

THE BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

Dedicated to the Cause of Voluntary Motherhood

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Number Three

THE FIGHT FROM COAST TO COAST

CLINICS, COURTS AND JAILS

By Margaret Sanger

THE MALTHUSIAN DOCTRINE TODAY

By C V Drysdale, D Sc

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THE BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

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CLINICS, COURTS AND JAILS

By Margaret Sanger

IN FEBRUARY, 1915,, when I heard Dr J Rutgers at The Hague give his last instructions to one of his maternity nurses, as she left his class fully equipped to open a clinic in one of the outlying districts, I knew that the people of the United States would never be fully aroused to the needs of birth control until such a clinic was also established here. My course of instruction which followed in Holland was taken solely for this purpose, the execution of which seemed to be a thing of years to come.

Upon returning to America in November, 1915, to take up the fight in the Federal Courts, the possibility of opening such a clinic came very suddenly after my case was dismissed on February 18th, 1916, without coming to trial. I was then free to lecture throughout the United States, to tell the people what birth control means to the individual, to the family and to the race. For four months I visited all the large cities to and from the Pacific Coast and was greatly encouraged because of the fact that the idea of disseminating contraceptive information by means of clinics with trained persons in charge was always greeted with the most profound interest. I came to the conclusion that a practical test of the law would have the moral endorsement of all thinking people in this country.

Shortly after this, plans were carefully laid and districts especially chosen to open a clinic in each borough of Greater New York. The Board of Health's report was to be my guide. The idea was to conduct the work where records showed the highest death rate, infant mortality, etc. If perchance we were allowed to remain unmolested, the results would speak for themselves, by comparison, in the next Board of Health report.

For weeks and weeks, I trudged the streets looking for rooms suitable for the purpose. At last I found some on Avenue A, between 21st and 20th Streets, New York City, and another in Brownsville, Brooklyn, and paid a month's rent in advance. This relieved me of all available cash for the time being.

Everything was ready—plans, enthusiasm, nurses, translators, vision, decision—everything, but the finances.

FOR NEARLY A WEEK I waited for the call to action. It came one afternoon when five women with babies in their arms called on me. They came from Brownsville. They had left the other children with one of the women in the tenement where they lived, while they came to seek advice. They told of the ravages of infantile paralysis in their district, of the low wages of the men, of the high cost of food. They told how the neighbors talked of the clinic, what a blessing, a godsend, it would be over there.

That night a friend called me on the phone and said fifty dollars had been sent to her from a woman in Los Angeles to give to me to use as I wished. The next day Fania Mindell and I started out to equip the place with chairs, desks, floor covering, curtains, stove, basins, etc. A week later,

October 16th, 1917, we opened the doors of the first Birth Control Clinic in America. The opening of these doors was a great social force in the lives of modern womanhood.

There was not a darkened tenement, or a hovel or hut, but was brightened by the knowledge that motherhood can be voluntary, that children need not be born into the world unless they are wanted and a place provided for them.

For the first time women talked openly of this terror of unwanted pregnancy, which had haunted their lives since time immemorial.

From the start the newspapers in glaring headlines, used the words "birth control" and carried to all who read, the message that somewhere in Brooklyn there was a place where contraceptive information could be obtained for all over-burdened mothers who wanted it!

From the first day, the little outer waiting room was crowded. The women came in pairs, with their neighbors, with their married daughters and their husbands. Some came in groups with nursing babies clasped in their arms. Some came from the far end of Long Island, from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey. They came from near and from far to learn the "secret" which they said the rich women all possessed and the poor women could not obtain. No unmarried women came—all were mothers, except one woman, married twelve years, but who could not carry a child to full term, and who came for advice. Her physician knew she could not bear a child and yet allowed her to conceive, month after month. Her health had been ruined and she was almost a nervous wreck when she came from Connecticut to seek advice.

Fania Mindell acted as the interpreter and took down the histories of the women as fast as she could get them. We recorded the nationality, the age, the husband's wage, the number of children living, number of children dead, number of miscarriages performed and whether by doctor or midwife, the reason for not desiring more children, whether for health, social or economic reasons.

ETHEL BYRNE, a trained nurse assisted me in advising and explaining and demonstrating to the women how to prevent conception. As most of the records, so carefully taken, were confiscated by the detectives when they made their arrests, it is difficult to tell exactly how many women came there in those few days to seek advice, but we roughly estimate that between 480 and 500 women's names were placed on the records. Hundreds of letters also poured in each day from all over the United States, telling sad and tragic tales of mothers ready to commit suicide, ready to go to any extreme or torture rather than endure child birth again.

Then one day, while I was absent making preparations for the opening of the Avenue A rooms, a woman came ostensibly to seek advice. She was of Irish type, with detective stamped plainly all over her. She told her story of

a large family, a brutal husband and several abortions and received advice from the nurse, like all those before her

A few days later, the same woman came in charge of a detective squad and arrested Fania Mindell, Ethel Byrne and myself

Then began months of activities quite beyond description. All the forces of opposition were on hand to malign individuals and to misrepresent the cause. The influence of the Roman Catholic Church was seen everywhere. It was especially seen in the Court's refusal to allow us a jury trial, and in refusing to allow physicians to present such medical testimony as was necessary in challenging the constitutionality of Section 1142 of the Penal Law of New York State.

Comstock's successor was also present to represent the "Society for the Suppression of Vice," but everywhere, and at every turn, the strongest opposition came from the subtle underground workings of that Church which apparently dominates American courts of justice and political life today.

We all spent one night in jail and were allowed out on bail. I returned to the clinic and opened the doors but was re-arrested on the charge of "maintaining a public nuisance." The landlord had a court order to eject me from the premises, but this action was finally dropped.

FROM OCTOBER 25, 1916, to June 1, 1917 most of my time was spent in courts and jails and in preparing and collecting facts for the trials and appeals for the higher courts. However, time was found to start *The Birth Control Review* in February, 1917. There were lectures given in cities, such as Chicago, Rochester, Paterson, Newark, Bridgeport and two to three each week in private homes in New York City. The police of Albany refused to allow a meeting, and in Buffalo too they refused to rent us a hall in which to speak on the subject. Then there was the preparation of a birth control film play, depicting the needs of birth control in American life among the poor. Again the Church exerted its influence openly, the film was forbidden to be shown. Countless hours were given to interviews to reporters from near and far who came to learn the facts. Then came women, old and young, frequently calling on me at seven in the morning, hundreds and hundreds of letters to be answered and phone calls to the amount of 80 to 107 in one day. Often the telephone operator would say, "You have had a hard day, haven't you?"

The greatest interest was stimulated when Mrs. Byrne, indignant at the outrageous sentence imposed on her and the treatment accorded her by the Court of Special Sessions, declared she would protest against her imprisonment by refusing to eat or drink until she was released.

For nearly a week she remained obdurate, and finally to keep her from dying the authorities in charge removed her to the hospital ward where she was forcibly fed. On the eleventh day she was released from the Workhouse, pardoned by Governor Whitman, taken to her home in an ambulance and placed under the care of two doctors and nurses until her health was partly restored.

The week after her release Fania Mindell and I were

both found guilty. A fifty-dollar fine was imposed on Miss Mindell and a thirty-days' sentence on Blackwell's Island on me. Both cases were at once appealed. The Court of Appeals reversed the decision in Fania Mindell's case. My case has gone up to the Supreme Court of the United States.

