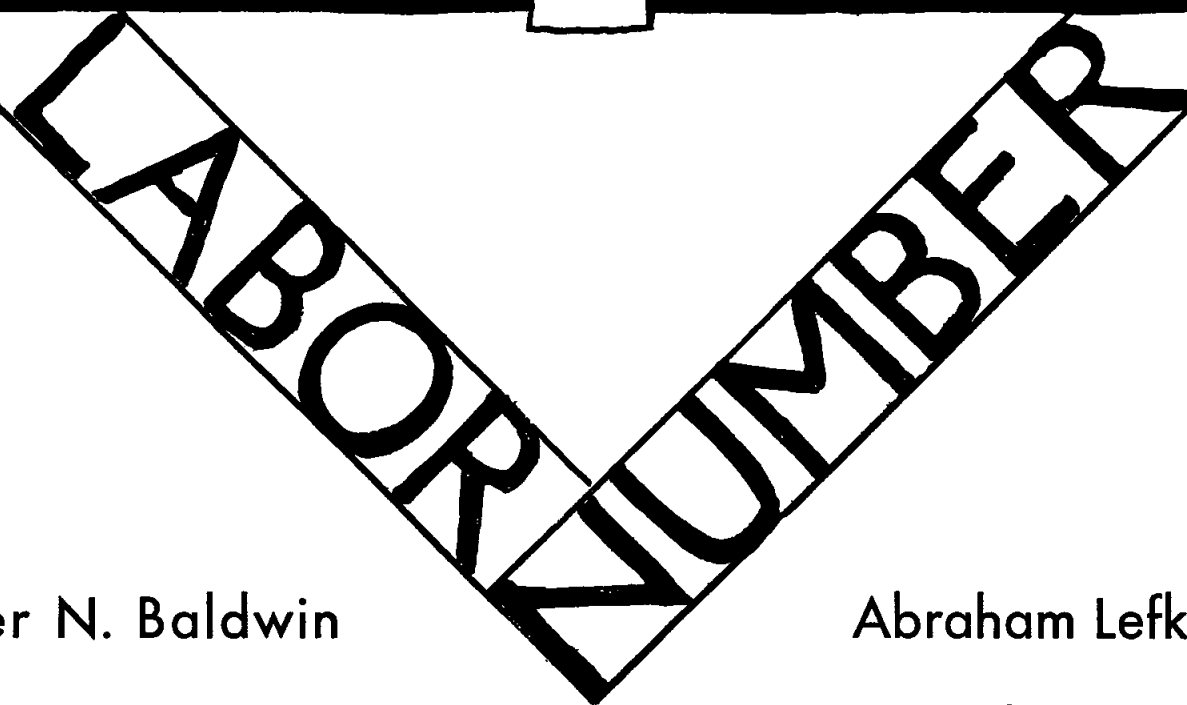


September 1929

Twenty Cents

# BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

Children of Choice, Not of Chance



LABOR NUMBER

Roger N. Baldwin

Abraham Lefkowitz

William Gropper

Carl Haessler

J. B. S. Hardman

Esther Lowell

A. J. Muste

Art Young

Norman Thomas

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# Birth Control Review

VOL XIII

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## BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

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# BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

*September 1929*

## Editorial

**I**N MARCH 1925, the Sixth International Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Conference placed itself on record as follows

The penalties of unlimited human reproduction are most severely visited upon the toiling masses. Population pressure produces war with its resultant world-wide economic instability. Children of exploited workers are forced into fields, factories, mines, and work-shops. These same children, later, as adults continue as competitors for jobs in an already glutted labor market. The very folk whose unhappy living conditions render small families imperative are the ones who because of restrictive Birth Control laws are unable to become familiar with the principal means of alleviating their lot as individual human beings, and as members of the working class. Because of these facts the organized labor movements of the world are urged (1) to become familiar with the economic and social advantages of the wise application of Birth Control principles, (2) to demand the alteration of existing laws so as to permit the sane dissemination of Birth Control information, to the end that the poor may obtain what is already available to the wealthy, and, (3) to assume the lead in inducing the workers to take an active part in the propaganda and educational work of the organized Birth Control movements in their respective countries.

This seems simple and understandable. The facts seem self evident, the conclusions obvious. But practically nothing has been done by organized labor along the lines urged by the Congress over four years ago.

We have issued this special Labor Number—using the term “Labor” in its widest sense—in an attempt to assemble and understand the reasons for this situation. “Tell us,” we said, “what organized Labor thinks about Birth Control, what the radical press has to say, or refuses to say about it, and why, what educators of young workers, and forward-looking teachers think, how the young workers themselves feel about the movement, what the politically minded radical believes, etc.” We have tried to make a composite

picture, a non-dogmatic survey, of Labor's point of view.

The result, as might be expected, is complex and contradictory, at once encouraging and disheartening, but always plausible, honest and sincere. Our thanks are due to the men and women, all prominent in their chosen fields, who have so generously expressed their ideas, and helped lay down this stepping stone of understanding between the Birth Control movement and Labor.

**T**HE seven clinics of Johann and Betty Ferch in Vienna, described in this issue, are a shining example of Labor, financing itself for its own benefit. These clinics are supported by Trade Union insurance companies, who find it cheaper to spend a little money for Birth Control, rather than a lot for sick benefits and funerals. The clinics are given adequate publicity in the labor press. The entire movement in Vienna is a Workers' movement.

There is, even in this country, a slight tendency toward an expansion of activities on the part of organized Labor. Leo Wolman, in Chapter 6 of “Recent Economic Changes in the United States” sums up the situation as follows: “Labor is much more preoccupied with unemployment, and has demanded the progressive shortening of the work week, and the acceptance by industry of its responsibility for labor displaced by improved machinery, and methodical unemployment reserve funds of various sorts have been set up. Unions have shown an inclination to engage in such enterprises as banking and life and health insurance.”

Is it not fair to assume that these activities, successfully undertaken, will develop and expand, that health insurance will open the way for preventive medicine, which in turn may well lead to an active espousal of the cause of Birth Control?

At the Institute of Politics held at Wilhamstown, Massachusetts, in August, eminent representatives of many nations discussed methods of maintaining international peace, and factors that made for war, such as naval rivalry, armament, etc. Count Giovanni Elia, Italian naval expert, asserted again and again that so far as his country was concerned, the causes of war would only be removed when Italy obtained colonies as an outlet for her population.

"With her fixed intention of maintaining peace," said the Count, "she looks to attain these colonies not by the old means of conquest, but by the award of a mandate from the League of Nations. If the revision of her present position is not effected by peaceful means, sooner or later it will be bound to be effected by war."

We cannot help wondering why none of the eminent participants at the round table discussions brought out the fact that a simpler solution for Italy would be the cessation of high power salesmanship for an increased population, and the free dissemination of Birth Control information.

THE recent death of Dr. Aletta Jacobs, first woman physician of Holland, at the age of eighty, brings to a close a life of singular usefulness in the cause of Birth Control, equal civil and economic rights for women, and the peace movement. We are indebted to Miss Henriette Hart, Executive Secretary of the New Jersey Birth Control League, for permission to reprint portions of a personal letter which Dr. Jacobs wrote to her on May 26th.

In June I shall go to Berlin to attend the World's Congress for Women. I daresay I shall have the pleasure of meeting many of my American friends there. From there I shall go to Prague, to take part in the World Peace Conference and in September I expect to go to England to attend the World Conference for Sexual Reform. All these plans subject, of course, to the condition of my health. But I intend to die in action, so I cannot and will not spare myself. Possibly I should be satisfied to stay at home and, through occasional writing, teach the younger generation. My articles are appreci-

ated. But then, a call comes from afar to help, and I must go.

It is a great satisfaction to her countless friends and admirers that this grand old pioneer had her wish, and truly "died in action."

THE New York Neurological Institute has engaged some fifty-nine leading research specialists to make what is declared to be the most sweeping investigation ever attempted into the cause and cure of crime, with particular reference to mental diseases. Everything in the field of neurology and psychiatry, bearing on crime, will be included: behavior problems, modern social problems, delinquency, insanity, epilepsy, sleeping sickness, etc. The work of the research specialists is to be coordinated and directed by a committee consisting of Dr. Frederick Tilney, Chairman, Dr. Charles Elsberg, and Dr. Walter Timme.

These eminent men at the wheel, and an adequate amount to finance the project, augur well for the results of the investigation. It is to be hoped and expected that the connection between lack of Birth Control instruction and crime will be brought out. Undoubtedly crime in the generation not yet born can to some extent be lessened if this generation has the knowledge and the power to bring into the world only those who can be given an adequate heritage, and an adequate environment both physical and psychological.

NEWS reaches us that the play "Her Unborn Child", which was seen in New York a few seasons ago, is still going strong, and is playing to crowded houses in North Carolina. Posters and hand bills are tricked out with such phrases as "Matinee, Ladies Only", "An ultra modern play every woman should see", "The truth about Birth Control." Our correspondent wisely points out that the play viciously confuses Birth Control and abortion, and should be labelled "The lie about Birth Control." We cannot stress too strongly the need for clear thinking on this point. We urge our readers to emphasize to all with whom they discuss the subject of constructive Birth Control, that it is not synonymous with abortion.

# Organized Labor and Birth Control

By J B S HARDMAN

*As Editor of "The Advance," official weekly magazine of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, Mr Hardman is well qualified to explain the point of view of organized Labor*

**T**HERE is nothing on record to indicate what is the position of Labor in regard to the Birth Control movement. No authoritative union body, international or central, has ever gone on record, one way or the other, in this matter though local divisions and trade union papers have perhaps expressed opinions on the subject.

While it is difficult to answer the question why the trade union movement in the United States has not taken a stand on the Birth Control question, it is possible to see some of the reasons for the prevailing reticence. With but rare exceptions, the American trade union movement has avoided expressing itself on matters and policies which it considered extraneous to its immediate program of action, and its purposes. The movement generally prefers to take no action in matters where there is no likelihood of getting a fairly unanimous opinion, unless these are considered of first importance to organized Labor. This seems to be a safe policy, whatever may be said for its wisdom, for a movement that is least of all worried about final programs and long range views. Certainly there is no likelihood of Labor arriving at a unanimous opinion on the subject of Birth Control, if we consider the important role which the Catholic Church plays in the councils of American trade unionism, both through the Irish leadership in a great number of American trade unions, and through those who would not pick a quarrel with their Irish colleagues. And the position of the Catholic Church is well known.

## ISSUE NOT FUNDAMENTAL FOR LABOR

It may be well to bear in mind that the American trade union movement is but loosely federated, and its policy—to avoid taking a stand in matters of no immediate concern to Labor, is not altogether unjustified. Of course, the trade union movement was not slow in arriving at conclusions in such issues as Socialism, for instance, or the recognition

of Russia. But these are not altogether outside matters, and the position taken by Labor ran along the familiar patterns of the thought of the man in the street. Such a course may not abound in beauty or magnanimity, but it seems to be safe.

Those who have given much thought to the problems of Birth Control, those who stood most of the brunt of pulling the movement out of its infancy, and up to its present state of recognition and near-respectability, may not agree with the suggestion that Birth Control is not an issue of first magnitude as far as Labor is concerned. It is fitting that proponents of a new movement should incline towards an overstatement of the importance of what they advocate. Such overstatement is necessary, if the movement is to be put across. But we must not lose sight of the relativity of values. The movement for Birth Control may, at most, be considered a fourth or fifth line of defense in the struggle for an equitable distribution of economic opportunities and social rights, with which the labor movement is primarily concerned. It is not the super-abundance of human beings on this earth that is the first cause of poverty. It is social inequality and poverty among the majority, that make Birth Control an economic issue.

