

BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW



NOVEMBER, 1939

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NO. 1

FREE

Pearl Buck Writes on Birth Control

Birth Rates in Fascist Countries

Robert C. Cook

Variation on the Case History

Ethel Hemington Henburn

News from the States and Abroad

Published by the
Birth Control Federation of America, Inc.

BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

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TODAY, AS NEVER BEFORE, leaders in public health are facing the fact that planned parenthood is an essential part of a health department's maternal and child health service. Vital statistics have held proof of this for years. Eminent physicians have pointed it out. Clinics and practitioners have demonstrated in cases by the tens of thousands that birth control can save happiness, health and life where one or all would otherwise be lost.

Some progressive public health officials finding or contriving favorable circumstances in their communities, have already made contraceptive and conceptive advice available in their programs. Many others now stand ready to follow their example but feel inadequately backed with fact, procedure and public opinion. The prospect of reducing maternal and infant death rates by twenty to twenty five per cent through this one facility is not lightly overlooked by a conscientious public servant whose responsibility is to reduce these rates. But he needs help. We must give him the help he needs without forcing his hand.

How can we help? We can furnish facts to him, to his board members and to the community. We can demonstrate the need and value of birth control, through clinics and through public education. We can consult with the health officer in our thinking and planning, so that what we do will make it easier for him to take up the work next month, or next year. And we can each build a demand among our friends, based upon facts.

These things call for personal study, wise planning, and increased effort on the part of each of us.

WOODBIDGE E. MORRIS, M.D.

General Director

BIRTH CONTROL FEDERATION OF AMERICA, INC.

Pearl Buck Writes on Birth Control

IN THE days to come people will be astonished that the things for which the Birth Control Federation fights should ever have been opposed or wondered at or taken for anything else than a matter of inevitable human right and reason. So today do we take the right of women to education, the right to freedom of religious belief, the right to freedom of the press, all rights which in times past have been causes involving the bitterest crusades. The time will come in our country, as it has already in countries older and wiser than ours, when birth control and the dissemination of scientific birth control knowledge will be a commonplace, a matter of simple hygiene, as well as of governmental compulsion.

Having lived all my life in China, an old and tolerant country, where no one is in a hurry, I also have learned to wait. I know that there are those in every generation who cannot see beyond their own limits to any larger issues. They are so. They are born so, and so they live. But they also die, and other larger minds and hearts spring up to take their place. If Margaret Sanger had throughout the ages to live with our generation only, I might not be sure of the success of her cause, in which I also believe. But her cause will live on long beyond our short day. She has started the fire of a great freedom and it will not burn down and no one can put it out because it is a freedom for humanity, and no one ever has been able to put down that sort of a fire. Time itself fans the blaze.

I am not impatient as to the hour of final triumph. Inevitably as the sun rises, it is coming, and quickly. In this generation it is tacitly accepted already, if still

openly opposed by some few groups. In the next generation there will be no opposition, or opposition of so formal a kind as to be negligible. By the time our grandchildren are in our shoes it will be as dead as the slavery question in the south, for which our grandfathers shouted, bled and died.

Aside from the happiness and welfare of individuals and individual homes, there are other wider and no less important implications. It is, for instance, obvious that birth control has a tremendous significance in relation to our economic life. I do not at all understand why American leaders in certain groups can for a moment think that tariffs and extreme restrictions alone can keep up our high standards of living. Our standards can be undermined from within as surely as from without. Why do we feel we can keep our standards safe if we refuse to allow undesirable immigrants to come in, for instance, when the real influx of undesirables is being generated inside our borders?

There is the relation of birth control to character. I do not mean the individual character, although I do not know of any one thing more vitally related to happiness and content, which after all is the basis of all good character, than a proper and normal sex life, and it is possible only with proper sex knowledge. But I want merely to mention the wider results in character of a crowded population. For one thing, in all those countries where population is too abundant, the cause of the individual is lost. Democracy is impossible in an overpopulated country. One needs only to read history with this in mind to discover how inevitably as population increases the

form of government changes from any semblance of democracy into some form of despotism

Indeed, why read history? It is to be seen in our own day. In many countries today democracy is non-existent, and one of the chief causes for the increase in despotic theories of government is overpopulation. Basically it is the only cause, for where food and jobs are plenty, the problem of government is simple, and strife is not necessary. It is only when work is too scarce and food not enough for all, that despotic measures must be taken, if not to insure plenty, at least to preserve order. Too little to eat, too little opportunity to achieve, too constant and fierce a struggle for barely enough upon which to feed the body, result in a state of mind which stultifies original and creative thinking, and breeds that type of dull patience which more than any religion, even, is responsible for a stolid fatalism, which is a sort of death. Are we to take part also in fierce wars for lands and territories that our people may live? It seems to me that the choice is inevitably in one of three ways, we will sink into the apathy of the semi-starved, or we will wage expensive and debasing wars that we may have food, or we will decide what we ought to have as our population and disseminate the information needed, so that not only will the well-to-do and the educated practice birth control, as is now the case, but that the poor and the less fit can also have the benefit of scientific knowledge. This third way is the only intelligent course, and an increasing number of persons know it.

