

Margaret Sanger; The Early Years, 1910-1917

by

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MARGARET SANGER

PREFACE

"I think you are spending far too much time on the early activities of the movement and the little details that are really insignificant in the history making the movement. I know that you like these details, but that is mainly because you are young, and perhaps if I may say it with apologies, inexperienced in viewing life and activities and results from a greater horizon."

Margaret Sanger in a letter
to her biographer, Lawrence
Lader, January 6, 1954.

The aim of this paper is to examine the life of Margaret Sanger from 1910 to March, 1917. In 1910 Margaret was converted from a docile suburban housewife to a rabid socialist. She was to progress through various stages of radicalism, and in 1914 she began the American birth control movement. The first stage of this movement ended in March 1917 when Margaret was released from the Queens County Penitentiary after serving a one-month sentence for opening a birth control clinic.

In discussing Margaret Sanger's life during these seven years, I will concentrate primarily on her activities in the various radical movements in which she was involved and in the birth control movement. Secondly, I will discuss her philosophical and personal development over the seven years. I begin with a comprehensive view of her activities with the Socialist Party and the Industrial Workers of the World and of

her association with various anarchists in the period 1910-1913. This is a comprehensive view because this period of her life has never been examined before by anyone. In addition, the central theme of this paper is that the birth control movement from 1914 to 1917 was a direct extension of Margaret Sanger's radical activities of the previous three years. The style, tone, strategy and tactics of the movement were all taken from Margaret's experience in her radical work. Even the workers in the movement were old anarchist or socialist friends of hers. A secondary theme of the paper is that, during the years 1915-1917, Margaret began to divorce the birth control movement from its former radical style and began to set it on a more conservative course.

After my examination of her radical activities, I discuss in great detail the birth control movement and Margaret Sanger's activities in it from 1914 to 1917. My aim is not merely to illustrate the two central themes of the paper but in addition to give a factual account of what happened during those three years. This period has been examined before by other writers, but many basic facts which I have included here were omitted in their studies.

In the course of studying Margaret's life in these seven years I examine her complex personality and her philosophical development. I give a new interpretation to both her personality and her philosophy and show that these had a great effect on the movement she led.

A perceptive critic will notice that I have repeatedly

said that Margaret's life from 1910 to 1917 has never been adequately explained or examined and that the two main sources for this period are Margaret's two autobiographies (one was largely ghost-written by two friends). I have concluded, from comparing the facts as presented in these two books and the facts as given in other primary and secondary sources, that Margaret was not always as truthful as she might have been. In part this was caused by the passage of time. But in addition Margaret's enormous ego made her change or omit many facts to make her appear in a better light. The one man who dared to publish a biography of her was misled by many of these misstatements and consequently his book is no better factually than her two. On most occasions I have not bothered in the text or in the footnotes to point out the discrepancies of fact between the various sources. I have merely told the factual narrative as I see it. I freely admit that I too have probably been misled upon occasion as everyone else has, but I trust that these occurrences are rare.

I would like to thank Miss Elisabeth Duvall of the Neilson Library at Smith College for her generous help and advice during my study of the Margaret Sanger Papers in the Sophia Smith Collection. I would like to thank the staffs of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, the Rare Book Collection of the New York Public Library and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America for their assistance in my study of the Sanger papers in their collections. In addition I would like to express my

thanks to the following libraries for their assistance: The National Archives, The Association of the Bar of the City of New York, The Hoover Institution of War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University, The Law Library and the Tamiment Library of New York University, The University Library at the University of Michigan, The Minnesota Historical Society, The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, The Indiana State Library, The Lilly Library of Indiana University, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, The Guy W. Bailey Library at The University of Vermont, The National Library of Medicine, and The Duke University Library.

In addition I would like to thank Mrs. Ruth Sheridan and Walter Lippmann for providing me with valuable material.

I would like to express my appreciation to my mother and father for the extensive information and advice they have given me. During the past year I had many informal discussions with my father about his mother, Margaret Sanger. These discussions took place during dinner, on the golf course and at other such times which made it impossible for me to record what exactly was said at each date. The information he has given me I have footnoted saying "Interview with Grant Sanger," and I have not attempted to date these interviews.