## LABOR MOVEMENT MUST CONCENTRATE

Of course, the economic aspect of the Birth Control movement is by no means its only, or even its most important, claim to attention. Limited or controlled motherhood, aimed at by the movement, is perhaps as important a consideration as the economic issue. However, the present limited outlook of the trade union movement leaves no room for hope that it will take action on relatively remote matters. The order of business is crowded with too many pressing topics that require attention, but have not been acted on. Labor has all too long neglected the job of properly enforcing the organization of the organized workers, and it has not approached, in any effective degree, the

issue of organizing the unorganized. It has paid too much attention to the prevention of immigration, to leave time for thought of Birth Control. Undoubtedly a rounded out and integrated labor movement, built upon the assumption that all that is human is within its sphere of competence, will have to think and also to act on the issue of Birth Control. But our movement has not yet reached that stage.

The prediction may be made that it will be long before the trade union movement will be found actively or formally on the side of Birth Control. This does not mean that the movement does not deserve support, or that it does not bear upon the concerns of the labor movement. But since the Birth Control cause is primarily a general humanitarian and reform movement, it is better for social workers and reformers to take care of it. To entertain the hope that Labor may effectively engage in the movement, is to court disillusionment.

With a population per square mile of territory, ten or fifteen times less than that of the advanced countries of Europe, the trade union movement in the United States should not be expected to espouse a cause which is not exclusively and directly within the domain of Labor and which does not appear as very urgent. Really the American continent can comfortably house and plentifully feed the American nation multiplied several times, provided that the social order is so amended as to cease being an impediment to the growth of life. To achieve such an end we need a concerted organization of revolutionary energy along lines of greatest possible

economy and effectiveness. For the time being and considering our great poverty it may be wiser that the labor movement leave liberal reform activity to sincere liberals, and center its energies on the building up of a sizeable body of social power. Spreading too widely without sufficient reserve may prove a dangerous exercise in futility.

Birth Control is one of the few important biological inventions made in historical times. The discovery of anaesthesia and that of various methods of killing or weakening the action of harmful bacteria are the only others that are in the same class with it.

JULIAN HUXLEY



ANOTHER KID, By WILLIAM GROPPER

*New Masses*

# Labor Education and Birth Control

By A J MUSTE

*Mr Muste is Chairman of the faculty, and Instructor in History at Brookwood Labor College, contributing editor to "Labor Age," and "The World Tomorrow," and Vice-President of the American Federation of Teachers. He discusses the reasons for and against including Birth Control in a program of Labor Education*

CONTACT with the student body of a labor college such as Brookwood gives one a good idea of the job that confronts those who desire to deal with the subject of Birth Control, or develop a scientific attitude toward sex problems in general among the American workers. The student body represents a cross-section of the working class and of the American labor movement. Some are "emancipated" spirits who have for years listened to the discussion of these matters and are accustomed to ideas that others regard as dangerous or mad. It does not always follow, unfortunately, that these more advanced individuals are free from inhibitions and abnormalities, including the urge to face their less advanced fellows with the challenge "Accept my gospel or I kill you." One encounters the student of Roman Catholic faith whose church tells him that the practice of Birth Control is sinful, and the Protestant whose church does not take so definite a position on that point perhaps, but who finds it difficult to discuss sex subjects naturally and objectively because of the atmosphere of secrecy and pruriency that was drawn about them in his childhood environment. Still others come with fresh minds, possessed of little knowledge but also free from inhibitions and therefore ready to hear argument and weigh it dispassionately.

## REASONS FOR NOT DISCUSSING SUBJECT

Shall Birth Control be discussed in labor colleges and study classes, and if so, how can it be most effectively presented? An argument for keeping the subject out of the labor class-room is sometimes made and in its most plausible form would read something like this: "The primary job of a labor college is to prepare workers to improve and revolutionize their economic status through trade unions and political action. Attention is distracted from that job, which is a sufficiently difficult and complex one, when you bring in con-

sideration of so controversial a subject as Birth Control. Furthermore, you really don't get anything for your pains, because people's lives aren't governed by reason, but by the conditions in which they find themselves. It has been amply demonstrated that when standards of life improve, people begin to practice Birth Control anyway. Consequently, it will be better all around for labor education to stick to its last and concentrate on the economic problems of the workers and the methods by which they may be met."

## NO PROBLEM SHOULD BE SUPPRESSED

The argument is not altogether devoid of sense. When one has had contacts with young workers or intellectuals who become addicted to what might be called radicalism in general, who affect the latest fad on every point, simply because it is the latest, who dabble in various experiments, but all in a dilettante spirit, so that they never get into the practical labor struggle, or fight for anything by the side of their fellows, one is inclined to attach a great deal of weight to it. The present writer, at any rate, is firmly of the conviction that labor education should place chief emphasis upon the economic-political struggle in which the workers are engaged, and upon preparing them for effective participation in that struggle.

There is, however, another side to the story. The discussion of the problem of Birth Control cannot be altogether ruled out from labor education, nor would it be desirable to do so. For one thing, it is a subject about which people, especially young people, and most especially young workers, think and talk. Now, the moment discussion of a live subject is ruled out, suppressed, in any educational institution, then the very soul of education has been stifled. The chief moral requirement for clear thinking is fearlessness, the courage to face any fact, to probe to the depths of any problem. There have been attempts in recent months to

ensor labor education Such censorship must be resisted to the utmost, to whatever subject it is applied

In the second place, the economic interpretation of history is by and large sound Men in groups do not reason things out in advance and then act upon what has been demonstrated to be the reasonable thing to do They find themselves in new situations, alter their lives to meet these new situations by the method of trial and error, and then invent ideas which justify to their own satisfaction what they are doing Yet, man's interests and activities are not divided up into air-tight compartments Our economic, political, social and cultural life constitutes an inter-related complex, and each department is constantly affecting all the others

Thus, it is true that it is mainly as they rise in the economic and social scale, that Southern textile workers, whose rebellion against starvation wages and interminable working hours has challenged the attention of the nation, will escape from the influence of the ignorant fundamentalist preacher, but it is also true that they, or at least their leaders, must to some extent escape from the bondage to religious and ethical fundamentalism before they care or dare to organize in order to change their economic conditions Economic conditions determine the cultural complex, but the cultural complex has its reflex influence in helping to create or perpetuate economic conditions

#### WHAT A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM INCLUDES

For this reason labor education necessarily concerns itself with all that goes into the thinking of the workers, with the various elements in their culture, their morals, as well as with the economic and political institutions under which they live Thus, the problem of Birth Control may also have its place in labor educational institutions

There are many points in a comprehensive labor educational program where consideration of this subject would be natural and inevitable—for example, in the study of the health of workers, particularly women and children, to which far too little attention has been given by our labor colleges up to now, but which will undoubtedly receive an increasing amount of consideration, in the discussion of the budget of working class families and the items that must or should go into it, in the study of population problems from the biological

standpoint—how rapidly every animal species multiplies and could in a very few generations take up every inch of space on the earth's surface, from the historical standpoint—how by the practice of abortion, infanticide, celibacy, etc., population has actually been controlled at all times, crudely but effectively, in the study of the history of thought and culture—how certain economic conditions in the past led to emphasis on large families, and how this in turn led people to adopt certain ethical conceptions which may not be applicable when society has passed out of a pastoral or agricultural into an industrial and urban economy

#### THREE CLASSES AND ATTITUDES

When it comes to the question of a large scale campaign to stimulate consideration of the problem of Birth Control by the workers, and the development of a scientific attitude toward the subject, as distinct from study by a relatively small number who attend labor educational classes or institutions, we have the workers roughly divided into three classes There are those in some of our urban centers who are accustomed to reading books and periodicals presenting modern viewpoints, and these are for the most part already acquainted with the subject here under discussion, there are the masses of workers who are not even organized into trade unions and whose whole orientation is still a middle-class and, frequently, puritanical one, and there is the 12 per cent of our employed population in the United States which is organized into our regular trade unions It seems to me that no direct large scale campaign of agitation on the subject among these groups is likely to produce results at this time The conservative unions, partly through inertia, partly because of the attitude of certain churches, will not open their meetings or their press to a consideration of the subject This does not mean that nothing can be done or is being done The economic condition of the workers is changing, and with it new practices are adopted by them, even if they cling ostensibly to old ideas The daily press, popular magazines, movies, etc., indirectly convey new ideas Furthermore, among workers, as among other social groups, the pace is set by the active and thinking minority, and that minority through various labor educational agencies and other means is undoubtedly getting a scientific understanding of the subject and developing an active interest



# Worn Out Women of the South

By ESTHER LOWELL

*Miss Lowell writes of Southern conditions from first hand knowledge, gathered on a seventeen months camping-survey of Southern industrialism. Her findings are embodied in a forthcoming book. She was formerly manager, with her husband, Art Shields, of the New York office of the Federated Press.*

**I**F I knew anything at all about Birth Control, I'd surely teach these people. They need to know that more than anything else."

The young woman who made this remark to me is a community nurse in one of eastern Tennessee's young industrial cities. She talked to me about the poor families who flocked into the new town's factories from Blue Ridge mountain and valley farms.

"Such big families—eight, nine, ten children—are common! Often the babies come every year. And so many of the older children bring in hookworm or other diseases," she added. "The parents can't earn enough to take care of big families like that—wages are too low, so as soon as the law allows, and before, if they can get away with it, the youngsters are forced to go to work."

Boosters of Southern industrialism boast of their states' high birth rate as an inducement to attract more Northern factories. Jackson, Mississippi, for example, tells the world in the customary Southern Chamber of Commerce phrases:

"Mississippi's birth rate of 25.2 per 1000 is four points higher than the national average. There is a plentiful supply of both white and negro labor, male and female—free from strikes."

## EVILS FOLLOW OVERSIZE FAMILIES

There you have it, the sequence of oversize families, cheap labor, child labor. Traditionally, the South has been backward in restricting child labor on farm and in factory. Even today the child labor laws of Southern states are generally less adequate than those of Northern ones and usually poorly enforced. Over and over again young Southern workers have told me that they "had to go to work as a child because there were too many mouths to feed at home." That meant short schooling, illiteracy and ignorance persisting, a host of other evils following.

"None of us ever went to high school," a bright eighteen-year-old girl textile worker exclaimed to

me in a tiny mill village of North Carolina's back country. "Didn't even finish grade school." She and two younger sisters, with the part-time work of their mother, support the family, which includes an able-bodied but unemployed father and an eleven-year-old brother.

"I'm not going to stay in a cotton mill all my life, if I can help it," she said rebelliously, shaking her short-cropped dark hair. But a wasting cough wracked her and she drooped back on the bed, trying to sleep in the hot mid-day, so that she could push herself through the night shift of nearly twelve hours in the mill.

## TOO HEAVY A BURDEN

Big families, child labor, broken young minds and bodies!

On almost any Southern farm where the old-time staples of tobacco, cotton or corn are grown, child workers will be found. Pioneer conditions have continued here, while other sections of the country have forged ahead more nearly apace with the march of scientific discovery. Large families on these Southern farms still mean many mouths to feed, but also more "hands" to work the crops. The agricultural technique is still chiefly tedious hand cultivation by hoe and one-mule plow. An endless vicious circle, but as more mechanized farming comes in and schools are more accessible to farmers' children, the large family is neither essential nor desirable. Too great a burden for the mother who now bears so many children, keeps the household as best she can, and works in the field besides!

