

## Chapter Sixteen

### HEAR ME FOR MY CAUSE

*"Speak clearly if you speak at all  
Carve every word before you let it fall"*

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES



ONCE Amos Pinchot asked me how long it had taken me to prepare that first lecture I delivered on my three months' trip across the country in 1916

"About fourteen years," I answered

I was thinking of all the time that had passed during which experiences, tragic and stirring, had come to me and were embodied therein

So much depended on this speech, the women of leisure must be made to listen, the women of wealth to give, the women of influence to protest. Before starting April 1st, I tried to put myself in their places and to see how their interests and imaginations could most effectively be excited, how the pictures which had so unceasingly beset me could best be brought to their minds. I felt certain that if I could do this, they would do the rest.

But the anxiety that went into the composition of the speech was as nothing to the agonies with which I contemplated its utterance. My mother used to say a decent woman only had her name in the papers three times during her life—when she was born, when she married, and when she died. Although by nature I shrank from publicity, the kind of work I had undertaken did not allow me to shirk it—but I was frightened to death. Hoping that practice would give me greater confidence, I used to climb to the roof of the Lexington Avenue hotel where I was staying and recite, my voice go-

ng out over the house tops and echoing timidly among the chimney  
pots

I repeated the lecture over and over to myself before I tried it  
on a small audience in New Rochelle. I did not dare cut myself adrift  
from my notes, I had to read it, and when I had finished, did not  
feel it had been very successful. By the time I reached Pittsburgh,  
my first large city, I had memorized every period and comma, but  
I was still scared that if I lost one word I would not know what  
the next was. I closed my eyes and spoke in fear and trembling. The  
aborers and social workers who crowded the big theater responded  
so enthusiastically that I was at least sure their attention had been  
held by its content.

It was interesting to watch the pencils come out at the announce-  
ment that there were specifically seven circumstances under which  
birth control should be practiced.

First, when either husband or wife had a transmissible disease,  
such as epilepsy, insanity, or syphilis.

Second, when the wife suffered from a temporary affection of the  
lungs, heart, or kidneys, the cure of which might be retarded through  
pregnancy.

Third, when parents, though normal, had subnormal children.

Fourth, when husband or wife were adolescent. Early marriage,  
yes, but parenthood should be postponed until after the twenty-third  
year of the boy and the twenty-second of the girl.

Fifth, when the earning capacity of the father was inadequate, no  
man had the right to have ten children if he could not provide for  
more than two. The standards of living desirable had to be con-  
sidered, it was one thing if the parents were planning college edu-  
cations for their offspring, and another if they wanted them simply  
for industrial exploitation.

Sixth, births should be spaced between two and three years, ac-  
cording to the mother's health.

All the foregoing were self-evident from the physiological and  
economic points of view. But I wished to introduce a final reason  
which seemed equally important to me, though it had not been taken  
into account statistically.

Seventh, every young couple should practice birth control for at

least one year after marriage and two as a rule, because this period should be one of physical, mental, financial, and spiritual adjustment in which they could grow together, cement the bonds of attraction and plan for their children

Like other professions, motherhood should serve its apprenticeship. It was not good sense to expect fruit from buds—yet if womanhood flowered from girlhood too soon it did not have a chance to be a thing in itself. I offered a hypothetical case. Suppose two young people started out in marriage, ignorant of its implications and possibilities. The bride, utterly unprepared, returned pregnant from the honeymoon—headaches, nausea, backache, general fatigue, and depression. The romantic lover never knew that girl as a woman, she forever after appeared to him only as a mother. Under such circumstances marriage seldom had an opportunity to become as fine an instrument for development as it might have been.

I wanted the world made safe for babies. From a government survey significant conclusions had emerged as to how many babies lived to celebrate their first birthday. These were based largely on three factors: the father's wage—as it went down, more died, and as it rose, more survived, the spacing of births—when children were born one year apart, more died than if the mother were allowed a two- or three-year interval between pregnancies, the relative position in the family—of the number of second-born, thirty-two out of every hundred died annually, and so on progressively until among those who were born twelfth, the rate was sixty out of a hundred.