It is to our shame that as a nation we say so often, "There is so much sordid and shameful in life that at least I don't want to hear or read about it." It amounts to a national attitude. In heaven's name,

if we will not allow ourselves to hear or to see or to speak, how can the sordidness and the shame ever be done away with in our life? How can we ever discover what makes the shame and the evil if we will not even know what it is? What is this stupidity which will not distinguish between leering pornography being sent secretly through the mails and clean scientific knowledge openly distributed to relieve distress and suffering? What is this attitude toward the very human instinct to which we all owe our existence today, which is as universal and in itself as clean as the hunger for food and the need for sleep, and as simple? Shall we say that all food is evil because some men and women overeat, or eat unwisely, or some starve? And shall we damn sleep because some are lazy and sleep when they should be working? Shall we pretend there is no such thing as food and sleep? What is the meaning of all this pretense?

We are a nation of pretenders. I do not say hypocrites, mind you, for hypocrisy is conscious. A hypocrite is one who knows he is evil and pretends he is good. But we will not even know what we are. We refuse to know. We sit with our feet in the mud and wave our little imaginary wings and pretend we are in heaven. We are not. We are human beings in this world, immersed now in extraordinarily simple and basic human problems, the problems of mature nationhood. For our pioneer days are over. The days of our childhood are passed, the days of more land to be settled, more work to be found, more room everywhere. We are grown now, and it is time to stop thinking that we are better than other people or that we can escape their problems.

We are wonderfully fortunate, it is true. We have a country of great re-

sources in which to live, but it will be as difficult for us and as insufficient as any other if we multiply more stupidly than the beasts do. We have a splendid heritage of character from our bold forefathers, who left us a code of righteousness to remember. But their codes were for their day, and they were only men, and what was good for them may not be good for us, or if it is, it is not by any magic of chapter and verse, but only because it still works. We need to face our country as it really is, not only economically, but spiritually and morally. How are our people really living and thinking behind this whitewashed fence of moral talk and creed? What are the morals by which we are really living? If they are not those which we profess in our churches and in our national bills, then why not?

I, for one, stand by the people. If they are not living as they profess to live, then the odds are not that their ways of life should change, but that the things which are professed should change. For I believe in the integrity of people. Most of us do the best we can under existing

conditions. If we are not able to live under the codes of our forefathers, it is not because we do not want to, but because life has changed so that we cannot and we want help. The harm to the spirit comes not in the change, but in having to pretend there is no need to change. That pretense, which is today not yet hypocrisy so much as the refusal to face truth and the fear of life and change, will inevitably degenerate into an actual hypocrisy as time goes on, and nothing is more devastating to the human heart and mind than hypocrisy. The only truly hateful creatures on this earth, as Jesus Christ said, are not the sinner, not the prostitute, not the thief, nor the failure, but the hypocrite, whether he be found among the lowly, as Judas was, or among the Pharisees. The hypocrite indeed may be found anywhere at any time, but he is always the enemy of humanity where ever he is found.

Until life is seen for what it is, until we do cease to be afraid of life, of unhappiness, of wrongs in our social system, we can do no great things in our day.

TRIBUTE

'Generations to come will honor Havelock Ellis as the one who opened the portals of the twentieth century and revealed sex as a spiritual factor in the lives of men and women. His labors, unique in history, raised this question from the obscurity where it had been thrust for centuries, and lifted it to its proper plane of dignity and science. —Margaret Sanger on the occasion of Havelock Ellis's recent death

Meetings

Tomorrow's Children was the theme of a Southern Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia, as this issue of the *Review* went to press. Outstanding doctors, sociologists, scientists and educators met to discuss problems concerning the future of the children of today and tomorrow. Whose will they be? What opportunity will they find? How shall we plan for them? These are some of the questions to which they attempted to find solutions.

Dr. William E. Cole, Professor of Sociology in the University of Tennessee, was Executive Chairman of the Conference. Honorary Chairman was Barry Bingham, President and Publisher of the Louisville, Kentucky, *Courier Journal*. Honorable H. B. Mays, Jr., Director of the Division of Child Welfare, represented Governor E. D. Rivers of Georgia.

Directors of the conference were Fred F. Athearn, President of the Georgia Conference of Social Work, Atlanta; Dr. Ernst W. Bertner, physician, Houston, Texas; Dr. Margaret C. Bristol, sociologist, Florida State College for Women, Tallahassee; Dr. John W. Davis, President, West Virginia State College; Dr. Roy L. Garis, economist, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee; Dr. R. Finley Gayle, physician, Richmond, Virginia; Dr. George H. Lawrence, President, North Carolina Maternal Health League, Chapel Hill; Dr. Roy Norton, Professor of Public Health Administration, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Dr. Robert E. Seibels, Chairman, Committee on Maternal Welfare, South Carolina State Medical Association, Columbia; Dr. Lee Turlington, physician, Birmingham, Alabama.

The Conference was sponsored by a

committee of more than one hundred leaders in medicine, social welfare, economics and community life, who represented eleven Southern states, and by the Birth Control Federation of America.