What this pioneer life without modern plumbing, modern cooking and heating, modern washing appliances, does to the women with large families is all too evident.

"My ole flapper's done wore out," a Southern workman put it with callous humor. "Had twelve children in ten years."

At my expression of incredulity, he explained the details of what was an exceptional case, but one not so far from the typical at that. There had been two sets of twins, one group of triplets, and five singly born children. Out of the dozen, five survived. The wife was stooped and sickly, with only one *snuff-stained snag* of a tooth protruding from her upper gum.

Early exhaustion of mothers doesn't come only among the poorer-paid groups of workers whose families increase too fast. In a young school teacher's case five babies were born in rather rapid succession, despite the parents' attempts to control the situation. The mother is an intelligent young woman, but her health has been sapped by the rush of child-bearing, and she hasn't the strength to raise her young ones as she wishes.

"If we just could have spaced the children further apart," she sighed to me, "I'm sure we could have kept them healthier and I wouldn't be so exhausted. Our income isn't big enough to buy all the good things to eat that growing children need, even though their father and I deprive ourselves of some foods we really should have, too."

With early marriage common in the South and the breeding period often from fifteen to forty or longer, it is no wonder that women in the thirties are frequently grandmothers and are considered really old in the forties!

Often on this trip through the South I have recalled the appreciative words of two working-class women in the Baltimore Birth Control Clinic. I was waiting to interview the doctor about her work when the two other women in the room began talking.

"We should have had something like this long ago," said one.

"Yes, indeed," the other answered. "The rich

folks knew how to stop having so many children, but we didn't have no way of learnin'."

"I love children as much as anyone, but I've had six and four 'mis-es'. I just couldn't do with more."

"Well, I've had plenty of trouble, too, before my last doctor sent me here. They didn't think I'd survive another ship."

#### BIRTH CONTROL SPREADING

Slowly the Southern states are shaking off shackles of ignorance, climbing up the ladder of better sanitation and health, reaching for new agricultural and industrial methods. But the trio of high birth rate (and high infant and maternal mortality rate), child labor and cheap labor have not been tackled. The South is plagued with unemployed thousands, just as the North is, and yet the boosters keep bragging of these three faults as though they were virtues.

A friend who has been doing trade union organizing work in the border states—Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee—assures me that the spread of Birth Control knowledge and practices of one sort or another is quite *astomishing* among the young folks of that section. Legalized distribution of contraceptive information would give these millions of coming adults a real chance for a better life than their parents had. They would get scientific knowledge instead of haphazard information from the neighbors.

Although the South is referred to by some as the "Bible belt," religious prejudice against Birth Control is not the factor that it is in Catholic communities. It weighs comparatively little against the overwhelming pressure of economic necessity, in the decision for family limitation.

## MORE LIBERTY

Our American pioneers thought that they must have spreading acres on which to make a living. To ask them to support their families by cultivation of a few acres of land would have been curtailing their liberty, agriculturally speaking, to a ridiculous extent. Their conception of liberty, like their conception of tillage was extensive. Farm as you please with no neighbors to bother, do as you please, and objectors be damned. But by

changing the ideal of farming from extensive to intensive, and by applying the same good sense to the size of the families, many not-remote descendants of these same wide-spreading, heavy-breeding pioneers are enjoying more liberty on a few acres of land with two or three well cared for children than their forbears realized out of a half-section of the former and a houseful of the latter.

THOMAS VERNOR SMITH

# Propaganda and Propagation

By CARL HAESSLER

*Mr Haessler is Managing Editor of the Federated Press His wide experience enables him to make this keen analysis of the attitude of the labor press towards Birth Control*

YOU might think offhand that a labor editor would have more than usual cause to take up and advertise the Birth Control movement. His readers are more in need of information on how to control the size of their families than the average. They include the lower income classes where an extra mouth is a serious matter and where means of preventing its coming to the family table are either unknown or often of the crudest and most dangerous sort. They include also a large proportion of such married women as regard all sex information as unclean and who are therefore particularly handicapped when it comes to learning from a compassionate doctor or friendly neighbor how to stop the next baby before it starts.

## MIDDLETOWN FINDINGS TYPICAL

The extent of this squeamishness, though it affects the health and happiness of themselves and their already existent families, is revealed in the exhaustive social study of Muncie, Indiana, in the classic work, "Middletown." Considerable attention was paid by the Lynds and their investigating staff to the question of Birth Control in Muncie. Following their usual practice, they divided the inhabitants into what they called the business class and the working class. They found that the business class used Birth Control devices as a matter of course and were not backward in discussing the subject. The working class women, on the other hand, were extremely reticent, hesitating to admit that they knew anything about it or openly conceding that they were ignorant of it. Not even when their daughters were about to marry and face the old dread of repeated pregnancies could the mothers bring themselves to talk about the facts or possibility of Birth Control.

In spite of these obvious considerations it has been the experience of *The Federated Press* that only the most courageous labor editors use the Birth Control items sent out from time to time by FP bureaus. Pains are taken to dress the items

with a labor character, so that the resistance to publishing them will be minimized. But no subject is so universally boycotted by the labor papers. Even legitimate news of the Communist movement gets a better chance of publication in the ordinary labor paper. No protests against FP policy have been more vigorous than on its release of Birth Control items.

The elected editor of a railroad brotherhood monthly magazine in Cleveland some years ago wrote to *The Federated Press* at great length against any sort of Birth Control references in its dispatches, earnestly contending that the large number of subnormal members of the economic upper class that he had noticed were the results of contraceptive attempts by the parents of the unfortunate specimens. He said further that this was even more true of the wastrel English upper class. His argument was that eugenics demanded natural instead of artificial breeding among human beings.

## SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST PRESS HOSTILE

*The Milwaukee Leader*, Socialist daily founded and edited by the late Victor L. Berger, was for many years hostile to any sort of reference to Birth Control in its columns. A major crisis in its editorial affairs was precipitated in 1920 because of censorship, by the higher-ups, of Birth Control and "bride strike" pacifist news items that the then managing editor, H. B. Brougham, regarded as vital news, but that Elizabeth Thomas and Berger decided were not to appear in the paper.

The Communist press in America for a long time pooh-poohed Birth Control publicity as a fad of the intelligentsia, but this attitude has been modified in later years, as the work the Soviet Union has long been doing in this field among its inhabitants has become better known in this country.

On the enlightened side of the account we must place first and foremost Freda Hogan of the *Ill-*

*now Miner* and *Oklahoma Leader* staff, who has fearlessly and consistently published Birth Control news items and articles on the woman's page she conducts for both publications. Other editors have not been lacking in progressiveness and stamina, possibly with her example before them. The effect of her work, reaching the wives and daughters of over 50,000 miners in the Illinois field, must be enormous.

An analysis of her favored situation for such work may throw some light on the way other editors have been hobbled. When *The Illinois Miner* was founded by Frank Farrington, then head of the Illinois district of United Mine Workers, he gave a practically free hand to the editor, Oscar Ameringer. In almost all directions Ameringer and Hogan, his assistant, could develop their progressive ideas. The woman's and children's pages received special attention. Farrington's primary interest was union politics and beyond that nothing much mattered. As a result, Birth Control news flourished, together with other indexes of civilization, and it is not improbable that many a central and southern Illinois miner's family is today more comfortable and better educated because babies were properly spaced out, and did not come at all after the voluntarily determined family quota had been filled.

#### THE CATHOLIC VOTE

Such ideal editorial situations are infrequent. It is doubtless true that political considerations dictated the one time obscurantist stand of the *Milwaukee Leader* on Birth Control. The Socialists of Milwaukee had elected a mayor, and were in hopes of converting their minority of aldermen and county supervisors into a majority. To succeed they could not afford to antagonize too sharply the strong Catholic and Lutheran vote of the city. Had not the Lord commanded the human race to be fruitful and multiply, and was not monkeying with the multiplication table disobedience to divine orders? So reasoned many otherwise progressive Catholic and Lutheran burghers of the town. And as Victor Berger used to say, "First we must conquer the economic problem, the sex problem can wait till the next century." But in spite of their political caution, the Socialist minorities were not converted into majorities, and

when it was unexpectedly discovered that a Milwaukee priest was himself quietly divulging Birth Control information to members of his flock, *The Leader* ban on such news items became lighter.

The editor of the railroad brotherhood journal already referred to is an Irish Catholic, fervent in his belief and ready to do battle for it. Labor editors, who do not have religious shackles on their spirits, often have to take orders from union officials who do, or they must consider the prejudices of the people for whom they write. A loyal son of the church angered by attempted human modification of the divine right of multiplication may vote wrong in a public ownership campaign, or stand up in union meeting to oppose a donation to a struggling labor cause in which the progressive editor is as vitally interested as in the Birth Control movement.

#### LABOR SUPPRESSES BIRTH CONTROL NEWS

In general, it is apparently true that labor editors are less ready to publish news of the Birth Control movement than any other class, except religious editors. Unless very fortunately situated or willing to take a long chance, they prefer to suppress such news. They do so, not always because they are personally opposed to letting men and women control the consequences of their sex relations, so far as this is possible, but because they are aware of the great pressure of prejudice that can still be stirred up against all their other projects, once they expose themselves on the sex issue.

*The Federated Press* once had Bill Lloyd, its homely versifier, do a Dinner Pail Epic on Birth Control. It was pointed and clever, as you will see, but it met a relatively cold reception even from papers that were regularly publishing the weekly Dinner Pail Epic on all sorts of other subjects, many with a quite radical tinge. In the last couple of years the attitude has not been quite so chilly. Labor editors have been affected by the general greater sex freedom, both in discussion and in practice, that is everywhere to be noticed. But in 1922, when the following epic was released, the labor world was still heavily chained to the old ways of thinking about sex. Here is the epic, submitted as a sample of the pioneering efforts of *The Federated Press* to popularize Birth Control as news among the labor papers.

## BIRTH CONTROL EPIC

By BILL LLOYD, (*Federated Press*)

I see some preachers, from their hole, still rail against our birth control, as if the whole of our creation were simply made for fecundation. They say it simply is a crime to suit yourself and pick the time when Mister Stork, with flapping wing, shall leave with us a wee pink thing. They say it's wrong to regulate how oft the stork comes to our gate, and if we would keep out of hell, we should let babies come pell-mell.

It may perhaps sound somewhat rough—but just where do they get that stuff? Sex specialists, like great Forel, have written books in which they tell that modern man has use for sex, aside from seeking to annex more children than he can support—which is the rabbit's special forte. Forel goes on much farther yet and tells us sex-life should beget love, cheer and personality, as well as more reality.

Young people, living on small wage, should be permitted to engage themselves in early married life, without the struggle and the strife of living constantly in need, by having numerous kids to feed. Babies are better born, I say, if we have the wit to pick the day and so don't look quite so dejected when babies come so unexpected.

The preachers say we should desist, from some things, if we would resist too large a family of our own. Their recipe just makes me groan. To which remark I rise to say, the human race ain't built that way.

Sex surely ain't the nasty thing some of our preachers seem to sing. Free us from profit-making pelf, and sex will take care of itself, and if we know what we're about, the human race will not die out. Most everybody loves a kid, but that don't mean to raise the lid, and live our lives in deadly fear the stork will come round once a year.