When one sums up the activities of the movement throughout the United States during the year, it is interesting to note that where arrests were made, where sentences were imposed upon advocates, there the movement is now strongest.

Thousands came when the interest was highest. Some came for selfish interests, some to inquire, some to exploit. Those who came to dally in sentimentality soon found themselves face to face with fundamental problems often too big for superficial minds to grasp. Those who came to be thrilled by the excitement of the moment are today still seeking thrills in other movements.

To the women of New York I am grateful, especially to the mothers of Brownsville. Day after day they came to the court and waited patiently for the case to begin. Other duties were put aside while they stood beside us in the fight for birth control, for woman's right of ownership and dominion over her own body.

All together, the year's work can well be considered one of the greatest educational efforts of this generation.

BIRTH CONTROL

By George Lyssander

SOMETIMES it comes over me with an overpowering sense of wonder—

The children that are born and the unborn
The deviation by a hair's breath affects all eternity
Had I returned a day sooner, this swarthy son
Would have been a blue-eyed daughter
What has become of the daughter?
She might have been and never will be
Millions of souls clamoring for birth on this old earth
Do they know what they ask so beseechingly?
Why do you knock so insistently at the gates of life?—
Is it this life that you want or something beyond it,
And is there no other road?

Do I hear a sound as of ten billion baby voices cooing
"Love invites us, draws us, and we cannot stay"

O my beautiful babes! do not rush into this snare!
You besiege the rotting doorways of infested tenements,
You risk birth into dirt, disease, degradation,
You must toil until you lose all sense of beauty,
You will ache and agonize in body and spirit
You may be born on Fifth avenue and be unwelcome
Or on Canal street, where your brothers fight for food,
You may grow up to be the prey of greed and lust—
Do you think it is love who bids you come to us?
It is love who bids us, who suffer, bar the gates against
you—

Bar them with tears and hungry longing in our hearts

(Courtesy of the New York Call)

THE FIGHT FROM COAST TO COAST

REPORTS OF THE LEAGUES

(This issue of *The Birth Control Review* is mainly devoted to an account of the fight for birth control in the United States during the past year. In addition to Margaret Sanger's personal story on Page 3, we present hereunder reports from nearly all the leagues formed as a result of the clinic she founded and her subsequent arrest, trial and prison sentence—Editors)

NEW YORK CITY

1 National Birth Control League

IN SPITE OF THE discouraging conditions due to the war, the National Birth Control League has some significant work to report. Some of the more important phases of it are as follows:

Co-operative relations have been maintained with local, state and city leagues in Massachusetts, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Washington, D. C., Cleveland, Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Portland, Ore., Seattle, and San Francisco.

A Woman's Committee of one hundred was formed in New York City to give special help to Mrs. Sanger's work and to promote the educational and legislative work of our league. This committee, while not an official part of the National League, has always worked in closest connection with the league, and in many cases the work of the two bodies has been so nearly merged that the separate identity almost disappeared.

The membership of the league has been more than doubled during the year. A bill was introduced into the New York legislature, providing for the amendment of the penal law by omitting from Section 1142 on Indecent Articles, the words "the prevention of conception." This amendment is the simplest possible and still the most thorough means of removing the ban on birth control information. The bill also provided for an amendment to section 1141 regarding obscene publications and articles "of indecent or immoral use," which specifically provides that publications giving methods of birth control or articles designed for the avoidance of conception, are not to be deemed obscene, because of their aim.

An amendment to the Federal Law was drafted, but it was not considered practicable to have it introduced while the war legislation had the exclusive attention of Congress.

Plans were made for a National Conference of all the birth control groups of the country, for the purpose of unifying aims and perfecting methods of work. But, as in the case of the national legislation, war conditions made it necessary to postpone the conference. All the branch leagues were consulted and the consensus of opinion was that the time was not opportune.

LARGE TEMPORARY headquarters were opened through the generosity of a friend, who gave the league the use of an entire floor of a well located business building at 21 West 46th Street, New York, City. For over two months weekly meetings, and for a time daily meetings, were held here. Large quantities of literature were sold and distributed. During the same period, the league and the

Committee of One Hundred held numerous other meetings varying from small parlor conferences to large public affairs—luncheons, dinners, and mass meetings.

Five new leaflets and pamphlets were published and widely circulated.

The league co-operated with the producers of two excellent moving picture films which were subsequently suppressed by the authorities although they were not open to the slightest adverse criticism.

From January till August, the league had an admirable executive secretary in Mrs. Augusta Cary, whose resignation meant serious loss. Because of the increasing pressure of war conditions and shortage of funds, there has since been only volunteer service in the office until recently.

But now the League is practically reborn. It was impossible that a work so imperatively necessary should die down and remain dormant. And everything that was planned before is now being taken up again with new vigor.

Funds are being raised. The New York bill is being re-introduced. A special piece of intensive educational work is being started in New York state, under the direction of Mrs. Mary Ware Dennett particularly in the districts of those members of the legislature, who have the balance of the power in the chamber. Aid is being given to *The Birth Control Review*, and several members of the executive committee of the league are also members of the Board of Directors of the Review. Plans for the National Conference are being revised. New Literature is being published.

All this and more will mean quick victory, so far as the laws are concerned if every one who believes in birth control will help. Money and work are needed at once.

The league urges every one, who wants to see rapid progress, to do these four things:

Join the league (Dues One dollar a year) Headquarters 200 Fifth Avenue, New York City)

Subscribe to *The Birth Control Review*

Send for a sample set of all the leaflets and pamphlets (25 cents)

Order a quantity of those you consider most useful and distribute them as widely as possible.

Mrs. AMOS PINCHOT, Chairman

2 Birth Control League of New York

THE BIRTH CONTROL League of New York was formed in December, 1916. Its objects, as stated in the articles of incorporation, were:

1 To support Margaret Sanger in her legal fight for birth control.

2 To secure such amendment to the State and Federal Laws as will allow physicians and registered nurses to give scientific instruction in birth control.

3 To advocate and encourage birth control as a means of safeguarding the health of mothers and children and promoting the social welfare

In pursuance of the first of these objects, it raised funds to assist in the conduct of the cases of Margaret Sanger and her assistants in connection with the Brownsville birth control clinic, organized a mass-meeting in Carnegie Hall on the eve of Mrs Sanger's conviction, tendered her a testimonial banquet upon her release from prison and in various ways assisted in her attempt to have the present New York law on this subject overthrown

In conjunction with the International Child Welfare League, this organization secured the services of the Legislative Drafting Bureau of Columbia University in the preparation of a bill aimed to grant physicians, midwives and registered nurses the legal right to give instruction in means of preventing conception

During the time of its existence, the New York League has carried on printed and oral propaganda in behalf of the principle of family limitation. It has distributed many booklets on this question and its officers and members have spoken before clubs, forums, churches, radical and other groups. The president of the league last winter made trips to Boston, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Rochester and other cities to deliver speeches and aid in organizing local birth control groups

It is the opinion of the present officers that every means possible under the present laws should be stimulated to secure the dissemination of medical instruction on this subject, through physicians and others in a position to undertake this work.

FREDERICK A BLOSSOM

WASHINGTON, D. C.

IN THE EARLY SPRING of 1916, Margaret Sanger addressed a large Washington audience. So convincingly did she present the case for birth control, that before her hearers left the hall, plans for the organization of a league were formulated. Within a month of Margaret Sanger's visit to this city about eighty men and women were banded together to co-operate with other leagues and, if possible, to act as a lobbying organization for the repeal of the Comstock law.