Miss Josephine Wilkins, President of the Georgia League of Women Voters, presided at the session at which George H. Cate, President of the Tennessee Conference of Social Work, spoke on the Obligation of the State to Tomorrow's Children; Rupert Vance, Research Professor of Sociology, Institute for Research and Social Science, University of North Carolina, on A Desirable Policy of Human Resources for the South; and Donald Klaiss, Professor of Sociology, University of North Carolina, on The Next Generation Marries. Fred F. Athearn, President of the Georgia Conference on Social Work, Dr. Woodbridge E. Morris, General Director, Birth Control Federation of America, and Dr. Robert S. Seibels, Chairman of the Committee on Maternal Welfare, South Carolina Medical Association, presided at other conference sessions. Alva Myrdal, President of the Swedish Federation of Business and Professional Women, was another speaker.

Sessions included a panel with eight outstanding doctors, economists, psychologists, sociologists as discussants, and also a discussion of Contraceptive Procedures, Merits and Demerits, and "Birth Control Clinic Procedure."

OUR FIELD WORKERS' FORUM

With worries about manpower, inevitable during a war, let us in America stand our ground and not be stampeded into an emphasis on quantity instead of on quality in population. Margaret

ANNUAL MEETING

From State Leagues and clinics all over this country delegates will come to New York to attend the annual meeting of the Birth Control Federation of America, which will be held at the Hotel Roosevelt on January 23rd and 24th, 1940

Details of program not yet completely worked out, as well as the names of the members of the Annual Meeting Committee and the Nominating Committee will be announced in the December issue of the *Review*

Sanger, Honorary Chairman of the Birth Control Federation of America, said at the opening of an institute held for the Federation's field and office staff in New York on September 6-9, 1939

Board members and staff joined in the study of problems, and in making plans for extending birth control as part of public health service. Field workers from the Carolinas, California, Georgia, Texas, and other parts of the country shared the inspiration of speeches by Margaret Sanger, Mrs. Henry J. Mali, Chairman of the Regional Organization Committee, Gilbert Colgate, Dr. Woodbridge E. Morris, and Dr. Clarence J. Gamble.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

'The South Tackles Her Problems,' a talk by William E. Cole, was a stimulating feature of the October meeting of the Board of Directors of the Birth Control Federation of America. Dr. Cole, Professor of Sociology, University of Tennessee, announced to the Board details of the Conference on Tomorrow's Children of which he was Executive Chairman.

Dr. Richard N. Pierson, as Chairman,

presided at the October meeting of the Board of Directors. Gilbert Colgate, as Treasurer, presented his report, which was accepted as read. The Board also approved the report of the Executive Committee as presented by Mr. Colgate as Chairman of that committee. Mrs. Henry J. Mali gave an outline of the progress in the Regional Organization Department, including the statement that there may soon be public announcement of the addition of birth control advice to the public health service of another Southern state. Mrs. Huntington Babcock reported for New York, Mrs. Robert G. Ilsley for New Jersey, Mrs. Laurence Ustick for Pennsylvania, and Mrs. A. Morgan Pease for Connecticut. Dr. Woodbridge E. Morris, General Director, gave his report covering the activities of the Federation since the last Board meeting.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors of the Birth Control Federation will be held on December 7th at 21 East 79th Street, New York, the home of Mrs. Henry C. Taylor who is serving both as a member of the Executive Committee and as Chairman of the National Clinic Service.

Birth Rates in Fascist Countries

By ROBERT C. COOK
Editor, *Journal of Heredity*

The baby barometer of the dictatorships is important to all of us for two vital reasons. First and foremost today's babies are tomorrow's cannon fodder—and in this modern world a philosophy of force and conquest can not prosper without plenty of willing human raw materials for armies and factories. Second, a program of colonial expansion must have people to fill these hoped-for places in the sun. The two objectives, soldiers for conquest and colonists to fill the conquered lands, are thus prime problems of world peace.

And the axis dictators have not been indifferent to this assumed need for a bulge in population. Both in Germany and Italy, the birth rate has been a matter of concern for many years. The approach has been quite different in the two countries. Italy has shown an urgent and not very critical interest in mere numbers. It appears that any mother with a half dozen youngsters is in line for a place if not in the sun, at least in the Sunday papers, with a pat on the back by Il Duce if she can muster eight or ten—no questions asked about I Q's.

Mussolini's ballyhoo has been accompanied by no increase in Italian births until the past year or so. Whether it has prevented a faster decline might be argued. In any event in 1920 the Italian birth rate was 27 births per thousand population. By 1936 it was down to 22. The logic of demanding more babies when things were already overcrowded at home (in Europe only Belgium exceeds Italy's 350 per square mile), to occupy still imaginary colonies seems not to have appealed to the Italian people. They

seem very sensibly to have detected an Ethiopian in the woodpile somewhere, and not Haile Selassie either.

As a matter of fact the trend of Italian population into the colonies has been more of a trickle than a tidal wave. New York City is a much larger Italian colony than Tripoli, Eritrea, and Abyssinia combined.