# Free Speech for Birth Control

By ROGER N. BALDWIN

*Mr. Baldwin is a Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, and has been an active crusader for free speech for over a decade.*

**M**Y first experience years ago with the passionate opposition to Birth Control agitation found me sponsoring a street meeting of protest in front of the theatre closed to Margaret Sanger by my Catholic friends. That was long before the war, long before the Civil Liberties Union claimed my major activities. But it was one of the first free speech lessons that sank in deep.

The two subjects, says Bernard Shaw, on which enlightenment is most needed—sex and economics—are the most under taboo. Economics in its radical challenge to privilege is a pretty clear class issue around which repression naturally centers. But Birth Control has no class basis of opposition. It is the one idea with a long record of persecution in the United States flowing mainly from Catholic sources. Catholics do not call the police to repress any other doctrine. The persecution of atheists and of teachers of evolution has always been inspired by Protestants. And these are the only other ideas without a class basis which are attacked by law and criminal prosecution.

Birth Control has made marked advance in its freedom to agitate in the years since the war. Cases of police interference are now rare. Boston is the only city in the country with an official ban on its advocacy—though it cheerfully gives the freedom of the city to its opponents.

This change in attitude is due, I think, to several factors. First, the character of the propaganda has itself changed. In the old days before the war, Birth Control was not only new, it was a favorite topic of anarchists and other "disreputable" speakers. From the public and official viewpoint it kept bad company. In recent years it has been more and more associated with the medical profession, with a scientific approach and with "nice ladies." Its gatherings often take on the air of a society function. Beside this change in the character of the agitation, the public attitude to all sex issues has become more tolerant, better informed, far more frank. And Birth Control is much more widely practiced.

When any cause gets into circles of social and

political respectability it has pretty much won its right of way. Suffrage did, Birth Control has almost done so. Where its sponsors are from a small minority section of the community, as in some Catholic cities, the road is difficult—and in Boston impassible. But those places are fewer, and the opposition meets with less success.

Despite the dominant political influence of Catholics in New York City, the recent raid on the Birth Control Clinic revealed the weakness of their case. The clinic's defense by many varied elements made plain the widespread approval of Birth Control under medical auspices, and the general condemnation of the Catholic position.

An examination of the record of interference with Birth Control propaganda since 1921, as shown by the files of the Civil Liberties Union, reveals only ten cases, chiefly in New York and Boston, with Mrs. Sanger as the target of most of the nonsense. One meeting broken up in New York, one in Albany, a state conference saved in Syracuse only by the mayor's veto of an ordinance prohibiting it—and in Boston, one prosecution of a lecturer for displaying a contraceptive device, and the perennial ban on Margaret Sanger.

Mrs. Sanger finally spoke in Boston last spring, but the occasion was no test of the ban. She spoke in a church on a Sunday morning, where the authorities disclaimed having any jurisdiction. Their ban is an extra-legal intimidation of hall-owners, who dare not rent to any meeting advocating Birth Control for fear of losing their licenses through a finding of some "structural defect." The authorities cannot legally close them up for permitting a Birth Control meeting, but there are always "defects" to be found.

#### BOSTON THE CHIEF ENEMY

The Civil Liberties Union has tried a half dozen times to break this censorship in Boston, but no hall owner has been found willing to take the risk. An effort to engage a municipal hall, with the prospect of suing out a mandamus if it were refused, came to nothing, but it will be tried again. We will break down the combined Catholic and Puritan opposition before we get through, though Boston is the hardest nut to crack. Censorship there is an entrenched habit, and Birth Control is only one of its victims.

Elsewhere the issue crops up occasionally. In California, Carl Rave, a mechanic, has just served a term of three months in jail for distributing to his fellow-workers Mrs. Sanger's pamphlet on "Family Limitation." That pamphlet has freely circulated for over a dozen years, in California as elsewhere. But when a workingman takes it on himself to instruct his fellow-workers, certain influences get busy. Rave says in a letter: "A few weeks ago, a professor in the University of California was given front page space proclaiming the need of compulsory Birth Control. I sit in my cell and wonder why the professor didn't lose his job in the college, as I have lost mine in the shipyard."

#### A PERSONAL PROPHECY

But such cases are now rare, and yet the knowledge of Birth Control and its discussion grow. It is making headway by methods difficult to attack. The time is not far distant when the ban on information will be removed, if not by a straight repeal of laws, then by interpretation and consent. We Americans like hypocrisy. We will probably hedge around our consent with "medical information to married persons for the prevention of disease." The drug-stores now sell contraceptive devices for just that purpose. The day will come when they will be as frank as they are in England, where any drug-store boldly advertises "Birth Control supplies," without reference to marriage licenses or the self-interest of health. Social interest will claim a tardy recognition.

The Civil Liberties Union takes no position on Birth Control as such, only on its freedom to agitate its case. These prophecies are purely personal. I make this point lest the wise men who head the New York public schools point the finger of damnation at us. For was it not Birth Control, that "menace to the boys and girls entrusted to their care," which loomed as the bogey if they allowed the Civil Liberties Union to hold meetings in public school buildings? "Free speech," said the guardians of morals at the hearing on our plea to use the schools, "is bad enough, but worse, under its cover you may advocate BIRTH CONTROL!" You defend those people, and we suspect you agree with them.

Well, I do—but please understand, strictly personally!

# A Socialist's Viewpoint

By NORMAN THOMAS

*Mr Thomas is Executive Director of the League for Industrial Democracy, an author and lecturer. He has been the candidate for the Socialist Party for various offices, including the Presidency of the United States in 1928, and will run for Mayor of New York this fall.*

**B**IRTH Control, like many other good causes, suffers when excessive claims are made in its behalf. Excessive claims sometimes provoke excessive reaction. For instance, many a radical who is by no means opposed to Birth Control in itself is seriously and not unreasonably alarmed when Birth Control is advocated as a kind of cure-all for unemployment, overcrowding and even poverty itself. It is the business of man to learn to manage the wonderful machinery he has had the wit to invent. If he will do that, taking the earth as a unit, he will not have to worry about poverty as an inevitable consequence of overcrowding. We do not wish to lull consciences made uneasy by the stupidity, the wastes, and the injustice of our social life with the comforting assurance that all will be well if only the poor will practice Birth Control.

According to the latest figures that I have seen there is no quantitative need for Birth Control or a special campaign of Birth Control in Northern or Western Europe or in the United States. Indeed, according to Dr Robert Kuczynski's<sup>1</sup> studies, if the present rates of mortality and fertility in Northern and Western Europe are kept up, the present stock will slowly die out, for the women are not giving birth to enough daughters to replace themselves as child-bearers, allowing for the mortality of girls during childhood. Indeed, Birth Control may mean a campaign to persuade certain races and social groups to have more children. The present tendency in the rate of increase in population as contrasted with our power to produce food or find relatively new and unutilized sources of food supply, does not warrant a Malthusian pessimism about the future, always providing that man can keep ahead of his great enemies for control of this world—the insects.

There is, however, no certainty that nature will

take care of the population question without our worrying. Pressure of population upon food supply may become a matter of very deep concern for the world. Over-population is now a matter for deep concern in certain countries. Qualitatively there is some reason for alarm in the high birth rate of definitely inferior stock, including the feeble minded. Modern methods of Birth Control are not, indeed, a sure panacea for these present and future evils. They are, however, methods which give hope that society may deal with these problems more easily and far more satisfactorily than if men and women were taught to accept children with the same resignation as they now accept the weather.

## BIRTH CONTROL NOW A CLASS PRIVILEGE

The present status of our contraceptive knowledge makes of it a peculiarly hypocritical form of class privilege. The well-to-do easily get all available information, the poor do not. To what extent this discrimination is due to a conscious desire of the privileged classes that the poor shall breed plenty of servants, workers and soldiers for them, and to what extent to apathy, indifference and a desire for making other people moral, I do not profess to know. Whatever the reason, the result is the same. It is just plain indecency that those people who often need Birth Control knowledge most, either cannot get it at all, or get it in an unscientific and even dangerous form, while the well-to-do buy safe protection, too often without any adequate sense of social responsibility.

I am inclined to accept the argument that human society has always had a rough and ready sense of the maximum population which it thinks desirable. In all sorts of ways, some of them infinitely cruel, our race has sought to control population. Abortion, infanticide and war are among the commonest of those measures. Even those moderns who object to Birth Control on religious grounds as a rule would merely substitute Birth Control by con-

<sup>1</sup>For a different interpretation, see Dr East's review of "The Balance of Births and Deaths," by Robert R. Kuczynski, on page 262 of this issue.—Ed. note

tinence for Birth Control by the use of contraceptive devices. The weight of human experience and of expert opinion is against family limitation by continence within the marriage relation. Those who want to cling to the method of continence surely should be allowed to do so without forcing their scruples upon that large part of mankind which does not believe that such continence produces the happiest homes or the finest relation be-

tween the sexes. From this point of view alone the crusade for making available, under proper conditions, a knowledge of modern scientific methods of Birth Control is worthwhile.

Unquestionably it will prevent innumerable family and personal tragedies, and it will give society one more desirable weapon in the struggle to regulate the quantity and quality of the population for the social good.

## Radical Youth Talks About Birth Control

By JULES JOEL UMANSKY

*Mr Umansky is Secretary of the Young People's Socialist League*

THE conversation recorded here is not photographic. Members of several youth organizations were approached, and the opinions expressed were substantially alike. Of the six characters (whose average age is twenty-two), Mannie is a contented husband, Ida and Abe are happily married, Roxy and Joel are young fellows who, with Min, a young lady, are still in a quandary concerning marital bliss. All are working class students and appear because the writer feels that their opinions are typical. They are members of such organizations as the League for Industrial Democracy, the Rand School Fellowship, the Youth Section of the War Resisters' League, the Bronx Free Fellowship, the Young People's Socialist League.

*(Abe and Ida enter Joel's office)*

ABE—Hello, Joel. Busy?

JOEL—Hullo, Abe, 'lo Ida. You're just the ones I am looking for. How do you stand on Birth Control?

ABE—Why, I'm in favor of it.

JOEL—The Birth Control Review wants the viewpoint of the young radicals, and I am trying to get a consensus.

IDA—Your duties are over, for the consensus is "yes."

JOEL—That's probably correct, but what I'm after are reasons.

*(Roxy walks in)*

JOEL—Say, Roxy, do you favor Birth Control?

ROXY—For whom?

IDA—Oh, are you the seventh son of a seventh daughter?

ROXY—No. I was thinking of the unemployed. Seriously, if you mean dissemination of contraceptive information, sure! Everybody ought to have it.

MIN *(enters and overhears the last remark)*—Wouldn't that lead to promiscuity, Roxy?

ROXY—Kissing is promiscuous, and no general regret has beset mankind. Moreover, with greater sex freedom as a result of an enlightened attitude, you have the added advantage of fewer "accidents."

MIN—I'll grant that information for the limitation of families should unquestionably be given to married folk, especially so, in the case of the workingmen and women. However, I wouldn't advocate indiscriminate distribution of contraceptive advice—to youngsters, for example.

IDA—But there are so many unmarried people who must be considered. It would be necessary to establish some standard, such as age. The shortcomings of such a standard might be eliminated by individual consideration of cases, based, in addition to age, on the physical condition of the couple.

*(Mannie has come in. He has been married for three years, and has no children.)*

EVERYBODY—*(to Mannie)*—Why do you favor Birth Control?

MANNIE—We can't afford to have youngsters yet.

ROXY—Ah, there it is, ladies and gentlemen.