So far, the work of the D C league has been confined to education and propaganda. Necessary business has been dispatched in as short a time as possible and the balance of each meeting devoted to a lecture and discussion of a particular phase of the birth control question.

Charles T Hallinan, spoke at a well attended meeting of the League, on the history of the Comstock "obscenity" law, which prohibits the interstate transmission of birth control information through the mails or by express.

Representatives of the opposition to birth control were given an opportunity to express their opinions at two meetings. Dr Paul Popenoe, editor of the *Journal of Heredity*, an eminent authority on eugenics, presented objections to birth control from a eugenic standpoint, which provoked a live discussion. The League also secured Dr W C Wood-

ward, Commissioner of Public Health, to deliver a lecture on birth control. His antagonistic attitude toward this vital issue turned out to be founded on a very meagre knowledge of the subject. One can form an idea of the frivolousness of his arguments from his statement that the demand for information on how to control conception arose mainly on the part of women who sought more time for bridge parties and other empty luxuries. He repeatedly dodged every reminder of the importance of the economic factor in family life.

A successful phase of the activity of the League has been its publicity work. The newspapers are broken into whenever possible, and interest in the purposes of the organization stimulated. For example, a news agency of national scope featured an interview with the President of the League. The result was a flood of inquiries and requests by the thousands for birth control information. One day's mail brought as many as one hundred and six communications and a steady flow continued for months, coming from all parts of the United States and Canada, and as late as last week, about a year after the responsible interview, an echo was heard round the world through a letter from Australia. These letters tell stories of hundreds of varied domestic tragedies with the basic note—the lack of birth control knowledge. We can only respond with the suggestion that leagues along the line of our organization should be started.

We respectfully suggest to the government that it undertake a distribution of information on how to obtain quality in human procreation through family limitation, as it now does in connection with cattle breeding.

ANNA WEXLER, President.

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

WE HAVE HAD six public meetings since we organized in Pittsburgh a little over a year ago, and a number of local clubs have had birth control afternoons and come to us for their speakers. Two of these six meetings were held in the theatres and we had the satisfaction of packed houses.

Mrs Sanger was the speaker at our April meeting, and Mrs Mary Ware Dennett of New York and Prof Robert Sprague of Amherst spoke for us in June. We draw our local speakers from the college professors, doctors, ministers and social workers of the city.

We have just one hundred paying members, but our mailing list has about 400 names. Our best sale of literature was at the time of the Conference of Social Workers. We were particularly fortunate in distributing a large number of Dr Knopf's pamphlet. We also sold out our supply of books, but have since gotten more from the publisher.

We feel that the influence which our League brought to bear on Governor Brumbaugh of Pennsylvania, had a good deal to do with his vetoing the anti-birth control bill passed by the State Legislature.

MAIDEE B RENSHAW, Secretary,
of the Birth Control League of Western Pennsylvania.

MASSACHUSETTS

A MARTYR, EVEN A POOR ONE, is a great asset to any cause. So long as he or she is in the eye of the public, there is little to trouble over in connection with publicity, money, friends or workers. During this period even volunteer workers can fairly well take care of the activities that crowd each other. Big meetings, newspaper items, letters to the press, interviews, can all be adequately looked after by a small group without much organization. But when the martyr has been freed, after the appealed case has been decided, when the papers will print no more news and the faithful are tired of having their letters refused, then is the time when the central group must get together and make solid its organization and look to far-reaching plans if it is to live.

So it has been with the Massachusetts League. There was no League when Allison was arrested. Our martyr was certainly not of our choosing—very young, irresponsible, although well-meaning, and, unfortunately, a man. There are still those who tell us how great an injury our martyr did our cause, but we are inclined to smile and say, "Yes, undoubtedly in some quarters, but the movement had to start somewhere, somehow, and we believe that our campaign has had a certain wide-spread educational value that it would have been hard to duplicate in so short a time without some sensational features."

Our first Mass Meeting, the first ever held in Boston on the subject of birth control as far as we know, we shall never forget. We had free use of the Majestic theatre, and within ten minutes of the time the doors were opened, every seat in the big theatre was filled. All through the hot July evening the audience sat listening with the most perfect attention to our long program. The effect of that meeting was inspirational and did much to start the movement aright.

But the time for big meetings passed and we began to turn our attention to our organization. It was at this time that our good friend, Prof. Charles Zueblin, happened in at one of our business meetings. When we urged him to express some opinion, he told us in no uncertain terms that we belonged to that class of reformers who held meetings for the good of their souls while their victims roasted, or in other words their golden opportunity slipped away. We had been so eager to hold the interest of all that we were fast getting a big, unwieldy, decentralized organization, nothing if not democratic, but quite inefficient. Out of that night's meeting grew our permanent organization and constitution, which have proved very satisfactory.

WE HAD ALREADY taken a room on Bromfield Street and our Chairman of Headquarters organized our volunteers to help her keep office hours. So that our next need we felt to be some form of publication which should embody our objects and underlying principles, with a statement defining birth control and giving some slight history of the movement, together with a short bibliography. After a great deal of work, we succeeded in preparing a pamphlet of 11 pages, which fairly well answered our pur-

pose. We still have several thousand of these on hand and shall be glad to furnish them at cost to members of other leagues or to individuals wanting them for distribution.

The chairman of our membership committee, who was very energetic and capable, now began sending out mimeographed letters with statements and membership blanks to carefully selected lists. This work she kept up actively all winter and her report in June showed that 5,500 letters had gone out, 47.6% bringing responses in the form of membership dues. It is interesting to note that the subscriptions received from these letters covered all expenses of postage, mimeographing and paper with a surplus of a few dollars over.

Our Speakers and Meetings Committee chairman had secured, almost from the beginning, a few local people willing to serve us as speakers before clubs and other groups. Among these were three able women physicians whom we were very anxious to have go before the women's clubs of the State. Accordingly, the Committee sent out about 900 letters to these clubs, briefly explaining the fundamental importance of birth control and asking that the club reserve a date for our speaker. We were greatly surprised to receive only about a dozen replies and these mostly unfavorable.

As it was, we held some 20 meetings of a public, semi-public and private character in and about Boston during the winter and spring. The most important and interesting small meeting was one at the home of the President, Mrs. Oakes Ames. At this were present some of the most prominent physicians of the city.

OUR FAILURE TO WIN a hearing before the women's organizations brought home to us a need that we have felt so deeply ever since the sensationalism of the Allison case subsided,—that of a secretary-organizer. We have never been able to pay the salary required by the right sort of a person for this position, although, we were hoping that we might find a way to do this when war was declared. Our ideal has been a socially-minded physician who through her professional knowledge might speak with such authority as largely to disarm criticism.

There had been some disagreement on the subject of attempting legislation. It was finally decided at a joint meeting of the Advisory Board and the Executive Committee that it would at least do no harm to have one or more bills introduced. We had three bills, two drawn up by the League, very conservative and allowing only physicians to give the information, and the other drawn up by a doctor, a friend of the League. Over 25 legislators were approached before one would touch it and we failed then to get anyone to take any interest or responsibility, with the result that no one of the bills was reported out of committee.