Any sane reason for a larger Italian birth rate has been hard to find and the Italian people have backed their judgment against propaganda, in spite of a religious and secular ban on birth control.

In Germany the story has been a little different.

The German program has been much more carefully worked out. The need for quality as well as quantity is recognized. It might be noted in passing that the German interest in more babies and better babies dates to a good many years before the Nazis came into power. So with Teutonic thoroughness an elaborate program of differential birth boosting has been worked out. If you are of good sound Aryan stock—with no genetic skeletons in the pedigree closet—or in that of your prospective spouse—you can get a loan up to \$500.00 to get married on. Each child cancels a quarter of the loan. If you can get it all written off by the obstetrician you can go on to other rewards in cash and honor for continued fecundity.

If you live on a farm you can get special consideration, for the German population authorities are rightly much exercised about the quality of rural population.

They are earnestly trying to make it not only pleasant but profitable to stay on the land, and to have children—a philosophy which we can well give thought to in this country, where the submarginal farms have the big families. Much of this program is engineered with skill.

The marriage loan system and other subsidies for fecundity were put into effect in 1932, at a time when the birth rate had been falling steadily for several years and had reached a record low of under 15 per thousand, exceeded or, better, *deceded* only by the birth rates of Sweden (14) and England (13). The marriage loan laws were followed by a striking increase in births in 1934 and 1935, the rate rising to nearly 19 by 1935. It has continued slowly upward ever

since, and stood between 19 and 20 in 1938, higher than the birth rates of England, France, Sweden or the United States. At first glance it looks as though we had here our first demonstration of a successful pegging of a falling birth rate by economic means. The story is not as simple as that, however. At the same time the marriage subsidies went into effect a strenuous campaign was instituted against abortion, and against the distribution of contraceptives. It seems likely that a good deal of the bulge in the German birth rate was due to these repressive campaigns rather than to the direct birth subsidies. Thus the conclusions to be drawn as to the real value of these very expensive direct subsidies are not by any means clear.

News from the States

Dr. Roy Norton of North Carolina, now Professor of Public Health Administration at the University of North Carolina, who is one of those best able to tell about the establishment of public contraceptive service under state public health administration, was the principal speaker at the annual meeting of the *Pennsylvania Birth Control Federation*. About 2000 Pittsburgh people attended a debate between Dr. Woodbridge E. Morris, General Director of the Birth Control Federation, and Dr. Helen Ingleby, Professor of Pathology, Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, on "Is Birth Control an Essential Factor in Preventive Medicine and Public Health?" No vote was taken.

The Maternal Health Association of *Missouri*, in a critical evaluation of its work for 1938, found great benefit to patients resulted from the use of medical

social workers for initial interviews and also for follow up work.

New Hampshire Maternal Health Association is the new name of the New Hampshire group. This change in name indicates a broadening in the scope of their work.

In *New York State* six new centers and a referral service have opened during the past eight months. Birth control, presented at a public health conference in this state for the first time, was favorably received at the Twentieth Annual Public Health Conference (New York) at which 1,900 health officers and public health nurses of the state were in attendance.

A course for prospective fathers, a school for brides and a school for bridegrooms, as well as both marriage study groups and family circles, are being sponsored by the *Massachusetts Mothers'*

Health Council. This state has just appointed a full time executive director to help with its broadly planned program, which recently included showing exhibits at two Massachusetts fairs.

The Connecticut Supreme Court of Errors will, this winter, consider the Waterbury Maternal Health Center case. One judge in a lower court interpreted the law so as to permit doctors to give married women the benefit of the best medical advice available. Another judge of the same bench ruled that contraceptive advice could not be given in Connecticut even to married women whose health required it. Public opinion in the state is gathering behind the *Connecticut* Birth Control League, and eagerly awaits the opinion of the higher court.

Time reports have come in on activities of state leagues in fairs already held, as well as notes on plans for future fairs. The *Minnesota* League, after reviewing results of a second experience at their State Fair, is making plans for next year's display. For the first time *Michigan* and *Illinois* had exhibits at their fairs this year. *Tennessee* also had a Fair exhibit.

Can your state arrange an exhibit for fairs still to be held this year, and make plans for next year's fairs? Those who staff the booths will find the average Fair attendant is an alert, interested person to whom our story of planning families will seem personal, logical and important.

During October birth control was represented at state social work conferences in *Kentucky*, *Indiana*, *Oklahoma*, *Nebraska* and *West Virginia*. In each of these five cases the Birth Control Federation assisted the state leagues by lending exhibits and supplying literature (at cost price).

The Maternal Health Association of *Ohio* again this year met with the Ohio Welfare Conference. As their report states, this was the ninth consecutive year they had the opportunity of having their services better understood and the individual needs of clients more adequately met.

Michigan for the third time participated in the Michigan State Public Health Conference, held in Grand Rapids, November 8th, 9th, and 10th.

News from Abroad

A fine statement illustrative of the current leadership of church groups in the birth control movement was made by the Methodist Church of England in its declaration on the Christian View of Marriage and the Family, issued in August of this year. Many wise comments on marriage and the home precede the statement that careless parenthood is injurious to the social order, and the endorsement of birth control in its positive aim of producing the healthiest possible family.