I claimed that sympathy and charity extended towards babies were not enough, that milk stations were not enough, that maternity centers were not enough, and that protective legislation in the form of child labor laws was not enough. With all the force I could muster I insisted that the first right of a child was to be wanted, to be desired, to be planned for with an intensity of love that gave it its title to being. It should be wanted by both parents, but especially by the mother who was to carry it, nourish it, and perhaps influence its life by her thoughts, her passions, her rebellions, her yearnings.

So that all babies born could be assured sound bodies and sound minds, I suggested in lighter vein that the Government issue pass-

ports for them, calling the attention of the audience to the fact that adults in this country would never think of going abroad without a government guarantee to ensure them safe passage and preservation against harm or ill-treatment. If this were necessary for grown persons journeying into a foreign land, how much more important it was to protect children who were to enter into this strange and insecure new world.

I reminded them also that no one would consider embarking in the medical or legal profession without due preparation. Even cooks or laundresses scarcely applied for positions without experience proving they were qualified to undertake their tasks. But anyone, no matter how ignorant, how diseased mentally or physically, how lacking in all knowledge of children, seemed to consider he or she had the right to become a parent.

In the same tone I proposed a bureau of application for the unborn. I pictured a married couple coming here for a baby as though for a chambermaid, chauffeur, or gardener. The unborn child took a look at his prospective parents and propounded a few questions such as any employee has the right to ask of his employer.

To his father the unborn child said, "Do you happen to have a health certificate?"

And to the mother, "How are your nerves? What do you know about babies? What kind of a table do you set?"

And to both of them, "What are your plans for bringing me up? Am I to spend my childhood days in factories or mills, or am I to have the opportunities offered by an intelligent, healthy, family life? I am unusually gifted," the baby might add "Do you know how to develop my talents? What sort of society have you made for the fullest expression of my genius?"

All babies came back to the practical question, "How many children have you already?"

"Eight."

"How much are you earning?"

"Ten dollars a week."

"And living in two rooms, you say? No, thank you. Next, please."

I was trying to make people think in order that they might act. My part was to give them the facts and then, when they asked what

they should do about them, suggest concrete programs for leagues and clinics. Many women had far more executive and administrative experience than I, and I still expected them to carry on where I left off so that I might be free to return to Europe.

My hopes seemed well-founded when many of the Pittsburgh audience waited afterward to request help in organizing themselves. Thus the first state birth control league was formed. This and all subsequent ones I referred to Mrs. Dennett's National Birth Control League to be under its future direction.

That meeting had been held under the sponsorship of Mrs. Enoch Raugh, a philanthropist of great courage. In the early days almost everywhere I went the subject of birth control was one likely to make conspicuous those who identified themselves with it. Average well-to-do persons hesitated except for the Jewish leaders in civic affairs who, as soon as they were personally convinced, showed no reluctance in aligning themselves publicly.

Not so did Chicago respond. Some members of the powerful Women's City Club had privately asked me to speak, but when the matter was brought up before their board, the unofficial invitation was officially canceled. Here again were conservatives enjoying the benefits of birth control for themselves but unwilling to endorse it for the less fortunate of their sex. When they did not listen, I tried to reach the women of the stockyards directly.

So many hundreds of letters had come to me—not only in English, but also in Hungarian, Bohemian, Polish, and Yiddish—clamoring for information, that I had every reason to suppose what I had to say was going to be welcome on Halsted Street. I was incredulous when I met an unforeseen resistance.

Hull House and similar settlements had been established to help the poor to help themselves. But I found that although social agencies had originally striven to win confidence by opening milk stations and day nurseries, this aim had been somewhat obscured in the interests of sheer efficiency. Many welfare workers had come to treat individuals merely as cases to be cataloged, arrogantly proclaiming they knew "what was best for the poor", a type had developed, and those who belonged to it were lacking in human sympathy. Instead they expanded their own egos through domination.

Their desire to build up prestige and secure a position of importance in the community had formed a civic barrier, a wall, in fact, around the stockyards district, preventing any new concepts, people, or organizations from coming in without official permission. The stockyards women were literally imprisoned in their homes from advanced ideas unless they went out into other sections of the city.