Towards Spring we made a definite bid to enlist the active support of our men physicians. 1200 letters signed by a woman physician were sent out to the doctors in and near Boston asking each to be one of 100 to come out openly and simultaneously in support of birth control. We asked them to state their objections in case they were unwilling to do

this We received about 35 replies to our 1,200 letters and these were at least half of them, unfavorable, one or two quite violently so Undoubtedly the declaration of war at this time somewhat lessened the number of replies we might have received

ABOUT THE TIME of the Allison case decision, two of our lawyer friends told us that they did not believe that the Massachusetts laws had reference to the giving of oral information This haunted us for some months, and although our finances were low, we finally decided to get an opinion from a lawyer of wide reputation, choosing the late Samuel J Elder as a man sufficiently prominent and conservative to give us the opinion we sought Here is the substance of his opinion

"It is true that our statutes have reference to printed and not to oral communications, so that doctors, nurses and individuals may so far as the statute is concerned give oral information The statute does not prohibit the maintaining of an office where such information may be given, but no printed matter can be circulated giving any 'hint' that such information can be had there Even the name of the League itself on the door or on cards or on letterheads may be deemed to give such a 'hint' and therefore be prohibited" He adds that an indictment might be found at common law for maintaining a nuisance, and that the office maintained for the advancement of the cause might itself come under this general definition

We felt that this was most interesting and significant Our first duty seemed to be to inform the doctors in regard to the law since those with whom we talked seemed to think that the majority of physicians were quite unaware that the law was capable of this interpretation

In spite, however, of the temporary hopefulness given by the Elder opinion, we became increasingly depressed by the general situation that made money-getting for other than war work a serious problem Early in the Spring, we had moved from our dingy headquarters to a delightful room further up-town and our hopes ran high that here we might hold frequent and regular meetings of the League with speakers on subjects related to our own However, we began to realize that our yearly pledges would most of them not be renewed for another year and that by fall we should be facing a serious condition financially So, finally, and with much reluctance, we decided to give up our pleasant room, but to have a permanent address in the form of a post office box, so that our friends could reach us, and to hold meetings of the League often enough, to keep the interest of our something over 400 members alive until such time as we could be much more active

May we urge with all earnestness the advisability of a gathering of accredited delegates and friends of the movement throughout the United States, at the earliest possible date, so that we may know just where we stand and whether we are to live as an organized movement or not If we are to grow as such, then we should combine to strengthen the weak leagues and to put in our energy where it will bring the greatest results to the movement as a whole In some

states, like Massachusetts, where the movement at the time is weak and the opposition great, we particularly need this backing

CERISE CARMAN JACK,

Vice-President, Birth Control League of Massachusetts

SAN FRANCISCO

THE SAN FRANCISCO Birth Control League, was formed three years ago It has sailed steadily on out of obscurity and ridicule to take its place side by side with other organizations that are fighting for a better state of affairs The working class mothers, in whose interest the League was started, are beginning to take a real joy in working with it and for it This is largely due to some of San Francisco's staunch and true women

There is Mrs Jennie Arnott of Palo Alto, who was our first president, and in whose house the League was launched Mrs Arnott is one of those courageous characters who dares to clasp an unpopular movement to her heart She tells a story, of how the first woman's suffragist came to Palo Alto many years ago, to hold a meeting to further the then "disgraceful" cause, and asked Mrs Arnott to help her In due time they went out on a street corner where the suffragist held forth Men and women hurried by The men snickered and the women were duly shocked Mrs Arnott asked several college students and men to stop and listen "Nothing doing," they said At last a boy came along on a bicycle and he was persuaded to help form an audience by standing around

Well, when the first birth control propagandist (myself) came to Palo Alto, she naturally sought shelter and comfort with Mrs Arnott We held a meeting in a private house, where about twenty people had gathered At the close a little fat man violently opposed the idea But the women were silent, at least most of them

The next morning about seven o'clock Mrs Arnott came to my room and said a delegation was waiting for me downstairs When I came down, I found four women who started in to express their indignation at that fat man and to assure me how heartily they were in sympathy with birth control Each one gave me a short history of her family life, and showed how she had been robbed both of health and means in her effort to limit her family to correspond with her ability to care for it The whole thing was so dramatic in the early morning hour, with the sobbing mothers pouring out their sorrowful tales, that we felt that this was the moment to form an organization The San Francisco Birth Control League was the result

THIS WAS EARLY in February, 1915, and the following month of August the League was publicly launched in the assembly hall in the Monadnock building, with nineteen members Ernest Schaeffle, who at that time held a prominent governmental position, was elected its first president, but after serving a short time pressure was brought to bear upon him to resign Dr Gottlieb, a young doctor, then took the presidency

But I must not forget two other women—Mrs De Luce and Mrs Gorham. When times looked dark and fools and enemies sneered, Mrs De Luce always loomed up, ready to declare *that this league could not fail*, that it would go on and enlist some of San Francisco's most noted people in the cause. Mrs Gorham certainly could work. For miles and miles she tramped with me distributing cards announcing our meetings, and her tall son nailed up placards on telegraph poles, etc., advertising the League. Mrs Gorham comes from Butte, Montana, where she worked for birth control for eleven years, by going from house to house to distribute the information.

In the spring when Mrs Gorham had to return home and Mrs de Luce went to Arizona, the League sustained a great loss. In the meantime, the New Era League members came to our league's aid. The New Era League of San Francisco is a women's club of high standing. Mrs Harris Coffin, the president, and Mrs Georgia Sperry brought their influence to bear upon the press to enable us to get up a large mass meeting.

So that in the fall of 1916, when Margaret Sanger came to San Francisco, the field was prepared for some of the best and largest meetings ever held for birth control anywhere. New material now came into the League and elected an executive board which rushed into print with the statement that every member who gave out birth control information would be thrown out of the League. The result was, that we had a little housecleaning. For while the League is not formed to violate any law, but to get the law off the statute books, it is certainly not formed to do police duty against birth control. And the joke of it was that Margaret Sanger's pamphlet had been taken to many officials to inquire if they thought that it was harmful, and they usually declared that they thought that it was the best thing that could be placed in the hands of poor parents.

Every organization has its ups and downs, and those who stand in the forefront are usually those who are attacked often by "the friends of the cause," but that is in the day's work. Our League soon became stronger than ever. Margaret McGovern became its president. She is known to every worker in our city, and everyone who wants a lift for a worthy case hastens to Margaret, who is always ready to fight a good fight.

During the last year, besides our regular meetings in Emerson's Studio, we had a birth control tea, given by an artist, a mothers' meeting in a minister's house and a meeting with about twenty mothers present in a working woman's house. We also met at the Fairmont hotel, in the apartment of one of our members, and over the bay at Mrs Frank Haven's garden fete we had a booth where we distributed literature. The attendance at our meetings varies according to subject and speaker. At our last meeting on January 29th, we had an audience of about seventy women. The lecture was given by the Woman's Court doctor, on "Why Girls go Wrong." She cited cases that come up in court and showed how badly sex-education is needed in the home and in the school.

CAROLINE NELSON

CHICAGO

IN OCTOBER, 1916, the Reform Department of the Chicago Woman's Club held a meeting on the subject of birth control. The question was presented by Professor James A. Field of the University of Chicago. Much discussion followed and at the close of the meeting, a committee was appointed to study the matter. This committee, of which Dr. Rachelle Yarros was chairman held a number of conferences at which the matter was discussed from the historical, ethical, medical, sociological and legal aspects by people qualified to speak along these various lines, including the Reverend Herbert Willets, Mr Horace Bridges, Dr Alice Hamilton, Dr Anna E. Blount, Dr George Burnham Foster, Judge John Stelk, Mr Sigmund Zeisler, Mr George Packard, etc.