The Family Planning Association is

the new name of the National Birth Control Association of England. This change in name which is meeting with approval is describing more accurately their functions and the increasing scope of their activities is illustrative of the affirmative stand taken by the birth control movement not only in this country but all over the world.

Some time later in the year we hope to tell our readers about progress in birth control activities in Jamaica, India, the British West Indies, South Africa and other foreign countries.

Variation on the Case History

By LILLI REMINGTON HLIBURN

YOU'RE a good one to talk of birth control—you, with your ten children! I've heard that remark so many times that it has finally roused me to reply.

I'm the very person TO talk of birth control—not only because I know so well all that it means to raise a large family but because so many persons still labor under the misunderstanding that birth control necessarily implies limitation of one's family.

Chance took me into a tenement. I climbed in darkness, up broken stairs to an attic room. There was no ventilation, little light. It was unbelievably crowded and filthy, and it served as living room, bedroom, dining room and kitchen. The odor was indescribable and unforgettable. As I turned to leave, my errand accomplished, a little child stumbled over my feet. When I picked her up, I saw that her eyes were running sores and that she was blind.

Next day, I got in touch with the local board of health. There was no satisfactory response. I spent most of the day telephoning to one official after another, until in desperation I made contact with the Mayor himself. He was very sympathetic and very courteous. But, he said, 'as long as these people continue to breed in ignorance and disease, what can you expect?'

The key to the whole problem, it seems to me, lies in the phrase, 'as long as these people (the ignorant and defective) continue to breed.' It is for those of us who have knowledge to see that this knowledge is passed on to those less enlightened and, where conditions make it advisable, to pass such laws as will make it impossible for degeneracy (I use

the word in both its limited and in its larger sense) to perpetuate itself.

I believe in birth control for the individual, whenever—for any reason—it seems best to limit the number of children. I believe in it even when it would mean no children at all. Better none than even one unwanted child.

I believe in birth control for the community because if we are to progress we must show as much intelligence in breeding citizens as we do in raising live stock and vegetables. It is a sad commentary on civilization that we give least thought to that which is most vital.

I should like to see war waged against bootleg birth control devices. It should be a criminal offense to manufacture any contraceptive device other than those found satisfactory by authorized experts in such matters.

I should like to see the sale of such devices limited to clinics and doctors, to assure their proper usage and fitting.

I should like to see clinics established in every small town as well as in every large city, and for the rural and back country folk, I should like to see adequate birth control clinics on wheels.

I look forward to a more enlightened future, when births will not be an accident or even an incident but the result of careful and deliberate planning. And if we are willing to shuffle off outmoded prejudices, the beauty of parenthood should be enhanced by this planning.

When that time comes, we shall be by way of producing not alone a superior race but government of the people by the people and for the people, will mean something better than corrupt politicians elected by ignorance and greed.

APPROVAL OF BIRTH CONTROL MOVEMENT

City and County health departments, business and professional women, ministerial groups, Rotary Clubs, medical associations, and social work conferences are among the many groups that have passed resolutions urging the inclusion of birth control service in national, state and local health and welfare programs since the last publication of the list. At that time more than 1,000 organizations had been so farsighted as to recognize the need for birth control. Among those now to be added to that honor roll are

Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs
Arkansas and Georgia State Conferences
of Social Work
Auburn, Cayuga County Ministerial As-
sociation of New York State
City of Salisbury, North Carolina, and
Rowan County Health Department
Eastern Connecticut Conference on Hu-
man Welfare
Family Relations Committee of the
Young Women's Christian Association
Georgia Business and Professional
Women's Association
Georgia State Medical Society
Hampton, Virginia, Rotary Club
Lauderdale County Medical Society of
Georgia
Lithuanian Women's Convention
Madison and Shelby County Medical
Associations of Alabama
West Virginia State Conference of Social
Work

GROWING PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE

All over the country groups of citizens have been conferring on fundamental problems about which planning is needed.

National Conference of Social Work
June, Buffalo. Almost 8,000 people at-
tended. The Birth Control Federation
participated in these sessions, at which
stimulating thoughtful papers were read
to more than 1,200 people. About 400
others saw a showing of *Why Let Them
Die?* The 721 people who registered at
our booth represented forty-six states,
two territories and six foreign countries.

National Medical Association, August
New York. The Birth Control Federa-
tion of America displayed an exhibit,
distributed literature, and showed our
film to the Negro physicians, dentists and
pharmacists at this meeting.

American Congress of Obstetrics and
Gynecology, September, Cleveland. The
Journal of Contraception had a booth at
which 190 doctors and 167 nurses from
thirty-nine states and six foreign coun-
tries registered.

American Public Health Association
October, Pittsburgh. At the session on
Public Health Nursing, Frances R. Pratt,
R.N., talked on an Outline Developed
in the North Carolina State Board of
Health for Staff Education Programs for
Public Health Nurses in Birth Control
Work.