Because this ridiculous situation had arisen in Chicago, no hall could be had in the immediate neighborhood. I could have held no meeting there had it not been for Fania Mindell, one of the many idealists of that time who threw themselves into the fight for the oppressed as an aftermath of their own sufferings and repressions in Russia. She had a devoted and self-sacrificing nature which made her work, slave, toil for the love of doing it. She made all the arrangements, producing an audience of fifteen hundred from the labor and stockyards environs.

These first lectures in Chicago and elsewhere attracted women in swarms, paying their twenty-five cents to fill the auditoriums, I remember that one offered her wedding ring as the price of admission, to be redeemed on pay day. They brought their children, and more than once I had to lift my voice above the persistent cooing and gurgling of a front-row baby. There was a natural understanding between infants. If one were given a bottle, another began to cry. A third in the back joined the chorus, or a small boy on the side aisle whispered shrilly, "I wantta go home!" I just ached to see those many babies, because I knew what their mothers had come for—definite help to stop having more—and it could not be given them.

Often at these meetings I saw some woman sitting down near the platform holding a bunch of wild flowers, daisies, Queen Anne's lace, or butter-and-eggs, waiting to present me with the little bouquet, to tell me that since she had received my pamphlet, she had "kept out of trouble." No matter how phrased, the gratitude was genuine.

Over and over again someone popped up in front of me, and extended a hand, "I used to subscribe to the *Woman Rebel*. I got all your pamphlets from England."

When I asked, "What's your name?" with the answer, like a flash, came the number of children and the locality, and the story sent me years earlier. And, "Didn't you live in Des Moines?" I continued

Seldom was it the wrong place In this way I came across dozens of "friends" who had been among the original two thousand

I was advised by Dr Mabel Ullrich of Minneapolis not to go there because the Twin Cities were the most conservative in America "You won't get six people," she prophesied

"Do you think I'll get six?"

"Perhaps "

"Then I'll go "

I was prepared to speak wherever it was possible, regardless of attendance Six people, properly convinced, usually made sixty people think before very long In spite of Dr Ullrich's warning, hundreds of chairs had to be brought in to the Minneapolis Public Library to take care of the overflow

People were frequently surprised at the size of my audiences I should have been surprised had it been the other way about, although I did not like too many present because the subject was too intimate for great numbers in large halls All came because birth control touched their lives deeply and vitally, they listened so earnestly, so intently that the very atmosphere was hushed and unnaturally quiet

Here in Minneapolis arrived a telegram from Frederick A Blossom, Ph D, manager of the Associated Charities of Cleveland, whom I had met there Would I speak at the National Social Workers' Conference then being held in Indianapolis? He could not get me placed on the program, but the two subjects that were currently arousing considerable interest were the prison reforms instituted by Thomas Mott Osborne at Sing Sing, and birth control He believed it was worth my while to come

Since I had nearly a week before my scheduled meeting in St Louis, the time fitted in very nicely and I seized the occasion I did not expect definite action, but I did yearn to arouse dissatisfaction over smoothing off the top, to say to these social workers plodding along in their organizations that I thought their accomplishments were temporary, and that charity was only a feather duster flicking from the surface particles which merely settled somewhere else They could never attain their ideal of eliminating the problems of

the masses until the breeding of the unending stream of unwanted babies was stopped

Blossom, polished, educated, and clever, had a charming and disarming personality, and an ability far above the average Part of his work had been to cultivate the rich, and in this he had been eminently successful because he was so suave, never waving a red flag in front of anybody's nose as I did, my flaming Feminism speeches had scared some of my supporters out of their wits

This master manager knew exactly what to do and how to go about it Notices were posted throughout the hotel and left in every delegate's mail box, announcing the meeting for four in the afternoon, the only hour when we could have the big amphitheater Although round-table discussions were going on at the same time, it was jammed to the doors, people were sitting on the platform and on window sills and radiators

I was almost startled that so many of those from whom I hoped for co-operation should turn out in such numbers Walter Lippmann said, "This will kick the football of birth control straight across to the Pacific" And, indeed, the social agents, like the plumed darts of a seeded dandelion puffed into the air, scattered to every quarter of the country, thereafter, to the West and back again, I heard echoes of the meeting

During the previous weeks in various cities it had been hard to be alone a minute Women with the inevitable babies kept calling on me in hotels and so did men setting out to their jobs early in the morning, carrying their lunch boxes I was so mentally weary with strain that it seemed I must get away from humanity for a little while if I were to retain my sanity Worst of all was the ever-present loneliness and grief—the apparition of Peggy who wanted me to recognize she had gone and was no longer here