So much interest was developed, that a Chicago Citizens' Committee was formed with Dr Yarros as chairman. This Committee formulated a statement which was published in full in the leading newspapers.

During the winter word came to the Committee that a bill modeled on the New York law had been introduced into the legislature and referred to the Judiciary Committee. Professor Field and Dr Charles S. Bacon went to Springfield for the hearing. Dr Bacon went not only as a member of the Citizens' Committee, but as a representative of the Medical Institute of Chicago. The Illinois Medical Society also sent two Springfield representatives to protest against the proposed law, Dr L. C. Taylor and Dr Deal. Effective lobbying was done before the hearing and so much interest was developed on the part of the Judiciary Committee that the hearing was continued in the evening and attracted a large audience. The impression made was so favorable, that the bill was killed in committee, so that Illinois is still without a law which specifically forbids the imparting of information on family limitation.

Since last spring the Committee has perfected its organization and increased its membership. Its officers at present are Professor James A. Field, chairman, Mr Allen B. Pond, treasurer, Mrs Benjamin E. Page, secretary. It has held no public meetings and attempted no active propaganda, feeling that the present abnormal times are unpropitious for such activities.

GRACE R. PAGE, Secretary

MINNESOTA

The Minnesota State Birth Control League did not do very much public work during the past year, but a great deal was done in an educational way. I have been obliged, for personal reasons, to resign as secretary, and Mrs E. E. Keller, 230 Vernon Avenue, St. Paul, has been chosen in my place. She is thoroughly in touch with the work and deeply interested in it. She has also been in touch with the work done for birth control by the Socialists, which was constant, thanks to their fearlessness. Special praise is due to Mr Empey and Mrs Webster.

SYLVIE T. THYGESON

CLEVELAND, OHIO

THE BIRTH CONTROL movement in Ohio dates from Easter Sunday, April 23, 1916, when Mrs Sanger delivered two addresses before crowded audiences in Cleveland in the Chapel of the Unitarian Church in the afternoon and at Pythian Temple that evening

Later informal gatherings to consider the question of a birth control campaign led to a meeting of doctors, social workers and others at the Union Club, June 1, when a committee on organization was decided upon. At a meeting in the Unitarian Chapel, June 23, this committee's plan of organization was adopted, officers were elected and the Birth Control League of Ohio was launched on its career. Officers elected, were Dr Frederick A Blossom, President, Dr Thomas Adams, Rev Dwight J Bradley, David Gibson and Mrs C W Stage, vice-president, H G Wellman, treasurer, W B Waggoner, assistant treasurer, Mrs Percy W Cobb, secretary, and Miss Tobie Robboy, assistant secretary. An executive committee and five committee chairman of the medical, law, clinic, membership, and educational committees were appointed. A constitution was adopted giving for its objects

First—The modification of existing laws in such a manner as to allow physicians, nurses, and other competent persons, to give information concerning methods of preventing conception

Second—The extension under proper auspices of the practice of family limitation as a means of reducing poverty, immorality, crime, physical and mental defectiveness and other human ills

The speaking campaign was launched on July 3, when President Blossom, Dr Alice Butler, and Rev A T Wooley, spoke on birth control before the Congress of Mothers, in the chapel of the Y W C A. After the addresses and general discussion, it was unanimously voted to endorse the Birth Control League. On July 7, the Executive Committee met and reports were given from the various committees showing that a vigorous campaign was being mapped out

On July 14, one hundred and thirty persons attended a banquet tendered Mrs Sanger in the ball-room of the Hotel Statler

During the summer the League held weekly luncheons open to the public, and short talks on various phases of the movement were given. One of the most enthusiastic of these was the Allison protest meeting, at which a collector was taken for the Allison defense. For some time meetings were held almost daily. Twenty thousand copies of the Birth Control News were published and distributed

IN THE FALL OF 1916, Dr Blossom left Cleveland to assist Mrs Sanger in New York in the capacity of managing editor of *The Birth Control Review*. At a meeting of the executive committee Mrs Percy Cobb was appointed acting President and served until the following December

when Prof Alfred Bosch became President and Mrs Lillian Olf, Secretary

On Saturday, January 13, 1917, was held the first of a series of monthly luncheons to be held the second Saturday of each month. The speakers were Prof Alfred Bosch and Mrs Royce D Fry. There was an attendance of about seventy-five. A group of weekly study clubs under the leadership of Mrs E O Peets, was formed

On Saturday evening, January 27, Rev Dwight Bradley spoke at the first of a series of monthly meetings held the fourth Saturday of each month at the Cleveland Music School Settlement

A second issue of the Birth Control News was published and 10,000 copies ordered for distribution. A large number of organizations including business men's clubs, fraternal organizations, and mothers' clubs were addressed during the winter with a large attendance. A number of copies of Dr Knopf's treatise on birth control were sold besides a great many copies of *The Birth Control Review*. At the April luncheon Francis Barnard gave an inspiring talk on "The Morality of Ignorance." The most noteworthy address of the season was that of Dr Blossom at the City Club, on May 5. This was followed by a banquet tendered him by the League on Saturday evening and a large and enthusiastic meeting at the North Congregational Church on Sunday evening. The speakers at this meeting beside Dr Blossom, were Dr Alice Butler and Rev C W Hardendorf

MRS A W NEWMAN

SEATTLE, WASH.

RADICAL PROPAGANDISTS who, before the war had begun a campaign of education among the women in the west for the dissemination of birth control information have, to a large extent, curbed their activities in view of the more intense problems which war conditions have brought

We have had a splendid course of lectures, however, given in one of the branch libraries here. Dr G M Hawkins spoke upon "Racial Betterment" and the women who heard him left the hall with a proper understanding of their own biological make-up. Professor N J Bowman, of the University lectured upon "The Rise and Fall of The Birth Rate and Its Historical Significance," and Miss Adella Parker, a teacher of economics, discussed the question, "Is The World Crowded?" Others who have lectured before an increasing number of interested women at our regular gatherings, have been Dr Falk, Dr Griswold and Thomas Horner, a lawyer who took up the legal aspect of the birth control agitation

We held a very large meeting at Everett, but this was in the nature of a free speech fight as well. All I have time to do now with the Birth Control League is merely to try to hold it together. There is no money in the treasury. What little we did have has been given to various defense funds

MINNIE PARKHURST, Secretary

HARRISBURG, PA.

THE MOVEMENT HERE has been most successful in many ways, but the most notable achievement was securing the veto of Governor Brumbaugh in connection with the Stern Bill, which was intended to stop our work in Pennsylvania

This bill was presented at the last session of the Pennsylvania legislature, and the interests back of it were many and hard to identify. Naturally, those who attempt to have such a law passed, use underground and medieval methods. Stern, the man who presented the bill, represents all that is reactionary. He is a Penrose tool from Philadelphia.

When the proposed law was put on the House calendar, the Pittsburg group of the birth control movement requested the help of the Harrisburg Centre, and we at once used all the power at our command to halt the proposed vicious legislation. But from the start, our chances of success were small.

