.

Port Elizabeth

• The Port Elizabeth Married Women’s Welfare Centre opened in 1933. By April 1938, the Port Elizabeth Committee had seven clinics under its supervision, two in the city, one at New Brighton, and rural clinics at Uitenhage, Addo, Kirkwood and Longmore.

Pretoria

• A birth-control clinic was established in July 1932.
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Susanne Klausen,
Ottawa
Map 1  Map of Union of South Africa, 1910.