I slipped into St Louis two days ahead so that I could be by myself, registering at the Hotel Jefferson and asking not to be disturbed But the telephone rang before I even had my suitcase unpacked, a reporter had seen my name at the desk and requested an interview I replied I could not give it, I was not in St Louis so far as he was concerned Saying to myself, "Good, I've escaped that,"

I went to bed. But next morning a ribbon on the front page of his paper announced I was "hiding" in the city. In my ignorance I had violated the etiquette observed by welcoming committees, and mine was highly indignant. I had little rest.

Among the group of backers was Robert Minor, an old friend, formerly an outstanding cartoonist on the *New York World*, who had been dropped because he had refused to draw the kind of pictures about Germany his employers wanted. It had been arranged that I was to have the Victoria Theater Sunday night, which had already been paid for in advance so that the meeting could be free. However, at a quarter to eight when we arrived, the building was in total darkness and the doors were locked. The proprietor's office was closed, he was not at home, there was no means of finding out anything. Actually, he had temporarily effaced himself because he did not wish to admit that he had been threatened with a Catholic boycott of his theater, and had been promised protection against a possible suit for breach of contract.

At least two thousand people had gathered and were filling the air with catcalls, hisses, hurrahs, cries of "the Catholics run the town! Break in the door!" Minor urged me to stand up in the car and give my speech, but without its proper setting I was lost, here was a type of battle needing an experienced campaigner. Although I did not feel adequate, I began, but my voice could not surmount the uproar.

I was barely under way when a police sergeant reached up and seized my arm. "Here now, you'll have to come down. You can't talk here."

"Speech! Speech!" yelled the crowd. "Go on!"

But the owner of the car, to my great relief, started his engine. I sat back in the seat with a thump and off we went.

The incident had repercussions. The Men's City Club, regarding the event as a blot on the fair name of the town, asked me to speak at their luncheon the next day, and I promised to wait over. Although forty Catholics then resigned in a body, St. Louis would not be coerced, and more than a hundred new members joined immediately.

William Marion Reedy, owner and publisher of the famous

*Reedy's Mirror*, had been at the closed theater. He printed a cartoon showing the Capitol of the United States with a papal crown on it, stated editorially that the Pope was now dictating to America what it should hear and think, and emphasized the consequent dangers to the country if any religious group were allowed such domination. "No idea let loose in the world has ever been suppressed. Ideas cannot be jailed in *oubliettes*," was his peroration.

After I had left the Middle West and reached the Rocky Mountains the atmosphere changed. I was struck even by the attitude of the bellboys and waiters at the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver. In New York you were served by trained foreign men and boys—Italian and French. Here they were American-born, blue-eyed, fair-complexioned, strong-jawed. Without bowing or obsequiousness they brought your food and carried your bags as if doing you a favor. You hesitated to give them a tip, though, as a matter of fact, they never refused it.

I loved Denver itself. It seemed to me the women there were the most beautiful I had seen—fresh, charming, alive. They had long had the vote and used it effectively. Because they believed in Judge Ben Lindsey's juvenile court, they had kept him in office in spite of the concerted antagonism of picturesque but corrupt politicians.

Although Judge Lindsey had bitter enemies in exalted places, he had loyal friends also. When Theodore Roosevelt had stopped there in 1912 on his Western Swing, the Judge was facing opposition. The city fathers did not want to include him as a substantial citizen on their platform committee of welcome. Roosevelt peered vainly about among all these bankers and business men. "Where's Ben Lindsey?" he asked.

"We don't talk about him around here."

"Don't we? Well, he's a friend of mine. I shan't say a word until Ben Lindsey comes and sits on this platform beside me."

Nor would he speak until Lindsey arrived, everybody had to wait.

It was a high point for me at this time, so soon after my own court appearance, to have Judge Lindsey preside at my meeting. Formerly my listeners, with the exception of Indianapolis, had been chiefly of the working class. Here they were wives of doctors, lawyers, petty officials, members of clubs.