Finally I would like to express my appreciation to my faculty adviser James McPherson who gave me a great deal of

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Alexander C. Sanger
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CHAPTER ONE
BIRTH CONTROL PIONEERS

"Every revolution was first a thought in one man's mind."
Emerson

There was no real birth control "movement" before 1910 in America. Ideas on family limitation were advocated only by a few radicals as a small part of their general radical philosophy. No person ever came forward to advocate family limitation as an entity in itself.

Ideas about overpopulation began in England in 1798 with the publication of Thomas Malthus's Essay on Population. Other English radicals and intellectuals such as James Mill, his son John Stuart Mill, Francis Place, Robert Owen, his son Robert Dale Owen and Richard Carlile soon discussed family limitation and overpopulation in their own writings.¹

English atitation began with the work of the Drysdales and finally in 1887, the circulation of information regarding family limitation was legalised by a court decision regarding a

¹Victor Robinson, Pioneers of Birth Control (New York, 1919), 18-30; Robert Dale Owen, Moral Physiology (London, 1832), 20-47; Norman E. Himes, "Birth Control in Historical and Clinical Perspective," Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science (March, 1932), 3; Peter Fryer, The Birth Controllers (New York, 1966), 98.

pamphlet circulated by Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh.²

This work, "Fruits of Philosophy," was written by an American, Dr. Charles L. Knowlton in 1832. It was the first pamphlet describing contraceptive methods to be published in America, and because of its contents Dr. Knowlton was the first man to be sent to jail for advocating birth control.³ Two years earlier, in 1830, Frances Wright had made family limitation one of the parts of her feminist program. This marked the first ties between feminism and birth control.⁴ In that same year, Robert Dale Owen published his Moral Physiology which advocated family limitation.⁵ This early activity in the 1830's was merely a mild carry-over from the British agitation, and it soon died out. America was a young nation and its people were moving west. There was opportunity and room for everyone.

For the next 40 years there was little spectacular birth control activity except in a few scattered utopian communities, like the one at Oneida, New York, which advocated and practised

²Robinson, Pioneers, 40-49.

³Fryer, Controllers, 99.

⁴Francis McLellan Vreeland, The Process of Reform with Especial Reference to Reform Groups in The Field of Population (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1929), 8; Margaret Sanger Research Bureau, One Hundred Fifty Years of Birth Control (New York, 1948).

⁵Fryer, Controllers, 98.

some forms of birth control.

There were a few doctors who continued to write articles and books advocating the use of contraceptives.⁶ Apparently there was enough activity in this area to prompt the Y. M. C.A. of New York to create in 1872 the Committee for Suppression of Vice with a man named Anthony Comstock as its director.⁷ In 1873 this group lobbied in Congress for strict postal laws to prevent the sending of contraceptive information and other "obscene" matter through the mails. Comstock succeeded; on March 1, 1873, the last day of Congress, an overwhelmingly Protestant Congress passed the so-called Comstock Laws, and Anthony Comstock was appointed Special Agent of the Post Office Department to oversee the enforcement of the law.⁸ From 1873 to 1915, Comstock zealously performed his duties, having destroyed 160 tons of obscene literature and having arrested 3873 persons, of whom 2911 were convicted.⁹

Immediately American freethinkers, radicals and sex-reformers began to agitate against these Comstock Laws that classed contraception with obscenity. The first to be prosecuted under the new law was Dr. Edward Bliss Foote in 1873; he was fined

⁶ Ibid., 113; Research Bureau, 150 Years; Marie Stopes, Contraception (London, 1925), 289.

⁷ Heywood Brown and Margaret Leech, Anthony Comstock (New York, 1927), 85.

⁸ Ibid., 143 and 249.

⁹ Fryer, Centrollers, 117; Margaret Sanger, "Comstockery in America," Unpublished article in The Sanger Papers (Library of Congress), Box 2.