Mannie offers evidence of what I have been preaching all these years

ABE—And what is that?

ROXY — Margaret Sanger says, "The working woman knows through her natural instinct that she should not have more children than her husband's wages can support" Doesn't that practically mean that the average working woman should go childless? Only the leisured classes can afford the sinful luxury of children

MANNIE—Be that as it may, there are several facts that constitute a strong brief for Birth Control The natural urge may lead to serious consequences if the couple is economically insecure The well-to-do, of course, are privileged in this respect, and this disparity is but another comment on the supposed equality of the classes The situation particularly affects the young worker It is he who supports prostitution, because of an unfair ignorance, an ignorance that is maintained by stupid laws These laws should be done away with

ABE—Yes, through extensive and intelligent distribution of Birth Control propaganda, restrictive legislation could be repealed Then with the spread of information there would be earlier marriages and less prostitution I realize that this scar of civilization is, unfortunately, largely the result of the economic situation of the time, but you see, certainly many girls would not become prostitutes if they could marry earlier And they could marry earlier if they could plan their families

MIN—In addition to all of that, there are more immediate reasons for restricting the number of offspring Hygienic as well as physiological factors must be taken into account One child directly after another in a family of small income means under-nourishment, lack of attention, uncleanness, illness, weariness, irritation and a host of other unpleasant concomitants, with the children, parents and society as the sufferers

IDA—Unquestionably, if this involuntary breeding were ended, people could rise to higher levels A decrease in the number of children, with longer periods between them, would permit proper care The mothers would have more leisure to improve themselves and their families

ROXY—Yeah, all seriousness aside, children are often burdensome The duties of motherhood could be lightened by procuring a maid, whose cost would be far less than that of breeding another child Now

that's truly a brilliant thought If you can't afford a child, get a maid Really it's a sure cure for Child Labor

MANNIE — We'll make allowances for Roxy's youth, but to return to the subject—greater leisure would afford more social, economic and cultural freedom for the wife, who is a mother But what of the unmarried mother?

MIN—That is a real problem, one which becomes complicated purely because of society's senseless code It is the unreasonable social consequences of a birth outside of marriage that make this question so important

MANNIE—Well, I'm in favor of contraceptive and prophylactic information for the unmarried as well as the married Abortions would be lessened, being largely precluded, prudishness would diminish, and the social taboo would be lifted

JOEL—Thank you, comrades Our thousand words are up

## Class Discrimination

The objection to the spread of Birth Control information at present amounts to an objection to making this information available for the poor, since for many years the differential birth rate has made it clear that the upper economic classes have availed themselves of the information It is clear that large families involve a lifetime of involuntary servitude on the part of those who have assumed the burden unwillingly Involuntary service to the state exists in many other forms, as in the performance of military duty in time of war, and the payment of certain taxes in time of peace But that population should be provided by people economically, and sometimes even physically, at a disadvantage, is an admission of a failure to institute the machinery for social control which cannot be otherwise than reprehensible in modern society If the burden of child-bearing were so great that women were unable to assume it willingly and compulsory service were resorted to, then it would seem more humane that this should be imposed upon all women alike without discrimination in favor of the upper classes

RUTH REED in *The Modern Family*

# Better Teaching through Birth Control

By ABRAHAM LEFKOWITZ

*Mr Lefkowitz is Vice-President of the American Federation of Teachers In this article he shows what smaller, better planned families could mean from the point of view of intelligent education*

RECENT investigations by psychologists and educators have demonstrated that the intelligence of children varies not only with the economic status of their parents, but also with their occupation. In tests conducted both in Massachusetts and Indiana, it was ascertained that high school seniors from homes with the largest incomes made the highest scores, and these scores decreased continuously, but not pronouncedly, according to the size of the family incomes. While the brightest seniors did not come from the wealthiest group, but from parents in moderate circumstances (those earning between \$1,000 and \$2,000) the wealthier group, however, furnished more seniors of average and high average ability than the poorer did. The difference in intelligence of children between the groups earning from \$1,000 to \$12,000 was slight, but the ratings in families earning less than \$1,000 were definitely lower.

## OCCUPATION ALSO A DETERMINING FACTOR

Parental occupation played almost as important a part in determining results of these intelligence tests as did economic status. 85 per cent of the children of parents in the professions scored above the median for the group tested, 68 per cent of the children from parents in business or in executive work, 41 per cent from the children of skilled workers and only 39 per cent of children of day laborers. The relation of mental capacity and parent occupation in rural regions of New York showed similar results, children of professional or business parents ranking highest, followed by children of skilled workers, semi-skilled workers, farmers, and unskilled workers.

Recent studies of children who enter school at six or seven years of age showed that children of pre-school age have their behavior attitudes strongly fixed before they enter the public schools of the country. Hence the recent emphasis upon pre-school or nursery education without which the

teacher is seriously handicapped in his efforts to develop a well-rounded, tolerant and social citizen.

## WHAT LARGE FAMILIES MEAN

What bearing have these studies and their tentative conclusions upon education and Birth Control? Large families for workers mean a decrease in the amount of money to be spent per member of the family, necessitate lower living standards, put the family in a lower economic status, prevent the normal and fullest development of these children, and often deprive children of the attention needed for their fullest mental and physical development. Such children come to school undernourished, neglected, with improper social attitudes and habits that make it difficult, and at times impossible, for them to take full advantage of educational opportunities afforded by the public schools of the country. In a word, large families with normal or less than normal income mean larger classes for teachers, pupils not fully equipped to develop their potentialities to the utmost without special care and consideration, increased retardation, maladjustment of pupils, incipient criminality or tendencies toward criminality, poorer teaching and exhausted teachers.

## FAR REACHING EFFECT OF BIRTH CONTROL

How would Birth Control effect the situation? Birth Control means a wanted family of manageable size. This in turn means more wholesome food, more clothing, a better home environment, adequate parental attention so that proper attitudes and habits may be developed. This will enable teachers to teach children who are physically and mentally equipped to do the work expected of them. It means decreased retardation, smaller classes with more individual attention to students, better and happier children and citizens. In the face of these facts it is difficult to under-



## The Point of View

MR RABBIT

*I understand that some of you ladies have very few children Some none at all Now that is all wrong Last year at our home we had sixty-three children, and we are proud of them*

Drawing by  
ART YOUNG

*First published in "Life" in 1910  
The Point of View is slowly changing*

stand the attitude of those opposed to Birth Control, especially when that attitude is predicated on the assumption that nature must take its course

### FAMILY LIMITATION A BOON TO WORKERS

Just why must nature take its course? Do not the breeder of animals and the plant culturist interfere with nature in order to improve upon it? Are not humans entitled to the same scientific and intelligent consideration given to plants or to lower animals? Is it not better for the community to have fewer humans who can be raised as human beings should be raised, than to encourage large families with an increasing number who must grow up physically and mentally ill-equipped to perform their social functions and who, in many cases, will lead miserable lives or become burdens upon society? Why should those in the lowest economic strata be forced—because of lack of knowledge of

Birth Control—to bring into the world, whether they want to or not, children to whom they must deny opportunities for fullest mental and physical development? Why should not they have access to the knowledge they want and need, which is so fully available to those who need it least—the rich who have small families though they can afford to have large ones?

The limitation of the size of workers' families would be a great boon to the workers and to society because it means smaller, better, happier and healthier families, better economic status and economic independence, higher wages, less cannon fodder, more manageable school conditions and finer citizens. Birth Control from the teacher-worker point of view is socially desirable, if not socially necessary. Education alone must be relied upon to banish the prejudice which now prevents the dissemination of such necessary knowledge to the workers of our country.

# The Ferch Clinic in Vienna

By RUTH AMBERG

*Miss Amberg is a special writer who has been living in Vienna for several years  
She was formerly an investigator for the Child Labor Committee*

**A**WAY with No 144! Out of the committee room, on to the floor! These and a dozen other banners flamed in the May Day parade, which is the triumphal march of the workers in Vienna. There are no strikes, no riots, no disorder of any kind, but just a steady flow of human beings all day long through the principal streets of the city.

One of the most insistent demands of the workers' groups is the elimination of the infamous paragraph No 144, regulating abortions.<sup>1</sup> The tremendous public interest in this subject is the result of the work of Johann and Betty Ferch. Their own contact with this law brought home to them the tragedy which confronts the proletariat of Austria. Shortly after their own experience, they began to agitate for the modification of this law, which forbids abortion except for specific medical reasons, which punishes by imprisonment up to five years any person who performs the operation, any person who has assisted in securing the operation, as well as the woman who submits to such an operation.

## HOW BIRTH CONTROL STANDS IN AUSTRIA

On the one hand, the Birth Control movement here has attained strength as a result of a *laissez faire* attitude. Prior to the war the law which made it punishable by fine or imprisonment to display, sell, or mention the price of contraceptives was strictly enforced. No legislative action has been taken to eliminate this statute, but as a result of the revolution many reactionary laws have been discarded "without action." The enthusiasm for introducing bills and passing laws, while not exclusively American, has only a shadowy reflection in Europe, especially in Austria, and consequently

no specific act has been passed to repeal or replace the old law.

On the other hand, the active concern of a very numerous public about paragraph 144 is to be credited to the untiring efforts of the Ferchs. In Vienna and throughout Austria they have held hundreds of meetings, explaining how paragraph 144 affects the life of every member of the community. Although the law governing the sale of contraceptives has fallen into disuse, that regulating abortions has been more rigidly enforced for several years, and this is why the Ferchs have agitated for its modification.

The official organ of the Birth Control League of Austria introduces its readers to the aims of the movement with this terse sentence:

The reform of paragraphs 144 to 148, explanation of the danger of abortions performed by non-medicals, explanation of the necessity of reducing the birth-rate, and maintenance of the advisory Birth Control stations.

It is characteristic of the organization. In its offices, in its relations to the public, in its contact with the women who seek advice, simplicity is its watchword. Not the crispness of an American business office, but the directness born of limited means, for neither the league nor those who seek its aid are rich.

## THE FERCH CLINIC

I have been living in Vienna for several years, but Koenigsegg is a street of which I had never heard. As I walked toward the headquarters of the Birth Control League, I observed that the neighborhood is clearly a lower middle class and workers' district.

The women who visit this advisory station are told in very clear and simple words what the most effective contraceptive is, exactly how it should be used, are advised to use it only with the aid of a physician. They are further referred to a physician living near them, whose services they can procure at special rates through their affiliation with the Birth Control League, and are urged to consult

<sup>1</sup>The American Birth Control League is definitely opposed to abortion. As contraceptive knowledge is perfected and made available, the necessity for abortion will obviously be reduced to a negligible minimum. From this point of view, it would seem fortunate that Johann and Betty Ferch developed their Birth Control clinics because they were unable to put their abortion amendment through parliament.—  
EDITORIAL NOTE

him regularly (monthly) in respect to the use of the contraceptive

The costs of consultation and equipment are very low, unbelievably so, according to American standards, but still a problem in Austria, where salaries and budgets tend to show an ever increasing gap. All information at the advisory stations is given *gratis*. The physicians charge between 28c and 35c for each office visit. All of the necessary equipment is supplied at cost. For the first visit to the physician, the woman is given an introductory note, which entitles her to reduced fees. She need not join the league, but to secure the special rates for succeeding visits, she has to show her membership card which costs 1 Schilling (15c) a year. To women whose husbands are unemployed, or who have several children, all advice and equipment is given free of charge.