The Pittsburg group sent us a supply of the Knopf pamphlet on birth control, and a copy was put in the mail box of every member of the House. Letters and telegrams to the members were part of our campaign. We enlisted the support of Representative James Maurer, the lone Socialist in the legislature, who spoke against the bill. A few progressive union labor lobbyists also helped us. But, in spite of our work, only three votes were cast on the side of birth control, those of Maurer and two members from Pittsburg.

After that, we had only the Governor to depend on. We felt that he was too broad-minded to approve such a law, and we were right. His veto was strongly phrased.

We are receiving aid for the movement from Representative Maurer and Quinn, of the State Federation of Labor. Their support is of great value.

Aside from our legislative work, our activities have been confined to the spreading of birth control knowledge, particularly among the working people. No attempt has been made to build up a large membership, but on the contrary we purposely keep it small and effective.

The war has overshadowed the interest which should be taken in such work, but because there is little said, that is no indication that nothing is being done, and we hope that the education of the people will soon be completed along the lines we advocate.

G A HERRING, Secretary

ANN ARBOR, MICH.

From Ann Arbor, Michigan, comes the report of a meeting held by the wives of university professors and instructors, who are strongly behind the movement. Literature was given out at this meeting, and the wife of an influential faculty man read a paper which was very well received.

It is necessary in Ann Arbor, as in other towns of that size, to go slowly along with birth control agitation, for the people are conservative and there is the usual obstruction from physicians, especially those connected with the University hospital.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.

SINCE THE FORMATION of the League, 56 men and 189 women have been interviewed on the great and humane question of contraception. Six meetings have been held, three of which were mass meetings, two were open forum meetings and one an exclusive woman's meeting. Several parlor talks have also been held.

At these meetings, the legal, moral, medical, economic and common sense aspects of birth control were dealt with and much valuable information was gleaned. Sixteen different speakers have come to our platform. The average attendance at these meetings was 550, enrolled membership 237. 112 letters have been received, some of which were pathetic in the nature of appeals made.

A I HOUSER, Secretary and Treasurer

BANGOR, ME.

At the beginning of last year, I attempted to organize a birth control league in this city. I also prepared a public address on the subject. But I am sorry to say that I have, so far, failed in my object. From the very first, I met with strenuous opposition from both the local papers, the clergy and nearly a solid phalanx of the fifty or sixty practicing physicians here. But I have succeeded in arousing considerable interest and causing discussion of the subject in a social way throughout the city, and I hope for and expect some crystallization of public opinion in the not distant future.

P E LUCE, M D

TWO VIEWS OF LOVE

Father John A. Ryan lays it down as 'a fundamental ethical principle' that sexual intercourse for any other object than procreation is unnatural and 'a perversion of the generative faculty on exactly the same moral level as the practice of the solitary vice.'

However the Catholic priesthood may look upon the most intimate relation of man and wife, there is no doubt that a great many people look upon this as not only a procreative function but also a sacred and solemn expression of mutual love. To them it is a physical symbol of the spiritual union. Those who advocate birth control are among the foremost to advocate a hardy self control and mutual consideration in the sexual relationship in order to keep love pure and to translate it into its highest values.—*Frank V. Anderson*

FALL OF THE GERMAN BIRTH RATE

In no country in the world has such a decline taken place. Between 1900 and 1912, England shows a drop per 1,000 inhabitants from 28 to 25, France from 21 to 19, Germany from 35 to 29. Before the war, the German rate was approximately the same as that in England. In 1904-5, in spite of the fact that the English movement had nearly twenty years' start.—*Adelyne More, Fecundity Versus Civilization*

LETTERS FROM WOMEN

LETTER NO 8

I HOPE YOU WILL forgive the liberty I am taking in writing to you, but from what I have read of you I believe you will be willing to give me the information I seek

My husband is earning about eleven dollars per week as a tobacco salesman. He has to pay his own expenses, about two dollars and fifty cents a week out of that, and the balance has to pay all the expenses incidental to the keeping of a family of five. He has lost all the fingers of his left hand in an accident, so is handicapped when seeking more remunerative employment.

We have three children—one girl of eight, one boy of five and the baby boy two years old. I cannot see any future for any of them if our family increases. Have had three miscarriages since the baby came, but my health will not stand that indefinitely, as I am not very robust to start with.

It is not that I don't want any more babies, but that I cannot see that it is giving those I have a square deal by bringing more here to share the little we have. Will any of them thank me if I have so many that I cannot equip them properly for the battle of life? Those are the plain facts that have to be faced. I do not want to undermine my health that I cannot properly care for those I have, and I do not want to increase the burden by having more, so can you, and will you, help me? Mrs A H M

LETTER NO 9

I AM VERY MUCH in favor of birth control, as I speak for myself. I am the mother of nine children and if I could have prevented it without abortion there would never have been so many. Two of my children were born in one year and two more only thirteen months between. No woman can stand that and do all her own work, and now I have to sew to help support them, as my husband is not able to do hard work, and my baby is only 9 months. I sincerely hope for myself that you can send me information of some kind so I will not become pregnant again, for I cannot ever stand to come through it again, as my health is not good and I am 42 years old and certainly think I have had my share of it. Hoping you will send me this information, I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

Mrs H E B

LETTER NO 10

I HAVE BEEN READING the Birth Control Review given to me by a friend and have read it through two times and am now writing to you for help.

I am a married woman with three babies. I was married Sept 14, 1911. My oldest child is a girl, she will be six years old in July. The next one is a boy who will be four years old in July and the baby girl will be two years old in April 21st.

I have my housework to do, my washing and ironing and care for my three babies and am now a month and a little

over a week on the way for another. I have tried everything that I knew to do and everything any one else has told me but it did no good. I am so nervous I can hardly stand for my babies to come around, to talk to me or touch me. It makes my home life miserable. I have always been weak and sickly. Even when a child I suffered with my left ovary. It is very much enlarged and swollen all of the time.

I have spent all of my married life in trouble and worry and bringing children into the world and caring for them. I miscarried one last February, 1917, and again in August, 1917. It all together has made me a perfect wreck.

My husband says he wants no more babies but I have come to believe he cares more for his passion than he does for me for he won't do anything to keep me from getting pregnant.

My husband is a man who could give me a good comfortable home and make good money but he won't hold to his jobs when he gets one. That keeps me worrying myself to death all the time, for I am a woman of ambition and want to be doing something all the time.

I have always claimed good friends and many of them and been out in company all the time, but since I have been a married woman I have to stay at home with my babies for my husband says there is no pleasure in going out and taking babies.

I was 21 when I was married and am now 28 years old. I married for love and a home for I wanted a home and babies, for I love them and a nice home. But I did not marry for passion or to be breed to death. I would rather kill myself than to have any more.

Well, I guess I have told you enough to let you know, I surely have my hands full and enough troubles.

I would love to read your books on birth control, and if you will give me any advice or help I surely will do just what you tell me to do, for I do not want any more babies.

Please let me hear from you at once, as I just can't sleep and feel as if I might do something desperate, if there can't be something done to help me, and for the sake of my three babies I don't want such a thing to happen.

Your kindness will be more than appreciated. Please answer at once.

Very sincerely yours,

Mrs D L M

LETTER NO 11

I JUST TOOK TIME to write you a few lines to ask you a kind favor. I have eight children and I would like to not have any more and I am in poor health and a poor worker, and I am fairly disgusted and worried, and if you would write and tell me how I can do not to have any more, I would be a thousand times obliging to you for your kindness.