I was more than delighted to have an audience which had the power to change public opinion. The "submerged tenth" had no need of theories nor the proof of the advantages of family limitation, they were the proof—the living example of the need. It was vitally important to have reflective hearers who not only themselves used contraceptives, but who advanced thought through literature, discussions, and papers. To them I was telling the story of those millions who could not come, and trying to relate it as I knew it to be true. Stimulating them offered the best possibility of getting something done.

Judge Lindsey invited me to sit on the bench with him the next morning, and I watched enthralled the way he handled his cases. The familiar court method was punishment, and the more punishment the better. But he operated on the new psychology. For instance, he attempted to inculcate a sense of responsibility in one boy who had disobeyed his mother and run away from school, by showing him his indebtedness to her, how he should be helping rather than causing her grief.

The same tactics were employed in the case of Joseph, charged with assault on his wife, Nelly, who stood silently in the background, shawl over her head. Lindsey read the evidence, then said, "Joseph, come over here."

Joseph stepped nearer, appearing somewhat guilty, as men of his status usually did when they came into court.

"What's this I hear about you? Why did you strike Nelly?"

"She made me mad," Joseph mumbled.

"Joseph, turn your head and look at your wife. Look at her! Look!—thin, pale, weak, and you a big strong man striking that delicate little woman. Aren't you ashamed of yourself to beat Nelly? You who promised to love, honor, and protect her?"

The reprimanding lasted fully two minutes. Finally tears began to spring from Nelly's eyes and to run down her face. She moved forward, took Joseph by the hand, and said, "Oh, he's not so bad, Judge." Joseph then embraced her. Instead of punishing him, which would in effect have also been punishing Nelly, Judge Lindsey put him on parole to report back in two months' time, and husband and wife went out arm in arm.

One of the hardest things for a judge in a lower court to combat is the prejudice of the police against those who already have records. Judge Lindsey, when a case came up before him, never took the word of the ward heelers, but had his own secretary, employed and paid by him, go to the home and investigate, and he held the case until this had been done. But I thought then that either Judge Lindsey was heading straight for trouble, or Denver had a kingdom of its own where freedom reigned.

A similar attitude of liberality prevailed on the far side of the Rockies. In many places where I had previously spoken, policemen had been stationed at the doors. Occasionally they had even come to the hotel to read my speech, as at St. Louis and Indianapolis. But in Los Angeles officials of all the city, even the representatives of the women's police division, met me at the station or called on me in a friendly way.

I was still as terrified of speaking as in the beginning, I used to wake up early in the morning, sometimes before it was light, and feel a ghastly depression coming over me. I realized it was the impending lecture which was so affecting me, and I waited in trepidation for the hour. My physical illness did not grow better until I was on my feet and well into my subject.

Though this was my first visit to the West, I had no time for scenery. Whenever possible I traveled by night and arrived during the day, and by this stage of my trip I was seemingly always tired. The dead grind went on and on, an endless succession of getting off trains, introductions, talking to committees, pouring yourself out—and nothing happening. Physically and psychically it was one of the lowest periods of my life.

Someone in San Francisco did a lovely thing for me. I never knew who she was, but at the end of one meeting she picked me up in her car and swept me away into a forest of huge, tall trees where the sun broke through. There she left me for fifteen minutes in the midst of a cathedral of great evergreens with the sky overhead and myself alone. I have never forgotten the peace and quiet.

I found the West Coast a lively place. Ideas were being constantly thrashed out. Every discourse had a challenging reception. Emma Goldman had been there year after year and had stirred peo-

ple to dare express themselves. All sorts of individuals catechized you, and if you were not well grounded in your subject you were quickly made aware of your ignorance. The Wobblies spent hours in libraries, not only keeping warm, but trying to find points on which to attack the next lecturer who should come to town. Often those most eager were considered cranks—on diet, free trade, single tax, and free silver—so familiar that their rising was hailed with groans. I never minded having questions asked, though everything I knew was questioned. It was as well for me that, in addition to my Malthus, I knew my Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, my Henry George, Marx, and Kropotkin. It seems to me that today the tone of audiences has deteriorated, queries rarely have the same intellectual grasp behind them.

My welcome at Portland was delightful. The sixty-year-old poet, C. E. S. Wood, dapper and gracious, made a practice of greeting personally women speakers, dedicating poems to them on their arrival, and sending bouquets of flowers to their hotel rooms. The City of Roses did much to entertain its visitors.