The simplicity and directness of Frau Ferch during the consultations were most impressive. As one woman after another came to her desk, I had opportunity to see with what skill, kindness and intelligence the advice was given. The explanation is within the reach of every woman's intelligence, and is made the more lucid through the use of charts. The harmlessness of the device recommended, and the exact reasons why the regular visit to a physician is urged, were emphasized so clearly, comprehensively, sympathetically, that one felt no question was left in the visitor's mind.

#### HOW THE WORK SPREADS

Since the establishment of the initial advisory station in November 1922, six others have been opened in various parts of the city, all of them in sections inhabited chiefly by workers. Notices of the location of the stations are posted in factories, workshops, and community houses erected by the municipality. At meetings of trade unions, political gatherings and the like, throwaways are liberally distributed in the audience. On one side there is a brief statement of the aims of the Birth Control League, as well as its slogan *Quality, not Quantity*, on the other, a list of the consulting stations. The *Arbeiter Zeitung*, the official organ of the Social Democratic Party, carries a weekly notice of the advisory stations. All of the liberal bourgeois papers support the *Ferch Aktion*, as it is popularly known. Other forms of publicity include the official bulletin of the movement, *Die Neue Zeit*, which appears from time to time, meetings in

(Continued on Page 270)

## S U B S C R I B E R S

*This Labor Number is the first of a series of special numbers which will appear throughout the year.*

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

RACIAL HYGIENE, by Thurman B. Rice, A M, M D. Macmillan, New York \$4 50

THE PERFECT BABY, by Claire Morton. Vanguard Press, New York \$1 90

BLACK AMERICA, by Scott Nearing. Vanguard Press, New York \$3 00

THE SEXUAL LIFE OF THE SAVAGE, by Bronislaus Malinowski. Horace Liveright, New York 2 vols \$10 00

THE MODERN FAMILY, by Ruth Reed, Ph D. Alfred A Knopf, New York \$3 25

CREATION BY EVOLUTION, edited by Frances Mason. The MacMillan Co., New York \$5 00

INTELLIGENT LIVING, by Austen Fox Riggs, M D. Doubleday, Doran, Garden City \$2 00

MEN AND MACHINES, by Stuart Chase. Macmillan, New York \$2 50. Reviewed in this issue.

LABOR AND INTERNATIONALISM, by Lewis R. Lorwin. Macmillan, New York \$3 00

HEREDITY AND PARENTHOOD, by Samuel C. Schmucker. Macmillan, New York \$2 50

JAPAN IN RECENT TIMES, 1919-1926, by A. Morgan Young. William Morrow & Co., New York \$3 50

A GIRL IN SOVIET RUSSIA, by Andree Viollis. Thomas Y. Crowell, New York \$2 50

## Book Reviews

### THE BALANCE OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS

Vol I Western Northern Europe, by Robert R Kuczinski *The Macmillan Co New York* \$2 00

**T**HIS little volume is one of the studies in the humanistic sciences, published by the Brookings Institution. It is the first of three volumes in which the statistics of birth and deaths for the entire world are to be considered.

As a repository of figures the book has much value. All of the existing birth rates and death rates for the countries under consideration have been recorded. Fertility rates, age distributions, ages of mothers, and other similar data are also presented. From such figures, much cranking of calculating machines has given what the author calls *net reproduction rates*. This rate is a computation which endeavors to answer the question *whether present birth rates and death rates are such that a given generation subject to them will increase or decrease*.

The author's conclusion is that the peoples of northern and western Europe are dying out, and his reaction to the conclusion is quite emotional. With a senatorial gesture, he views the situation with alarm. Yet it does not appear from the figures cited that this population as a whole is dying out. Certainly the populations of some countries are diminishing. A weighted average for the whole region, however, shows a slight tendency to increase. And even if the peoples of industrial countries have decided that the population is too great and should be cut down as a measure of social prophylaxis, why should a statistician wring his hands in horror? One begins to sniff. Something of a decayed nature is in the vicinity. What it is, I do not know, not having the time or inclination to check the results. But when a statistician writes a book telling the poor bedeviled public what erroneous conclusions it draws from crude birth rates and death rates, and then says that the birth rate began to decline in Ireland about 1840, something is wrong. If he had applied his own corrections, he would have found that the fertility of Irish women declined very little until about 1890. Instead, he drew a

conclusion from a crude birth rate, materially affected by emigration. Since such hasty and obviously incorrect statements are not rare, I feel more inclined to treasure what rolls out of the calculating machine than the conclusions which emanate from the author.

E M EAST

OUR OWN TIMES, by H G Thomas and Wm A Hamm *Vanguard Press New York* 75c

**T**HIS volume supplements "The Foundations of Modern Civilization" and "Civilization in Transition," by the same authors, taking up the history of the world at 1870 and bringing it down to date. To bring together the many complex materials in such a survey is no easy task, but the authors have done it well. Their method is to summarize the main lines of economic and social development in an introductory chapter and then to sketch the history of each of the main countries and the Far East in separate chapters. Separate attention is given to imperialism, general international relations, the world war, the peace treaties and the fruits of the war.

The authors are clearly liberal, but not extreme in their interpretations. In so vast a survey one can not expect a reviewer to be in complete agreement with all positions taken, but to stress any such differences in a brief review would give an entirely false impression. The book is heartily commended.

ERNEST MINOR PATTERSON

RACE AND POPULATION PROBLEMS, by H G Duncan *Longmans, Green & Co New York* \$2 50

**A**LTHOUGH this book by an associate professor of Sociology in the University of North Carolina, is primarily written for text use in college courses on population—how few there are at present compared, for example, with the field of labor problems!—the reviewer suggests that any intelligent citizen would find its perusal not only instructive, but at times even absorbing.

A word as to its scope and plan. Part I treats

of the rise and spread of the human group (the origin, formation and classification of races), Part II with such biological and racial topics as heredity and eugenics, the amalgamation of races, the dysgenic effects of war and religion on population. Part III is mainly devoted to the relation of population to the diffusion of culture, while Part IV considers Malthusian, pre-Malthusian, and post-Malthusian theories of population. The last part, which is concerned with population control, includes in its discussion of positive and preventive methods two chapters on "the modern Birth Control movement."

This emphasis on the Birth Control movement is a notable step forward. The reviewer has for some time wondered who would be the first among the text-book writers in the population field to give the subject the space and treatment it merits. While Professor Duncan's book leaves much to be desired so far as thoroughness of treatment is concerned, he is to be congratulated for having done much more than his predecessors (except possibly Wolfe and Carr-Saunders). One could not expect a textbook, or any other general treatise covering a wide field, to give undue space to even an important topic. The limitations, are, therefore, necessarily those one must needs impose upon oneself in writing a work dealing with many phases of the population problem.

A few criticisms seem in order. I doubt the advisability of including so much anthropology and ethnology in such a treatise. There are some 650 quotations—too much re-hash of available materials. Certain sections gave the reviewer mental indigestion. Many quotations are from needlessly old sources (not that old sources are not sometimes preferable), and should have been avoided when later statistics are available. Sources are almost exclusively secondary. The work is not original in any sense and does not claim to be. It is, nevertheless, a valuable compilation which the layman will find interesting.

It would be out of place to criticize individual opinions, especially when these are a matter of emphasis on interpretations based on conflicting data. On the whole, the author takes great pains to state his propositions with fairness, impartiality and objectivity. It is not within the realm of human attainment to produce a book on this subject which would not contain statements to which

some scholars would find objection.

Too much space is given during the Birth Control discussion to a consideration of the declining birth rate. Perhaps it is well that the discussion of the history of the movement was curtailed in view of the fact that it says nothing new, is not always accurate, and is based upon the fragmentary materials available several years ago. Nevertheless, I wish to impress upon the reader that this work represents a long step in advance in its fairness and fearlessness on the subject of Birth Control. The general editor, Professor E. R. Groves, is to be congratulated in having obtained this text for Longmans' Social Science Series.

NORMAN E. HIMES

SEX AND YOUTH, by Sherwood Eddy. *Double-day, Doran*. New York. \$2.00

THE question must often arise whether there is not too much being written on the subject of Sex. Understand, I do not mean too much in a technical sense, like Mary Ware Dennett's much discussed pamphlet. I would like to see thousands of books and pamphlets on *Sex and Marriage* for one book on *Sex Advice* and *Sex Pathology*.

There is in Sherwood Eddy's book a rare wholesomeness. He speaks in his foreword of "scientific information applied by rational intelligence, and of the actual goodness of a joyous way of life lived at its best." He himself says that he finds "youth eager and open-minded to consider." I would like to add that for the most part I find them wholesome, so wholesome that I do not think they need some of the advice that Mr. Eddy includes in his book.

Of course his first chapter on "Sex and Life," especially the subdivision called "The Significance of Sex," is the usual "song of life" type of thing, only more than usually well done. His ethical admonitions are not at all in the line of preaching. It is rather a sort of pragmatic warning. Speaking of the dangers of sex life of either license or asceticism, he says: "It is a short-circuiting of life at its primitive and exclusively physical levels, an arresting of life's full promise and progress short of its higher spiritual completion and fulfillment. It sacrifices the long and significant future for the short and fleeting present."

On the other hand, there are two or three phrases which Mr. Eddy uses which I was sorry to find in

his book. One is that miserable Freudian expression, "fixation." Mother fixation, and father, etc., are phrases that would seem to us who are healthy minded, and who feel that the majority of people on this earth are healthy minded, unnecessary, and we are very much fed up on them!

The other phrase is "Companionate Marriage," a phrase which we never needed, which means nothing, and which has been the great hoax of the publicist, a phrase to conjure with for publicity purposes. Mr Eddy speaks of it with more seriousness than it deserves. He describes it as an ideal of absolutely legal and permanent marriage which will be made possible for young people by better divorce laws and proper Birth Control laws.

Now, nobody takes any issue with this, but we needed no new phrase, and especially a specious and misleading one. We do know that divorce laws must be improved, and we know that Birth Control must come, but we all know that marriage is marriage, so why all this fuss and feathers, creating a delusive impression of license and latitude which simply do not exist. Being very much thrown with the young people, I know that this has been a very muddling and useless, and more or less pernicious phrase. I think that such clear-cut and sound writers as Mr Eddy will do well to leave it to the oblivion to which it is gradually drifting, except as it is used in derision, more and more by young people who have a keen sense of humor.

It is a question whether many of our young people feel the stress and strain of sex life that is portrayed so dramatically in such books as these. Rather does not Mr Eddy himself express the common experience when he says, speaking of sex impulses and the demoralizing idea that they should be yielded to too easily: "We have to repress instincts every hour of our life. The secret of self-realization is not to give free play to a chaos of instinctive desires, but to bury them in a harmonious personality."

One of the fine passages of the book is where the author emphasizes the dangers of unwholesome sources of information and of half information. The fine emphasis upon the amalgamation of the spiritual and the physical is re-emphasized over and over in the book, including the emphasis upon the "whole personality."

In his chapter on the choice of a life companion, Mr Eddy is at his best, also in chapter four, "Problems of Marriage." Here the author gives some very happy quotations from Margaret Sanger's book and others, and he himself lifts the whole question on a high wave of feeling that will be very useful to any young person who reads it. It is very essential that every young person believe that we older people have a working faith in romance. Mr Eddy adds to his practical idealism on this subject of mating the last word in modern economic practicability and sex equality, "If modern marriage is to be fully successful, it must be democratically founded on the corner stones of liberty, equality, and co-operation, the essential continuity of mind and thought, as well as of heart." Mr Eddy emphasizes this very nobly. He is a thoroughly practical feminist with a fine adventurous outlook on a completely liberated womanhood.