\$5000 for sending contraceptive information through the mails.¹⁰ Penalties such as this did not deter the radicals from fighting Comstock. D. M. Bennett started a magazine called "The Truth Seeker" which carried birth control propaganda. During Bennett's trial, in which he was convicted and sentenced to 13 months at hard labor, Assistant District Attorney William P. Fiero caught the true Victorian spirit of the age when he addressed the jury: "The United States is one great society for the suppression of vice."¹¹ And so it seemed at the end of the nineteenth century as radical after freethinker after sex-reformer was sentenced to pay large fines and to serve long jail terms for breaking Anthony Comstock's postal law. The fight was essentially one for free speech, as Ezra Heywood said at his trial in Boston in 1882 for violation of The Comstock Laws: "Others and still others with increasing invincible numbers will rise in my tracks, and the good fight of faith will go on, until freedom to acquire and impart knowledge on all subjects of human interest, the right to have, print and mail honest opinions, is assured wherever the federal union flag floats."¹²

Many martyrs were created by Anthony Comstock's zealous persecution, and these served as inspiration for later birth control

¹⁰Robinson, Pioneers, 62; Fryer, Centrollers, 116.

¹¹Brown and Leech, Comstock, 89; Vreeland, Reform, 34-37.

¹²Robinson, Pioneers, 61-62.

advocates: old Moses Harmon received five years in jail; Ida Craddock committed suicide rather than be sent to jail by Comstock.¹³ Influential men like Robert Ingersoll began to speak out on family limitation:

There is but one hope. Ignorance, poverty and vice must stop populating the world. This cannot be done by moral suasion. This cannot be done by talk or example. This cannot be done by religion or by law, by priest or by hangman. This cannot be done by force, physical or moral.

To accomplish this there is but one way. Science must make woman the owner, the mistress of herself. Science, the only possible savior of mankind, must put in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother.¹⁴

In the first decade of the twentieth century, two people emerged as the most forceful advocates of birth control. In the medical profession, Dr. William J. Robinson edited his magazine, "Medico-Pharmaceutical Critic and Guide," in which he advocated that doctors be able to distribute contraceptive information.¹⁵ Among the radicals, Emma Goldman, the fiery anarchist, was greatly influenced by Moses Harmon and Ida Craddock, and advocated, as part of her anarchist platform, the freedom of women to control their bodies and thus their destinies.¹⁶ Not all of Emma Goldman's ideas

¹³Fryer, Controllers, 195-196; Vreeland, Reform, 42; Mark Haller, Eugenics (New Brunswick, 1963), 86; Sanger, "Comstockery," Sanger Papers.

¹⁴Robinson, Pioneers, 65-66.

¹⁵Ibid., 67; Vreeland, Reform, 50-53; Fryer, Controllers, 197.

¹⁶Emma Goldman, "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation," Mother Earth, I (1906), 10; Frederick Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State (Chicago, 1905), 196.

on birth control came from American reformers or from her Marxian and anarchist predecessors. She had gone to Paris in 1900 and there attended the first international Neo-Malthusian Conference. Victor Dave, one of the leaders of the Paris Commune of 1871, invited Emma to the small meeting which was attended by such luminaries in the field as Dr. Drysdale from England, Paul Robin from France and Dr. Rutgers, who with Dr. Aletta Jacobs had developed the idea and the practice of birth control clinics in Holland back in 1878.¹⁷ Europe was clearly ahead of America in the field of birth control, as Holland and England had legalized the dissemination and contraceptive information, and in France, birth control had been practised widely in all segments of society for over a hundred years.

Furthermore, in Holland there was already a chain of birth control clinics supported by the government. The problems of contraception were discussed openly in many international meetings following that first one in Paris in 1910. Meetings were held in 1905, 1910 and 1911, in Liege, The Hague and Dresden respectively.¹⁸

¹⁷Emma Goldman, Living My Life (New York, 1931), II, 553; Margaret Sanger, "Birth Control Conferences," unpublished article, Sanger Collection (Smith College Library) Box: B. C. - 13. From now on the abbreviations "Sanger Papers" will refer to the collection at the Library of Congress and "Sanger Collection" will refer to the collection at Smith College.

¹⁸Sanger, "Conferences," Sanger Collection.