Here I was invited by a church to address its congregation following the evening service. I had not been very well in the afternoon, but I promised over the telephone to be there if I could. I was late and the meeting had already begun. As I slipped in at the rear I heard the chairman refer to me as a Joan of Arc. Entirely too many Joans of Arc were floating about in those days. Not wishing to be a disappointment I turned right around and walked back to the hotel. Since no one had ever seen me, both my entrance and exit went unremarked.

I admired robust, vital women, they appeared so efficient, and I regretted the fact that I did not give the same impression. I felt that way, but could not help resembling, as someone phrased it, "a hungry flower drooping in the rain." If I were in a room with ten people and somebody came in who expected me to be present, she invariably approached the biggest woman and addressed her, "How do you do, Mrs. Sanger?" For a brief while I tried to make myself seem more competent-looking by wearing severe suits, but this phase did not last, for one thing, effective simplicity cost money and I did not have enough to be really well-tailored. However, the

anonymity due to my appearance was, on the whole, fortunate I was always able to go along any street, into any restaurant or shop, and seldom be identified, and this made it possible for me to maintain a relatively private life

A dinner was given at Portland, the chairman, who had seen Susan B Anthony and many other women with causes come and go, made a short speech of introduction I rarely remember what people say on such occasions, but one of her statements has remained in my mind "I would like to see Margaret Sanger again after ten years Most movements either break you or develop the 'public figure' type of face which has become hard and set through long and furious battling But her cause is different from any other I have ever known I should like to see how she comes out of it "

I have thought of this many times—how, if the cause is not great enough to lift you outside yourself, you can be driven to the point of bitterness by public apathy and, within your own circle, by the petty prides and jealousies of little egos which clamor for attention and approbation

One of the first persons I met in the city was Dr Marie Equi, of Italian ancestry and Latin fire Definitely, she was an individualist and a rugged one Her strong, large body could stand miles and miles on horseback night or day She had been brought up in the pioneer era when medical work was genuine service If cowboys or Indians were in fights, difficulties, jail, Dr Equi was always on hand to speak a good word for them

It was in Portland that I realized *Family Limitation*, which had been crudely and hurriedly written in 1914, needed revising The working women to whom it was addressed needed the facts It had served its purpose in its unpolished state, but the time had now come to reach the middle classes, for whom it required a slightly more professional tone Dr Equi gave me genuine assistance in this matter

The wider the distribution of the pamphlet, the happier I was Since it had not been copyrighted, anybody who wanted to could reprint as many as he wished, and I W W lumberjacks, for example, transients without families who moved to California for the crop harvesting in the summer, often thus provided themselves with a little extra money as they journeyed from place to place When

they unrolled the blankets draped over their shoulders out dropped a half-dozen or so pamphlets

An automobile mechanic of Portland had made one of these reprints and asked me whether he could sell it at my next meeting I myself had never distributed *Family Limitation* publicly, but if any local people wanted to do so, I had no objection Accordingly the mechanic and two of his friends sold copies and were arrested Their trial was postponed so that I could deliver my proposed lectures in Seattle and Spokane

When these were over I came back to serve as a witness, and at another meeting held the night preceding the trial four more of us were arrested, Dr Equi, two Englishwomen, and myself I was tremendously gratified by seeing women for the first time come out openly with courage, over a hundred followed us through the streets to the jail asking to be "let in too We also have broken the law "

The city jail was nice and clean and warm The girls, who were not locked in cells, scampered around talking over their troubles and complaints with Dr Equi, and receiving condolence and wholesome advice in return

The seven of us were tried together the next day Two lawyers took upon themselves the responsibility of defending us, and they were splendid We were all found guilty The men were fined ten dollars, which the Judge said they need not pay, the women were not fined at all

The papers made a great to-do about the affair but it was not a type of publicity of my choosing and did little to bring the goal nearer The year 1916 was filled with such turmoil, some of it useful, some not The ferment was working violently Everybody began starting things here and there Many radicals, some of whom I did not even know, were distributing leaflets, getting themselves arrested and jailed Meetings were being held in New York on street corners, at Union Square, Madison Square

You had to keep a steady head, to be about your business, to make careful decisions, to waste the least possible time on trivialities, it was always a problem to prevent emotional scatter-brains from disturbing the clear flow of the stream The public, quite naturally,

could not be expected to distinguish between purposeful activities and any others carried on in the name of the movement

Emma Goldman and her campaign manager, Ben Reitman, belatedly advocated birth control, not to further it but strategically to utilize in their own program of anarchism the publicity value it had achieved. Earlier she had made me feel she considered it unimportant in the class struggle. Suddenly, when in 1916 it had demonstrated the fact that it was important, she delivered a lecture on the subject, was arrested, and sentenced to ten days.