Mrs J T

THE MALTHUSIAN DOCTRINE TO-DAY

By C V Drysdale, D Sc

(Continued from the last issue)

SO MANY MISCONCEPTIONS and representations have been in circulation concerning Malthus and his doctrine that a few details of his life and work may first be given

Thomas Robert Malthus was born in 1766, at the Rookery, near Dorking, in Surrey, and was privately educated until he went to Cambridge, in 1784, and graduated as ninth wrangler in 1788, being elected Fellow of Jesus College in the year 1797. He then received holy orders, and became curate of Albury, in Surrey. At that time the flood of Utopian ideas following upon the French Revolution was at its height, and Mr Daniel Malthus, the father, was much impressed with the writing of Condorcet and of Godwin, who, in his "Political Justice," sought to prove that human happiness was easily attainable by just institutions. The son, however, disputed this, pointing out that Godwin and Condorcet had overlooked the difficulty of the expensive force of population, and his father urged him to publish his views. In 1798, therefore, appeared anonymously the first edition of the "Essay on the Principle of Population," putting forward the principle that population tended to increase in a rapid geometrical progression, while food could only be increased much more slowly, and possibly more nearly in a steady or arithmetical ratio. With this principle Malthus proceeded to demonstrate the unsoundness of Condorcet's and Godwin's views, and thus began the conflict between the population doctrine and idealistic humanitarian schemes which has always caused it to be so detested by advocates of the latter.

DESPITE THE VEHEMENT attacks on his work, Malthus was able to refute all objections, and he greatly increased the value of his Essay in later editions by traveling abroad and gleaning first hand and historical evidence in favor of the existence of powerful checks to population in the form of starvation, disease, and war, on the one hand, or of prudential abstention from marriage or avoidance of childbirth, on the other. The second edition of the Essay appeared in 1803, and 1804 Malthus married Miss Harriet Eckersall, being soon afterwards appointed professor of history and political economy at Haileybury College. The Royal Society elected him a Fellow in 1819, and he published a treatise on political economy in 1820, and formed, with Grote, Ricardo, James Mill, and Tooke, a Political Economy Club in 1821. He died from heart disease in 1834, the latter part of his life having been principally devoted to the publication of successive editions of his Essay.

Malthus's life has been recognized by all writers as a most ideal one, and as being in perfect accord with his principles. The anonymous, and by no means sympathetic writer in the "Encyclopedia Britannica" says of him

"Malthus was one of the most amiable, candid and cul-

tured of men. In all his private relations he was not only without reproach, but distinguished for the beauty of his character. He bore popular abuse and misrepresentation without the slightest murmur of sourness of temper. The aim of his inquiries was to promote the happiness of mankind, which could be better accomplished by pointing out the real possibilities of progress than by indulging in vague dreams of perfectibility apart from the actual facts which condition human life."

It will be observed that Malthus did not marry before the age of thirty-nine, in conformity with his own principles. We do not know the age of his wife, but there appear to have been only three children, two of whom survived him. The tales which are commonly told of him as having had a large family are pure inventions.

We cannot do better than first to give the doctrine of Malthus in his own words, as they not only show the clearness and moderation with which he stated it, but also his entire freedom from the errors which are continually fastened upon him. Here are a few extracts from the first chapter of the last (sixth) edition of his Essay, in which I have italicized the most important passages. It opens as follows

IN AN INQUIRY concerning the improvement of society the mode of conducting the subject which naturally presents itself is

"1. To investigate the causes which have hitherto impeded the progress of mankind towards happiness and

"2. To examine the probability of the total or partial removal of these causes in future

"To enter fully into this question, and to enumerate all the causes that have hitherto influenced human improvement, would be much beyond the power of an individual. The principal object of the present essay is to examine the effects of one great cause intimately united with the very nature of man, which, though it has been constantly and powerfully operating since the commencement of society has been little noticed by the writers who have treated this subject. The facts which establish the existence of this cause have, indeed, been repeatedly stated and acknowledged, but its natural and necessary effects have been almost totally overlooked though probably among these effects may be reckoned a very considerable proportion of that vice and misery and of that unequal distribution of the bounties of nature, which it has been the unceasing object of the enlightened philanthropist in all ages to correct

"The cause to which I allude is the constant tendency in all animated life to increase beyond the nourishment provided for it

"It is observed by Dr Franklin that there is no bound to the prolific nature of plants or animals but what is made by their crowding and interference with each others means of subsistence. Were the face of the earth he says vacant of other plants it might be gradually sowed and overspread with one kind only as for instance with fennel, and were it empty of other inhabitants, it might in a few ages be replenished from one nation only, as for instance with Englishmen

"This is incontrovertibly true. Through the animal and vegetable kingdoms Nature has scattered the seeds of life abroad with a most profuse and liberal hand, but has been comparatively sparing in the room and the nourishment necessary to rear them. The germs of existence contained in this earth if they could freely develop themselves, would fill millions of worlds in the course of a few thousand years. Necessity that imperious, all pervading law of nature, restrains them within the prescribed bounds. The race of plants and the race of animals shrink under this great restrictive law and man cannot by any efforts of reason escape from it."

(To be continued)

IS BIRTH CONTROL UNNATURAL?

W J Robmson, M D

THE ADJECTIVE "unnatural" is doing fine service in the hands of our conservative and reactionary friends. Any idea or action that they do not like, which goes against their antiquated mode of thought or ingrained habits, they stigmatize as "unnatural." If you should ask them to define the term "unnatural" or to explain why an action is unnatural, you would find them in a helpless state of confusion.

"To use any means to obviate conception is bad because it is unnatural." Why is it unnatural? Because it is artificial, because none of the lower animals do it, because we never did it when we were savages, when we lived in a state of nature.

But if by "unnatural" we are to understand anything that is artificial, anything that the lower animals do not do and that we didn't do when we were savages, then ninety per cent of our actions are unnatural.

If we cook our food, we do something unnatural! Nature does not know anything about cooking food, and if we are to eat naturally, we ought to eat all our food in a raw state. If we envelope our bodies in clothing, we go against nature and are doing something unnatural.

When we cut out a cancer from a person we are doing something unnatural. We are distinctly thwarting nature—if we did not cut out the tumor it would continue to grow until the person died and his would be a natural end. All our campaigns against mosquitoes or flies are unnatural because we are trying to thwart nature, to fight her and to frustrate her natural designs.

In short, by far the greater part of all the activities of a civilized human being are "unnatural." And the higher the civilization, the more "unnatural" is our activity. And it is because we can act unnaturally and go against nature that we have reached this high state of civilization. If we could only do "natural" things, we should still be in the state of the most primitive savage.

Do not therefore be frightened and deterred from a certain action because the silly people, the shoalbrains incapable of any thinking, designate it as unnatural. A so-called unnatural thing may be in the highest degree wise, useful and beneficent. And to use a hygienic measure, or a chemical or mechanical application for the purpose of preventing conception is no more unnatural than is the use of things for the prevention or cure of disease.

Crowding children beyond the strength of the mother and earning power of the father breaks down the mother physically, crushes the spirit of the father, stunts the children in all ways, prevents the normal development and happiness of everybody and creates material for submerged classes and social problems.—*Prof Robert J Sprague*

A CHALLENGE TO WOMANHOOD

By O Kihlstrom

THE ONLY remedy for existing social evils is reconstruction of humanity from the bottom, and it is here where the birth control movement fills its place with honor. It aims to mitigate sufferings and increase happiness, it favors children with healthy bodies and minds capable of intellectual improvement, in short it stands for quality and not for quantity. Its advocates are moved by altruistic motives, they see a vision of a grander humanity which shall arise on the ashes of ours.