Of first importance it seems to me
is to meet the reasonable wish of every
normal woman to choose the time and
circumstances of her child bearing, *the
whether or not and when of pregnancy*."

HAVEN EMERSON, M.D.

Professor of Public Health Practice, College of
Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University,
New York City. *Speech at National Conference
of Social Work, Buffalo—1939*



From the Editor's Desk



¶ During the six months period just passed there have been contacts with 122,890 people in the 185 clinics on which a report is available. Many hundreds of patients were helped with planned pregnancies. More than one third of the patients were on work or home relief or were unemployed.

¶ 'Contraceptives and the Law' is the title of a valuable article in the *University of Chicago Law Review*, February, 1939. Local legal advisers will find much helpful material in this article.

¶ Sometimes current medical skill in lowering infant mortality rates brings birth control new adherents in surprising ways. Witness the cabbie who drove home a Washington *Post* columnist and told him: 'Now in the old country, Sir, a man has twelve to fourteen children and some babies die always. Not all grow up. Before you getta well acquainted very good some die. Here in this D. C. what happens? Baby get sick. Wife goes to clinic. Doctor pronounce had cold, measles, pneumonia, tonsils—rush to children's hospital—baby get well—All grow up.'

¶ The national birth rate in 1938, according to Census Bureau figures, showed an increase for the second consecutive year. Our interest in healthy babies being born to healthy mothers make us wish we could give a full page in this *Review* to this statement. Certainly it answers the weak argument that if doctors are allowed to give sound medical advice to mothers the population of this country will decline—Census figures show that isn't so!

¶ When the *Birth Control Review* was first published in 1917 no magazine was courageous enough to publish an article on a subject regarded by its opponents as anti-social, unmoral and even indecent. Fortunately for America that has changed. During the past year articles on birth control have appeared in many magazines of national circulation including, *Liberty*, *Look*, *The Commentator*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Reader's Digest*, *You* and *Colliers*. The *Woman's Home Companion* and *Ladies Home Journal* are leaders in recognizing that this is a subject of major importance in every American home and one about which a magazine has a responsibility to its readers.

¶ As evidence of the general interest the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* reports to us that they already have received 499 letters bearing directly upon the article by Eduard C. Lindeman published by them in July and those by Don Wharton and Father Connell which followed. Two letters typical of the points of view expressed by their readers follow.

Atlantic Monthly

Dear Sirs:

I was most interested in your articles on birth control. I am particularly in sympathy with Don Wharton's article as I have just returned from an extended visit and tour of North Carolina and can appreciate what it has meant to the woman (and the other members of the family) to have the state officially promoting birth control.

You are doing a splendid public service in giving this subject so much space in your magazine.

New Jersey

Permit me to offer sincere congratulations to you for the publication of the scholarly article written in your October issue by the Reverend Francis Connell and entitled "The Case for the Catholic

Unfortunately, there are too many magazines and periodicals coming from our present day press which fail to realize that in every controversy there are two sides to the question controverted. Thank you for departing from this outrageous and dishonest policy, so foreign to the pursuit of truth and so contrary to correct thinking.

After reading Father Connell's words, I am of this opinion — the number of letters you receive commenting on this article will be legion and the number of those who disagree will be many. However, positing that there is a Supreme Being to Whom all rational creatures are morally responsible, I feel certain that

"The Case for the Catholic" will not be refuted intelligently from the viewpoint of reason—only sentiment (not reason) will be the major objection to the *reasons* brought forth by Father Connell against Birth Control.

Yours sincerely,
New York

¶ New York City in 1938, according to its Health Department figures, had succeeded in reducing its infant mortality rate from 110.9 in 1898 to 38.3. More than one hundred and two babies out of every 1,000 born in 1938 lived who would have died had they been born in 1898. Part of the credit for these babies being healthier belongs to the thirty maternal health centers functioning in New York City.

¶ North Carolina's infant death rate has dropped in the last year, according to a comparison of figures for August, 1938

with those of August, 1939. The new state program for child spacing should be credited in part with this decline. One hundred and fifteen fewer deaths of children under one year were reported and thirteen fewer maternal deaths.

¶ The abortion racket unearthed in Brooklyn, New York, makes it worthwhile to restate the fact that most abortion victims are married women already mothers of many children. The health of the mother and the well being of the children demands women be given proper contraceptive advice so that they need not be the victims of illegal abortionists.

¶ New York State in its Tax Department has adopted a new maternity leave policy to encourage the rearing of families. The plan allows women workers thirty days sick leave in addition to their accumulated sick leave and earned vacation.

¶ Plato in his *Republic* states plainly that in an ideal city the quality of children born and not the number must be the vital consideration. Several passages are devoted by this ancient Greek philosopher to a description of the kind and age of the people who should be permitted to bear children. Even when Plato wrote it was known that a city desiring a population of wise, brave and just citizens must emphasize the quality of life.

¶ The rural health program has been expanded with a full time nurse in the west.

¶ Two new state leagues, California and Tennessee, have been added to the Birth Control Federation, and a third state league is in process of formation.

¶ There has been a marked increase in the circulation of the slide film to groups throughout the country and of the medical film to medical schools and societies.