Ben Reitman, who used to go up and down the aisles at meetings shouting out Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth* in a voice that never needed a megaphone, was also arrested when the police found on the table of her lecture hall in Rochester several books on birth control. One of these was by Dr. Robinson, who had hastily published a volume purporting to give contraceptive information. The unwary purchaser discovered when he came to the section supposed to give him the facts for which he had paid his money that the pages were blank and empty.

Of far greater interest to me was the decision of Jessie Ashley, Ida Rauh, who was Max Eastman's wife, and Bolton Hall, a leader in the single tax movement, to make test cases on the grounds that the denial of contraceptive information to women whose health might be endangered by pregnancy was unconstitutional since the Constitution guaranteed each individual the right to liberty. These three had themselves arrested on birth control charges. They were all three convicted and given a choice of fines or terms in prison. They paid the former, announcing that they would appeal, but, most unfortunately, as it turned out later, they did not carry through their intentions.

A sympathetic thing if not a wise one was being done by a young man in Boston named Van Kleek Allison, who started handing out leaflets to workers as they emerged from factories. Early in the summer he gave one to a police decoy, was arrested and sentenced to three years. Dear old Boston, the home of the Puritan, rose in all its strength and held a huge meeting of protest on his behalf.

This was the occasion of my first heckling. A Jewish convert to

Catholicism, named Goldstein, began belligerently to fling questions at me. It was not in the sense of trying to find out the answers, but as though he had them wrapped up in his own pocket and were merely trying to trap me, and he, in turn, had his answers ready for mine. But after my Western experiences I was not unprepared and was aided, furthermore, by other members of the audience who spoke in my defense when he became almost insulting.

I never made light of questioners and never judged any question too trivial or unworthy of an honest response. I believed that for each person who had the courage to ask there must be at least twenty-five who would like to know, and I have never assumed anyone was seeking to trick me into giving illegal information, even though his inquiry might appear as intended to confuse me or be vindictively thrust at me. I usually replied, "That's an interesting point. I'm glad you raised it," and then proceeded to discuss it as best I could.

Another heckling in Albany resulted in a joyous reunion. Somebody in the audience insisted my work was unnecessary. I would ordinarily have paid no attention, not considering the statement at all personal. But there arose a lady, wearing a high lace collar propped up with whalebones, and a hat that sat flat on her head, a ghost out of my school-girl days. "I am acquainted with Margaret Sanger," she stated. "I have slept with her, I have lived with her, I have worked with her, I have delivered her, and I have named my baby for her." Here was dear old Amelia come to champion me. Her type of dress had remained the same as fifteen years before, but so had her loyalty and wit. The lecture over, we went back together to her home in Schenectady, she hauled out from the attic scrapbooks and photographs and snapshots taken at Claverack, and we sat on the floor and rocked with laughter until three in the morning.

When I returned to New York after my long trip I took a studio apartment in what seemed like a bit of old Chelsea on Fourteenth Street way over between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. Gertrude Boyle, the sculptress, had the one below me, and my sister Ethel moved in above. Occasionally father came down from Cape Cod to spend some time with us.

Although it was never quite warm enough, because it lacked cen-

tral heating, it hardened me physically, and the open fireplaces, stoked incessantly by expansive and voluble Vito Silecchia, the Italian coal vendor, kept the air fresh and clean. The lovely high ceilings, the tall windows, and the broad doors flung wide between the rooms, gave an atmosphere of space, and the marvelous carved woodwork was a joy. The windows in the rear were draped with light yellow curtains, reflecting an illusory glow of sunshine. Above one of these grew a Japanese wistaria vine, whenever I looked up I saw this little bit of spring