The opposers of the birth control movement are misleading and deceiving the great mass of ignorant people. They have not one single argument which would not vanish in the light of reason and humanity.

Women, what are you going to do? Are you in favor of free motherhood? Do you believe it to be your sacred birthright? Do you want happier homes? Do you believe in full equality between the sexes? Then say so. This is your opportunity to voice a solemn protest against this inhuman and most diabolical law concocted by a handful of bigoted pseudo-moralists—the man-made law which forbids dissemination of knowledge pertaining to birth control.

Demand the obliteration of this infamous law, which is a disgrace to your country, and an insult to your sex. Defy the power which is ever doing its best to keep you in subjection, a power that is the enemy of all progressive ideas.

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

By Dr A L Goldwater

I recently conducted an inquiry among two hundred married members of three New York medical societies. I found that, although the average length of married life was sixteen years, the average number of children per family was less than one and a half.

Will these doctors claim that no regulation was exercised in their own cases?

Let us tear away the cloak of hypocrisy with which certain members of the medical profession enfold themselves, smugly complacent in the fact that they have sufficient knowledge for their own guidance, but too selfish or indifferent to give it to others.

THE REAL IMMORALITY

It is more than immoral for huge families to become the burden of poor parents, while the rich can obtain their physician's services in the control of births. As for the argument that many girls would become immoral were it not for the fear of pregnancy, I feel that it would be far better for a few more girls to become immoral without any illegitimate children being born, than for a large number of fatherless children to be born yearly and countless girls driven to a life of prostitution, because of either uncontrolled passion or seduction by some man for whom there is more love than prudent feeling.—*Claude T Smith*

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Birth control has been misrepresented by its opponents, We must undo that work The people must be educated, and the Review is the best medium through which this can be accomplished

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34 UNION SQUARE

NEW YORK CITY

A BARBAROUS VIEW OF CHILDHOOD

It must be admitted that, under existing circumstances, it is well-nigh impossible for poor people living in cities to properly bring up large families In the country the difficulty does not exist The farmer who has a house full of children can raise a large cotton crop children, *as soon as they are beyond the stage of infancy*, become a valuable asset to him from an economical point of view—*The Guardian*, published by the Catholic Publication Society of Little Rock, Arkansas

The forthcoming peace conference will undoubtedly call upon civilization to take away from men the dead'ly weapons used in the European holocaust Will it have the intelligence to demand that the women of the world be the ones armed—armed with knowledge of how to control the birth rate and thus make humanity too rare and precious ever to be sacrificed in another war?

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and

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

JUDGE JOHN STELK, of the Court of Domestic Relations, Chicago, has issued a report of his work in which he proves himself to be a genuine humanitarian and an exceptionally enlightened jurist. He advocates birth control, handles without gloves the war baby problem and scores the hypocrisy and inefficiency of organized charity. The poor, overburdened mother has the right, he affirms, to "guard against another mouth to feed." The same knowledge that is "given out every day to her sisters in the higher walks of life" should be extended to her. "I don't hesitate to say," he declares, "that it is a thing of sheer brutality to compel a physically debilitated wife to further burden herself and society with defective offspring, aside from the almost criminal shortcomings, with attendant misery, visited upon the latter. I am of the opinion that some day the entire question will be considered by the Federal Government." So far as we know, he drew his conclusions directly from the problems he was called upon to solve in the Court of Domestic Relations. We regard it as only a matter of time before all thinking persons with the interests of society at heart will hold similar views. But it is gratifying to find a judge in the vanguard of progress, usually men of his calling are among the last to fall in line. We shall have more to say about Mr. Stelk, of Chicago, in a subsequent issue.

WORD HAS COME that Dr. Ben Reitman has lost his appeal in the higher courts of Ohio. He was first tried about a year ago and convicted of giving out birth control leaflets. His sentence, now affirmed, was six months in the workhouse and a fine of \$1,000. Cleveland newspapers state that he began to serve this outrageous jail term on March 18. It is to be regretted that no mention was made of his case in the report of the Cleveland league printed elsewhere in this issue. Dr. Reitman does not appear to have received the full local support to which any idealist battling in this cause was surely entitled.

OFFICIAL FRANCE is crying for more children to fill the places of those who have been slain. But the people, militarized and stricken economically, are unable properly to care for all those who come into the world as it is. Let two incidents recorded in recent Paris newspapers demonstrate the point. Louis Maffert, one of the editors of the patriotic *La Victoire*, writes as follows: "We are certainly too fond of formulas. When we discover a phrase which is applicable to a problem, we repeat it with unwearied zeal. We say sanctimoniously to every woman 'Have children!' and the day before yesterday two poor girl-mothers arrived at my office, at nine o'clock in the evening, with two new-born infants. They were without food, without money, without shoes and without lodging. The hotels never seem to have rooms for unfortunates of their kind. We did our best for them and finally turned them over to the Saint Sulpice home. But, all the same, such things ought not to happen." Again, the Socialist newspaper, *l'Humanite*, tells how a father, mother and four young children, unable to meet their obli-

gations, were dispossessed in mid-winter not by a flinty-hearted bourgeois landlord, but by a munitions concern controlled by the Ministry of War, on whose property their poor lodging was located. Had the parents practised birth control, the repopulation of France would have suffered, but they probably would have been financially able to cope with their ironical tragedy.

WE WISH THAT WE had available space in this magazine to record every case of wife murder and infanticide occurring as a result of unrestricted childbearing. Every month sees scores of such tragedies in the United States, only a small proportion of which are considered sufficiently sensational to be played up in the newspapers. Of the thousands that take place in other countries we, of course, hear nothing. We have before us accounts of two incidents which illustrate the extremes of the problem. The birth of a seventh child in a poverty-stricken Italian home in New York City rendered the father temporarily insane. He stamped up and down the room where his wife was lying in bed, muttering in his despair, then drew a knife and stabbed at the baby. The mother threw herself across the little body and received a mortal wound. Horrified the man fled. In a New Jersey suburb of Greater New York, a middle-aged mother with a boy of sixteen and a girl of eleven gave birth to a third girl. This was an eventuality which she had plainly not figured upon. She brooded until her mind was affected. With a small quantity of chloroform bought at the drug store, she ended her baby's life. When placed under arrest, she stated that she had felt herself "unable to raise the child properly," that her everyday domestic work had become too formidable for her to cope with. Can any one doubt that this was a case of unwanted pregnancy? By every dictate of reason, knowledge of how to prevent conception should have been available for her, no less than for the murdered Italian mother with her seven babies produced in blindness and ignorance and probably in all too rapid succession to each other.

WE CALL ATTENTION to the prospectus on another page of The New York Woman's Publishing Company, Inc. This new organization is composed of fifteen women, who propose to leave no stone unturned to put *The Birth Control Review* on a financial basis. Application for papers of incorporation has been made, and \$10,000 worth of stock will be offered to the public at \$10 a share.

When this magazine resumed publication last December, we printed an appeal for help and told our subscribers that the continued existence of the only organ of the birth control movement in America depended upon their co-operation. The response was almost nil, but we have struggled along through the winter at a financial loss. The little group that has borne the burden cannot do so indefinitely. If YOU want your magazine to live, buy at least one share and urge your friends to do likewise. It is a case of now or never.