¶ In its August-September issue the *Journal of Contraception* prints never before

published photographs of wall charts and models by Dr. Robert L. Dickinson. These are to be used in clinic instruction. Life size samples of this series have been shown at the Hall of Man, New York World's Fair. Dr. Dickinson worked out the series with the sculptor Abram Belskie, Malvina Hoffman as consultant.

¶ The October issue of the *Journal of Contraception* contains an article about the certification of birth control centers in which the standards for centers affiliated with the Birth Control Federation are stated. This group of 163 clinical birth control centers is steadily increasing in number.

New Literature

The new pamphlet of the Birth Control Federation, *Plan Your Family*, contains a simple explanation of birth control and child spacing for the clinic patient. Business men, especially, will be interested in another new publication, *Business and the Birth Rate*, which states opinions of authorities on the economic aspects of population trends in the United States. The Whether or Not and When of Pregnancy is the subtitle of a pamphlet containing the text of an address by Dr. Haven Emerson on "What May Health Departments Do To Further Improve the Quality of Life?" A reprint from the November, 1939 *Reader's Digest* of Don Wharton's *Atlantic Monthly* article "Birth Control, The Case for the State" also is ready for distribution. In this article North Carolina's program of state sponsored birth control clinics is described. All of these pamphlets can be obtained, one free and the others at a nominal fee, from the Birth Control Federation offices.

SOCIETY IN TRANSITION *Harry Elmer Barnes* New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1939. 999 pp. \$5.00

Society in Transition again demonstrates the extraordinary gift of the author in summarizing and clarifying complex and multitudinous social phenomena.

The readers of this magazine will be especially interested in his discussion of birth control. Although there is no doubt that birth control with its more effective contraceptive methods is the major cause of our decreasing birth rate in the United States, our birth control program rests upon psychological, sociological, and economic influences (p. 205). Our increasing knowledge of birth control and our deliberate sterilization become a substitute for the moral restraint that Malthus advocated as a means of controlling the size of families (p. 236). In eighteen pages the author gives the history of the birth control movement from the time of Malthus and Place up to January, 1938. This includes consideration of the eugenic resources that birth control and sterilization provide (pp. 237-255). Nowhere in so brief a space will be found a more informing discussion of the problem of quality population, a challenge to intelligence which in the mind of the reviewer excels all others in its consequences for human survival and social welfare. The author writes some wise words about the abortion evil and the need of giving those who marry better understanding of sex (pp. 243-244 and Chapter 10).

ERNEST R. GROVES

Research Professor, Institute for Research and Social Science, University of North Carolina

PREDICTING SUCCESS OR FAILURE IN MARRIAGE by *Ernest W Burgess and Leonard S Cottrell, Jr*, Prentice Hall, Inc New York, 1939 472 pp \$3 25

The authors, two university professors, spent seven years in completing this detailed study of the marital adjustment of 526 couples. As a result of their analysis, they believe that prediction before marriage of marital adjustment is feasible.

Of particular interest to advocates of planned parenthood is the finding that marriages which produce unwanted children reach a much lower level of adjustment than either childless marriages or those which produce desired children. More than 65 per cent of the parents of unwanted children proved to have poor

marital adjustment, as compared with only 20 per cent of the parents of wanted children. Further, the study shows that children reared in homes made unhappy by their parents' poor adjustment are less apt than others to find happiness in their own marriages. Several of the case histories illustrate what every birth control worker knows—that lack of a satisfactory and reliable method of contraception is a definite factor in marital maladjustment.

This book should prove valuable to the growing number of maternal health centers which have marriage counseling service. One of its useful features is a 27 page bibliography of recent books and studies on marriage problems.

MABEL TRAVIS WOOD

Some Recent Statements

‘Until society realizes the blasphemy of the assertion that it is by the will of God that children are brought into the world under conditions of wretchedness and squalor these conditions cannot be prevented.’

MAGISTRATE CLAUDE NULLINS

Of Southwestern Police Court London. *In sentencing a husband and his wife for neglecting their nine children.*

“When a baby is conceived before his predecessor is a year old, the first one is three times as likely to die as under other circumstances.”

DR. FREDERICK C. HOLDEN

Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology N. Y. University College of Medicine

Deaths from abortions number from 4,000 to 6,000 a year. What is the preventive medicine for the great mass of abortions? Birth Control? Public health vital statistics in the United States show

that birth control is needed for the good of the public health.”

DR. WOODBRIDGE E. MORRIS

Speech at National Conference on Social Work Buffalo—1939

‘Either we shall pay more attention to less fortunate mothers or build more hospitals, asylums, jails, reformatories and penitentiaries. We now know that the overwhelming majority of criminals are bred in homes where there is too little care and too many children.’

REVEREND CARTER H. HARRISON

Rector St. John's Church Hampton Virginia

“In my opinion America cannot solve its unemployment situation for more than short periods of time until (1) sufficient purchasing power is created through wages and farm income to permit the purchase of products produced, (2) information is made available to the

rank and file of the people which will permit them to adapt the size and quality of their families to the employment opportunities of a machine age. The latter is of especial importance in the South where population is being replenished more rapidly than elsewhere.