Quite logically part seven deals with the problems of "Family Limitation." His subject is treated without the shadow of reservation in brilliant summaries and telling statistics. The sweet reasonableness of the whole matter was never better set forth.

His last chapter is a very wise summary and recapitulation of many of the points made earlier in the book, together with the rapid fire and pointed answers to many of the problems of modern life. "When to Marry" contains some data on very youthful marriages that sane people may take issue with. The question, "Why Wait for Marriage?" is answered with a power and practical idealism that would be hard to match, as is his answer to monogamy. Asceticism, divorce, prostitution and venereal diseases are all treated in a forthright manner. In "Sexual Equality, Sexual Ethics," a very high ground is taken. It is a thoroughly modern, well evolved statement of human relations. Again, the note rises to something of a paean.

Seldom has this subject been treated more nobly. A great deal of practical material is to be found in the appendices, especially the details in reference to the backward situation of Birth Control in our country. Believers in Birth Control may feel that this whole book is a very valuable and ideal contribution to this vital subject.

HARRIET B LAIDLAW



MEN AND MACHINES, by Stuart Chase *The Macmillan Co., New York* \$2 50

ARE we becoming robotized? Are we breeding a race of robots? What is the nature of the Frankenstein which man has created and which seems to have grown too powerful for man's control? How adequately Stuart Chase answers these questions depends upon the vantage point from which the reader gazes upon the unfolding panorama of men and machines, marching down the ages. From the time primitive man takes the club in his hand to secure food for himself, and to alter his environment, to the time when the machine encompasses man in its vise-like grip, and spews forth a few shekels with which the workingman of the twentieth century secures his living—all the periods of time are graphically presented.

Upon his "moving belt", the author has assembled the arguments and opinions of many of the philosophers and critics of today. In stating what they think about the mechanization of the world, of humans, of thought, of culture, he has assembled as fit a vehicle for his thesis as any good automobile is. For every set of arguments condemning the influence of the machine upon civilization, he presents arguments praising it, calling it the "liberator of mankind", the instrument through which Utopia will be made possible. With these two slogans echoing in his ears, the author leads the reader into the wilderness of the technology of production, and finds the magic thread for what has been a maze, a labyrinth of misunderstanding.

The chapter on the anatomy of machinery is an excellent one for this very reason. He analyzes the evolution of the machine in terms of six mechanical principles—the pulley, the wedge, the screw, the lever, the wheel and the inclined plane. If you are one of those to whom the machine has always been a great unknown quantity, clothed in mysterious garments of steel and rubber, you will find at the end of the chapter, that you have at least a speaking acquaintance with it.

But the history and anatomy of the machine merely paves the way for the discussion of the philosophical implications of the machine-made world. As the "smoke lifts", the author sees "mass production on a cosmic scale, unit parts made here, there, and everywhere to be assembled into a world economy." All of it is accompanied by increased population, increased ex-

ploitation, more colonization and imperialism. True, the machine age was ushered in with a toll of human lives, with a breakdown of the moral and cultural values of the domestic system, and the creation of cancerous sores on the face of the industrial community. What have we today?

The creation of a flood of goods, new skills, new jobs, more leisure—a greater life expectancy, decreased hours of labor, decreasing spans of space, on the credit side. More unemployment, a ruling class based on profits, an exploited wage earning class, more noise, more smoke, more ugliness, more congestion—all of these, and a host more, on the debit side. Who will dare assume the role of book-keeper of this civilization?

Is the United States becoming "robotized"? Mr Chase attempts to answer the question statistically, and the result is a rather dangerous generalization. Of the 41,615,000 gainfully employed, he estimates 5,394,000 "net possible robots" or five percent of the total population and only thirteen percent of those gainfully employed. He arrives at this estimate by excluding from the classification as robots, all workers who have "interesting, manifestly ego-inflating jobs", such as chauffeurs, locomotive engineers, elevator men, miners, etc.

Greece in the heyday of her civilization had a population of twelve million slaves for five million freemen. Mr Chase challenges the modern critic to conclude that a population 70% slave is a more wholesome combination than one 5% slave to the machine! All of which seems to be fantastic tilting at wind mills. In the first place there is no evidence that our "freemen" are creating a culture such as the Greek citizen created. In the second place, the 5% slave population is not without dire influence upon the rest of the population. There seems to be little opportunity for conscious control of the machine in the interest of a larger and happier life. Only an aggressive minority is interested enough in controlling the machine and wresting it from the hands of profit-motivated business men. The mass of workers themselves seem unaware of the possibilities beyond the horizon, so dominated are they by the cast-iron mold of the machine and the standards which have been set by it.

Mr Chase suggests the necessity of conscious control of the "billion wild horses." But how—by whom? By Man or by Machine?

Theresa Wolfson

# News Notes

## UNITED STATES

**T**HE Protestant Episcopal Church proposes to introduce religious and scientific instruction for marriage into the regular program of every parish. Reverend Dr. Charles N. Lathrop, Executive Secretary of the Department of Christian Social Work, announces a series of "Family Relations Institutes" in different dioceses for the fall, offering a training course for the clergy in the conduct of the marriage classes. Mental hygiene, spiritual living, sex relationships, and household economics will be considered. The object of this program is to combat the rising tide of divorce.

Dr. Louis I. Dublin, statistical expert for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, places the nation's birth rate at 23 per 1,000 in 1928, as against 53 per 1,000 in 1925. With what seems to be a surprising lack of understanding of the real issues involved, he ascribes this reduction in the birth rate to "reluctant motherhood, or, perhaps, the inhibitions of the modern marriageable daughter."

## California

**T**HE State Bureau of Vital Statistics announces that, despite estimated gains in population, the number of births in California will fall below 80,000 during 1929, whereas, births for 1928 reached a total of 83,643. L. E. Ross, Chief of the Bureau, states that no facts or statistics are available on which to base reasons for the indicated decrease.

## Missouri

**M**RS HENRY N. ESS, civic leader in Kansas City, and former President of the Missouri Federation of Women's Clubs, has recently completed an historical study of the early American home. Removing the sentimental haze of a century ago, she found that "virtually every wife had a baby a year, or, at most, every two years, and children died like rats. Early day cemeteries bear testimony to the early home life of women. Nearly every man had from two to four wives—in succession, of course—and families of from twenty-five to thirty children were not uncommon."

## New Jersey

**T**HE New Jersey Birth Control League reports marked growth in membership, and a series of successful local meetings throughout the state. A local branch has been formed in Montclair, under the leadership of the following committee: Mrs. H. V. Schieren, Chairman; Mrs. Robert Christie, Mrs. Raymond Fosdick, Mrs. J. F. Geertz, Mrs. Charles Littelfield, Mrs. Frank Van Wie, Mrs. Charles Weston. The officers of the New Jersey League are: Margaret Sanger, Honorary President; Mrs. Zachariah Belcher, President; Mrs. Willard V. King, First Vice-President; Mrs. Garis E. Adriance, Second Vice-President; Mrs. Franklin Conklin, Jr., Treasurer; Mrs. Henry Young, Treasurer, Maternal Health Center; Miss Harriet E. Niese, Recording Secretary; Mrs. Royal A. Schaaf, Corresponding Secretary; and Miss Henriette Hart, Executive Secretary.

## New York

**T**HE American Birth Control League will have a booth at the annual Exposition of Women's Arts and Industries, to be held at the Hotel Astor from September 30th through October 5th.

An example of constructive Birth Control, that is, having as many children as can be adequately and happily taken care of, was presented when Dr. Vernon Lytle, head of the department of psychology at De Pauw University, Greencastle, Indiana, his wife and six children attended the summer session at Columbia University. The children range from ten years to eighteen months, and were enrolled in the nursery school and kindergarten; the parents took courses in psychology and child education.

## Austria

**A**CCORDING to Professor Julius Tandler, Commissioner of Public Health and Welfare of Vienna, that city, though still economically depressed from the World War, is spending more than \$14,000 yearly on public welfare. The greater part of this is allotted to the protection of infant

life The infant conservation program includes family allowances, compulsory leave for child birth, pre-natal and post-natal care, state insurance, etc

#### Canada

THE province of Saskatchewan last year gave maternity grants of \$25 apiece to 521 mothers. The grant may be paid to the hospital or to the physician, or, if a physician is not available within twenty-five miles, to the nurse who attends the case, or to the mother herself, or it may be divided between the mother, the physician and the nurse attending the confinement. The applicant writes to the deputy minister of health stating her residence and distance from the nearest physician, her financial circumstances, acreage under cultivation, amount of stock and farm implements and harvest results, and the employment of the husband. She must be recommended by an official of her district. The grant is to help mothers in outlying districts and not those who reside in a municipality.

#### China

ACCORDING to the special correspondent of the New York Times, Chinese newspapers and magazines are month by month devoting more space to discussions of the possible governmental backing of a Birth Control movement, as the only way in which China's economic ills can be cured. Statistics, conjectures, discussions of ethical and religious values are all playing a part in the campaign, and much arrestingly interesting material is being brought to light.

China's population increase is shown in the following figures, quoted from *The China Critic*

337,000,000 in 1885  
376,432,000 in 1910  
447,475,000 in 1919  
434,163,000 in 1920  
444,653,000 in 1923  
482,808,000 in 1928

Colonel E. P. Bicknel, investigator for the American Red Cross, reports that it is a normal condition in China for about 20,000,000 people to exist in a state of undernourishment, and it is also nor-

mal for thousands to die of hunger every year. The caravan route leading over the Lupan Shan range has been renamed the "Road to Death," and is strewn with corpses. In this vast region there is almost no food.

#### England

WE announce with regret the death of Dame Millicent Fawcett, veteran Feminist, on August 5th, at the age of eighty-two.

Dr Gilbert E. Mould, physician in mental diseases in Sheffield, addressing a meeting of the Royal Sanitary Institute Congress on July 17th, gave the following list of contributory causes of mental breakdown:

- Spiritualist seances,
- The works of pessimistic and unbalanced writers,
- Bad films,
- Noise,
- Birth control

When the National Council of Women of Great Britain meets in October, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship will offer the following resolution: "that the National Council call upon the Ministry of Health and local authorities to allow information with respect to methods of Birth Control to be given by medical officers at Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics in receipt of Government grants, in cases in which either a mother asks for such information, or in which, in the opinion of the Medical Officer, the health of the parents renders it desirable." Whether this resolution be carried or not, its discussion at such a fully representative assembly of women is important at the present time.

#### India

AN ASSOCIATION known as the "Education Friends," has recently been formed in India for the purpose of administering a fund to promote the education of women and girls, and to further propaganda for the education of women. The first open meeting will be held in Bombay, in January, 1930. The idea was initiated at the All India Women's Conference held at Delhi in January, 1928.

Another interesting organization, the Sholapur Eugenics Education Society, announces its purpose of "educating the general public to think eugenically, and to recognize the responsibility of parenthood, furthering such measures as the opening of Mothers' Clinics, insisting that the palpably unfit and degenerate shall not reproduce. The Society advocates conception control, segregation and sterilization."

### Italy

**O**FFICIAL returns for the first five months of 1929 show that births dropped 22 per cent below those of a similar period last year. Bachelor taxation, preference to married men and women candidates for all government posts, subsidies to fathers of large families, with or without Mussolini's signed photograph, press campaigns, have all been in vain. Italy's birthrate is dropping, though Birth Control is forbidden under pain of imprisonment and the penal islands.