JOSEPHINE WILKINS
—Radio Broadcast—1939

We firmly believe that no syphilitic mother is fit to conceive a child, further more she has not the right to do so, and she should demand instruction in methods of contraception which would permit her to avoid pregnancies until she has been properly treated and cured of the disease. For this reason we have always maintained that the teaching of contraceptive methods, in these and similar cases, should constitute an integral and important part of every intelligent public health program."

DR. JOSE S. BELAVAL
Puerto Rico radio address 1939

The class most needing information is not getting it. The only way to correct this fault is to provide it through local authorities under medical supervision. But such instruction should not be confined to women whose lives are in danger from subsequent confinements nor to those suffering from gynecological dis-

eases. It should invariably be under medical control and supervision.

LORD HORDER

Head of Family Planning Association (Great Britain) and one of the physicians to the King

"The use of contraceptives as a means for regulating birth is a practice which is now endorsed, I believe, by an overwhelming majority of American citizens."

EDUARD C. LINDEMAN

Professor of Social Philosophy, New York School of Social Work. *Atlantic Monthly*—June

"The objective sought in this phase of the Committee's proposed program is to make available to all mothers and children of all income groups and in all parts of the United States minimum medical services essential for the reduction of our needlessly high maternal mortality rates and death rates among newborn infants." Report of the 1938 Technical Committee on Medical Care of the President's Interdepartmental Committee to Coordinate Health and Welfare Activities.

"Emphasis today is not on family limitation but on the spacing of births in conformity with the statistical evidence that conscious control of fertility materially reduces mortality in both mothers and children. During the past three years there has been a definite trend toward the inclusion of birth control as an integral part of public health and maternal welfare programs."

Editorial—*Medical Record*, August 1939

"The tragedy of unplanned parenthood: our children's children will look back upon us as utterly inhuman. It is just as much a man's problem as it is a woman's to see that this inhumanity is done away and that voluntary parenthood is established as the normal functioning of family life."

DR. HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

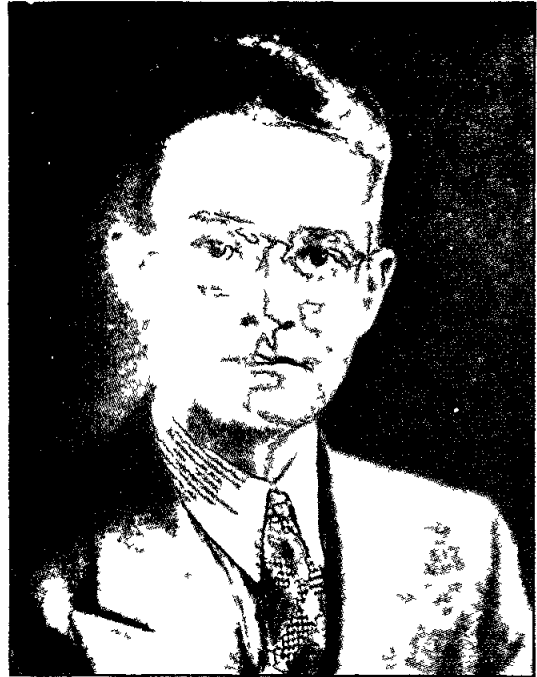
NOVEMBER, 1939

PERSONAL ITEMS

Since the June issue of the *Birth Control Review* Mr Gilbert Colgate is Chairman of the Federation's Executive Committee Mrs Kathryn Trent, R N, formerly Director of the Division of Public Health Nursing for the Delaware State Board of Health, succeeds as regional organization director, Mrs Marguerite Benson, who resigned last summer For the past two years, Mrs Trent has been



Mrs Kathryn Trent R N



Charles M Smith

President of the Delaware State Nurses Association She is a member of the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, the American Nurses Association, and the American Public Health Association

Charles M Smith has been appointed Director of Public Information Mr Smith attended Tulane University and Washington and Lee University, and concurrently worked as reporter and feature writer on several newspapers During the last six years he has been on the staff of the American Institute of Accountants engaged in public relations activities and editing the Institute's two monthly magazines and other publications He has had considerable experience in planning and organizing meetings, and in cooperating with state and local organizations

Appointment of a medical director to follow Dr Eric M Matsner, who served as acting medical director in the early months of the Federation's existence, is expected soon Dr Matsner resigned last spring to devote full time to his growing practice

An enlarged Public Progress Committee with a reserve corps and a committee from the board has notable achievements already to its credit

BIRTH CONTROL FEDERATION of AMERICA Inc

Formerly American Birth Control League
and Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau

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Regional Organization Department
Public Information Department

Medical Department
National Clinic Service
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NOVEMBER 1939

BIRTH CONTROL MEANS RACE BUILDING

Ireland Discourages Birth Control ~

**In Holland Birth Control is
Generally Available**

BIRTH RATE



DEATH RATE



INCREASE OF BIRTHS OVER DEATHS



Each Symbol = 2 Individuals
Based on the average rates per 1000 population, 1928-32