Italian students of genetics and eugenics will meet in Rome in September. Professor Artom will speak on genetic constitution and the changes that result from the union of different races, Professor Enriquez on environment and heredity according to the recent investigations, Professor Pestalozza on sterilization, and Professor Foa, physiologist of Milan, will illustrate the topic of biologic factors of Birth Control.

### Japan

**A**CCORDING to an article in *The Japan Medical World*, a Tokyo publication, overpopulation is causing untold misery among the poor, through unemployment and overcrowding. The article concludes "The Japan Medical Association has made a recommendation to the Home Minister that a law be passed encouraging Birth Control as a method of eliminating the mentally and physically unfit people. The present trend of Japanese public opinion seems to be in favor of giving Birth Control a trial."

Another indication of the growing interest in the movement is the fact that the Japanese newspaper "*Osaka Mamochi*", of Tokyo, has been running a series of articles called "A Century of Birth Control", tracing the history of the movement in England and America.

## Book Service

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Our Book Department can put you in touch with the latest authoritative books on the many aspects of Birth Control.

Send for our selected reading lists.

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### *A Few Suggestions*

**Mankind at the Cross Roads** \$3.50

*By E. M. East*

**Standing Room Only** \$3.00

*By E. A. Ross*

**Builders of America** \$3.50

*By Ellsworth Huntington and  
Leon F. Whitney*

**Race and Population Problems** \$2.50

*By H. G. Duncan*

**Sex and Youth**

*By Sherwood Eddy*

**The Task of Social Hygiene** \$3.50

*By Havelock Ellis*

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## Birth Control Review

104 FIFTH AVENUE

N. Y. C.

# Readers' Page

*We urge our readers to express their opinions for publication on this page. Comments, criticisms, ideas, suggestions, for the REVIEW and for the Birth Control movement, are welcome*

## SCOTLAND READS THE REVIEW

### TO THE EDITOR

Some kind person has been sending me your excellent REVIEW this year, and as I do not know to whom I am indebted, I must at least send a line of most grateful appreciation to your office

I run a Birth Control Clinic here and I always pass your paper on, so it has practically filtered through a good deal of the countryside and into the hands of District Nurses and ministers. I have kept a number of your cartoons to decorate the walls of the Clinic, and they are much appreciated on the "open day" with which we start the session.

Wishing you the best of luck in your splendid work,

(MRS) LUELLA PATON

*Aberdeen, Scotland, August 1*

## THE WORKER'S DILEMMA

### TO THE EDITOR

It is interesting to learn that you are to have a Labor Number. I hope that some article in it will deal with the dilemma of the class-conscious worker in regard to Birth Control.

On the one hand, every circumstance surrounding his life demands that he practice contraception. To be free for the class struggle, to be fair to his (hypothetical) family, he cannot do otherwise. The average worker cannot afford to bring up even one child properly.

On the other hand he realizes that under the present organization of society, contraceptive technique is but another of the myriad forces that tend to make him ever less a spontaneous human being and more an efficient servant of the machine age. There is little joy in the life of a machine tender, and now he is to deny himself the thrill of creation.

Birth Control will be the guardian of a new society. It is only a charity worker now.

LYDIA A. YAGER

*New York, N. Y., August 13*

## WITH A RENEWAL CHECK

### TO THE EDITOR

I appreciate the many excellent articles on population by outstanding authorities in this field. I think your magazine is getting better each year.

F. W. CLOWER

*State College, Pullman, Wash., August 11*

## CATHOLICISM SAVES AN APOSTATE WORLD

### TO THE EDITOR

As one wholly unsympathetic to your cause, and looking forward to its early and complete dissolution, the writer would like to call your attention to a few naive, not to say ludicrous assumptions, which appeared in your issue of August, 1929.

1 The naive assumption that Dr. Sheen (quoted from *America*) disproved his own case when he conceded the logic of your cause and took exception to the first principle of the Birth Control movement (implicitly held, of course), that "there is no future life." Evidently Dr. Sheen's argument could only be defective if this first principle is right.

2 The naive assumption (quoted from the *New Republic*) that the thinking Catholic is in a dilemma regarding Birth Control. "If he practices Birth Control, he frustrates the primary end of the generative faculty and commits a mortal sin. If he fails to practice Birth Control when his reason so dictates, he frustrates the primary end of reason, as a faculty."

I should like to suggest that your cause can never hope to win converts, even "thinking Catholics," by recourse to such disingenuous tactics as these: to assume, firstly, that belief in a future life is so absurd that one should not take the trouble of refuting it, and, secondly, that "thinking Catholics"—most of whom are trained in vigorous scholastic logic—are confronted with a dilemma. *Damnatio quod non intelligunt*.

Unquestionably (may I insert these *obiter dicta*?) the most formidable opponent the Birth Control movement has, and will continue to have

is the Roman Catholic Church In the East that institution is challenging Bolshevism, in the West that other obscenty, Birth Control May she continue her mission of saving an Apostate world from itself

FRANCIS E McMAHON

*Chicago, Ill., August 9*

#### A PROUD MOTHER OF NINE

TO THE EDITOR

Please discontinue sending the BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW, for my subscription has expired and I cannot afford to renew

I have enjoyed reading your magazine I hope with all my heart that this country eventually will be broad-minded enough to accept Birth Control as a wonderful thing and a blessing to thousands

I am a mother of nine children, and though life is not *too* easy it is *very, very* pleasant, for all my little ones are fine strong children, and I am sure I shall live to be proud of them all However, I feel I have done my share in my 15 years of married life

Mrs I T PETTIT

*Brookfield Centre, Conn., August 5*

#### ANOTHER PLEA FOR MOTHER'S LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

It is indeed distressing to note that letters from over-burdened mothers, which are really enlightening, are omitted from your columns, while so much space is given to an article like "Who Are Competent?", by Ellsworth Huntington, in the July, 1929, issue

If Birth Control methods were more generally taught, possibly in time there would be a greater supply of college freshmen to cut lawns and trim hedges, and fewer stupid ex-soldiers to annoy Mr Huntington I would recommend to those persons who find ex-soldiers so obnoxious that they discontinue to support and perpetuate a system that makes ex-soldiers inevitable

I think more space should be allotted to competent and rational writers, such as Madeline Groggins

S M CANFIELD

*Saulte Ste Marie, Mich., August 2*

### THE FERCH CLINIC IN VIENNA

(Continued from page 261)

workingmen's districts, with stereopticon illustrations, plays and movies In short, as Mr Ferch says, there is no form of propaganda, with the exception of skywriting, which they have not used

The establishment of advisory clinics outside Vienna has proved impossible Some seventeen, in cities and villages of different sizes, have existed at various times The prejudice to be overcome, and the difficulty of securing adequate privacy for the visitors proved insurmountable In lieu of the stations in smaller cities and in the country, advertisements are from time to time inserted in the local newspapers, stating that contraceptive information can be secured free of charge by writing to the main office in Vienna As many as 140 answers are received as the result of a single advertisement

#### THE PROPOSED NEW LAW

The law which the Ferchs recommend to replace paragraph 144 would be based on "social indications" Under the present law, medical considerations technically permit abortion, but actually the problem is an economic one If a woman has adequate means, she can secure an abortion, because she will be able to find some physician, or even two, who will declare that a pregnancy would endanger her health In the case of the working classes, even the existence of medical indications is seldom considered adequate cause Such a woman naturally goes to the public clinics, and the rigid enforcement of the law has made the physician there wary of undertaking an operation which may soon thereafter be called into question He must be able to furnish proof of the necessity of interrupting the pregnancy, and even if he is convinced that the health of the patient would be endangered by a pregnancy, he does not want the unpleasant publicity connected with a trial, to say nothing of wasting days in courtroom wrangling

The basis of the new law should be, according to the Ferchs, not only whether the individual mother's health would be endangered, but a more positive attitude — whether the community life would be benefited Not only whether the mother and child will be able to pull through nine difficult months, but what will happen in the fifteen years succeeding those months, when that child is dependent upon its parents for its existence Is the health of the father such as to indicate that he will be able to go

on working for that long? What is his financial situation? Can he actually purchase enough food and clothes for the family? How many children are there now? Have the parents enough time to give them any attention?

The program of the Birth Control League of Austria has the active support of the Social Democratic Party, the party which has sponsored the most important social reforms in this country. However, as it has not had a working majority in Parliament, it has not been possible to secure a favorable vote on the bill, though it has been introduced several times.

As people of action, the Ferchs were dissatisfied. Their visit to the Fifth International Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Conference in England in 1922 determined them upon a different mode of procedure. If their hope for effecting an immediate change in the law was doomed, they might accomplish their purpose in another way, — by greatly reducing the number of pregnancies through contraceptive methods, and consequently removing to an appreciable extent the necessity for abortion.

#### THE FERCH'S GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENT

By a simple act of faith, Johann and Betty Ferch have begun a movement whose history has been startlingly dramatic. They knew when their first clinic was established in 1922, that they had no backing of any kind, neither financial, legal nor moral. With the surety that their undertaking was filling a tremendous need in the community, they faced their task single-handed. From a legal standpoint their activities have never been challenged. Through their well placed publicity, they have won the adherence of thinking people to the cause, through the real assistance rendered to thousands in Vienna and throughout Austria who might have been mothers by chance, they have gained the staunch support of a great army of unwavering, if not wholly articulate women.

All of the offices for the advisory stations are given rent free by the Sickness Insurance Bureau (the *Krankenkassa*). It is necessary to explain that in Austria social insurance has attained a very high stage of development, that every employee is insured against sickness and accident, and that the employer pays a definite sum monthly to the sick fund which enables the employee to secure medical service without further charge, and medical supplies at special rates. The *Krankenkassen* are private institutions managed by the respective

trades, under strict government supervision, rates being determined by the government, and the administration subject to frequent revision by government officials. Similarly there is a fund in the various *Krankenkassen* for maternity care.

#### INTELLIGENT SOCIAL INSURANCE

When the officials of the insurance fund studied costs of confinements, and discovered that every new baby costs the community 500 Schillings or about \$75, they felt that the Ferch *Aktion* was a movement which they could afford to support not only morally, but financially as well. Not only because they had before them the League's slogan Quality, not Quantity, but also because their records showed stories such as this: of 1,034 pregnancies reported in a single children's clinic in Vienna, there were 148 miscarriages and 350 infant deaths. In other words, nearly 50 per cent of these pregnancies ended in disaster. Individually the mothers had overwhelming costs to bear, physically, spiritually and financially. The community had spent 249,000 Schillings which had resulted in no good to any one. The administrators of the *Krankenkassa* came to the conclusion that assisting a movement which would teach parents to have children when they were physically and financially capable of doing so, was a more human and more intelligent procedure than blindly equipping maternity wards!

What have the Ferchs accomplished? They have brought the attention of all Austria to the injustice of paragraph 144. They have influenced public opinion so that the legal sentence of five years for violation of paragraph 144 is never imposed. An offender is now usually sentenced to eight days which must be served only if there is a further violation of the law within two years. They have secured the support of the most progressive elements in the country for a change in the law. They have established seven free consulting stations in the city of Vienna, and have made contraceptive information available to thousands of working class mothers.

Perhaps the most impressive thing about the movement here is that it is an established, smoothly running enterprise. The initial interest and excitement of agitation have died down, the general public no longer hears the drums, but despite financial and other handicaps, the seven stations go on doing their work quietly, constructively.

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