Thus the backbone of the American agitation for birth control was the radicals. The problem with the agitation was that first, it was done mostly by men; second, no agitator concentrated solely on the question of birth control; and third, there was no organization on the European model. The opposition was formidable: Anthony Comstock and his Postal Law, the Catholic Church who had joined with prudish Protestants in upholding that law, Theodore Roosevelt and his arguments against "race suicide," and the general Victorianism and ignorance of the American woman. What the American birth control agitation needed to become a "movement" was a woman leader who would devote all of her time to the cause, who could agitate and organize, and who could awaken the American women to the possibilities of emancipation from the burden of excessive childbearing.

CHAPTER TWO
MARGARET SANGER 1879-1910

"There is a legend of a peasant who lived near Paris through the whole Napoleonic era without ever having heard the name of Bonaparte."

Walter Lippmann

Margaret Sanger's father was Michael Higgins, a Roman Catholic born in Ireland in 1845.¹ When he was 14, his mother brought him to Canada to work on his older brother's cattle ranch.² As soon as the American Civil War began, he ran away from home and joined the 12th New York Cavalry of Volunteers and participated in Sherman's march.³ After the war, he decided to remain in the United States, and he began to study anatomy, medicine and phrenology in preparation to be a sculptor.⁴ One day while studying in New York City, an old army friend invited him out to his New Jersey home for lunch, and there he met his friend's sister, Anne Purcell.⁵

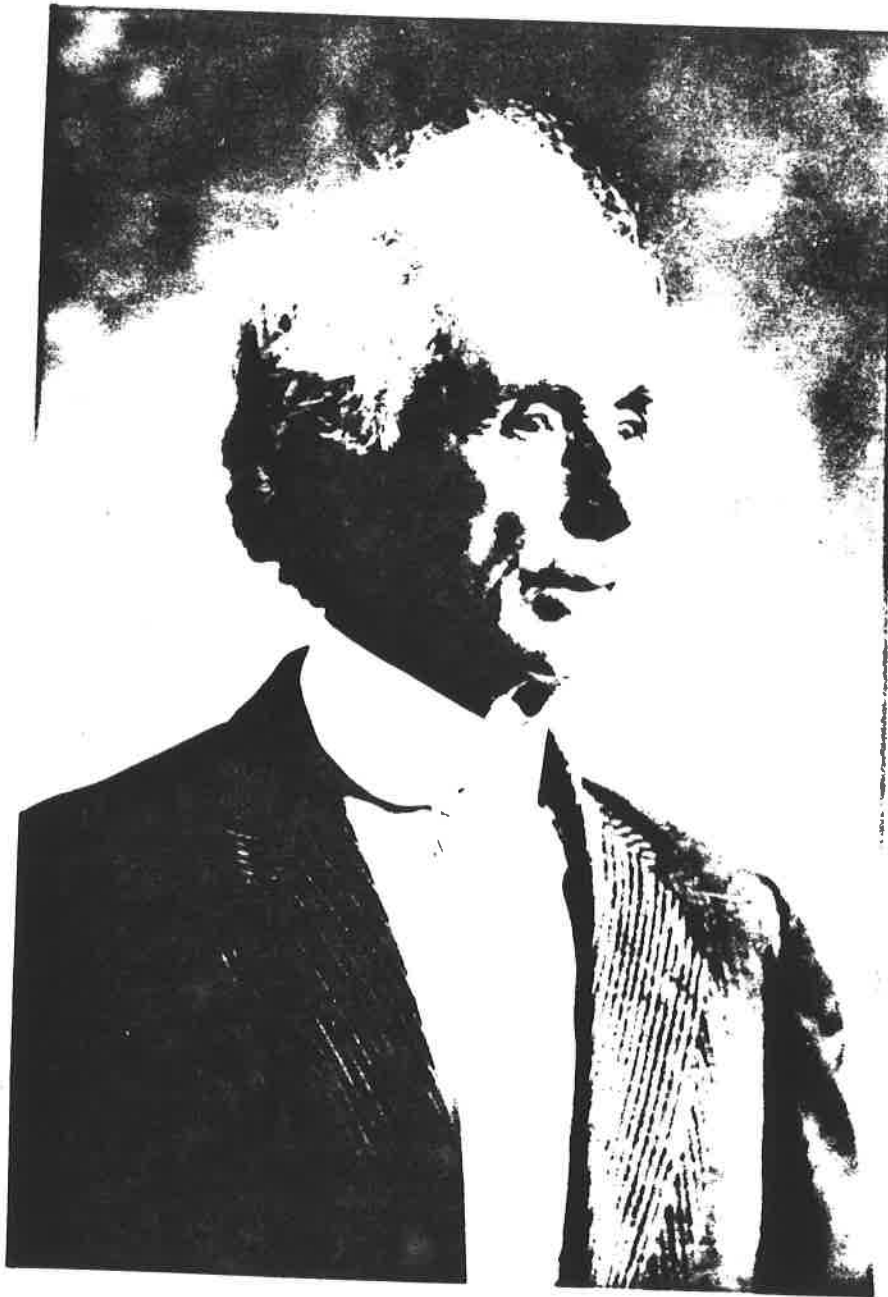
¹Harold Hersey, Margaret Sanger: The Biography of the Birth Control Pioneer, unpublished biography, Rare Book Collection (New York Public Library), 8; Margaret Sanger, "Manuscript for Who's Who," Sanger Collection (Smith College Library), Box 7.

²Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 9; Sanger, "Manuscript of My Fight For Birth Control," Sanger Collection, Box 34, 8.

³Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 9; Sanger, "Manuscript of My Fight," Sanger Collection, 9.

⁴Sanger, "Manuscript of My Fight," Sanger Collection, 10.

⁵Ibid., 10-11; Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 10.



MICHAEL HIGGINS

Her father had lost all his money during the war and wanted his only daughter to marry someone wealthy, which Michael Higgins was not. Michael Higgins eventually won over Anne's parents, and after their marriage, the couple moved to New York City to live.⁶ Two children were born in New York, and then the couple moved to Massillon, Ohio in 1873 where a third child was born. They moved back to Flemington, New York for their fourth child and eventually to Corning, New York where seven more children were born.⁷ The main industry in Corning was the glass works, but Michael Higgins, having no liking for that sort of work, used his artistic talents to become a sculptor of figure heads for graves in the local cemetery.⁸ He built up quite a business at first, but his lack of business sense and his predeliction for discussing philosophy instead of working caused the business to decline. He compounded his trouble by speaking out against the Roman Catholic church whose members provided the bulk of his business and who immediately took their business elsewhere.⁹ In addition, at one time his partner ran off with all the money, and, as soon as Higgins had built up the business again, his studio burned down, causing a

⁶Sanger, "Manuscript of My Fight," Sanger Collection, 10-11; Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 10.

⁷Higgins Family Bible, Sanger Collection.

⁸Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 11-12.

⁹Ibid., 20.

great financial loss.¹⁰ A few years after this, their house burned down, causing another financial loss.¹¹

In addition to sculpting and discussing philosophy, Higgins was one of Corning's leading labor organizers. He joined the Knights of Labor, a radical labor organization, and organized the Corning chapter.¹² There were riots and a large strike in 1890 in the in the Corning glass works, and Higgins was greatly involved.¹³ In his role as a labor organizer, Higgins arranged for such famous speakers to come to Corning as Henry George, Robert Ingersoll and Father McGlynn, and he made sure all the children heard them speak.¹⁴

Despite all his activities, Higgins managed to raise a family of eleven children. All the children went to school, but Michael Higgins gave them additional education at home by reading aloud to them Henry George's Progress and Poverty, Irish poetry, the Bible and other works. But more than this, Higgins was a living example to his children of a man who searched for truth and who despised all hypocrisy and pretense. He was a rebel, always

¹⁰Sanger, "Manuscript of My Fight," Sanger Collection, 13-18.

¹¹Ibid., 11-12.

¹²Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 18 and 37-38.

¹³Ibid., 14 and 39.

¹⁴"Unauthored article on Margaret Sanger," Sanger Papers (Library of Congress), Box 108.

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with the cause of "truth, freedom and right".¹⁵ As Higgins once said, "I can't leave you riches, my children, but I leave you unchained from dogmas."¹⁶ He lived his life as an independent, lonely and unhappy man for no one in Corning could match his intellect in the daily discussions of philosophy in his studio.¹⁷

Anne Purcell Higgins was a small, tough Irishwoman and a devout Roman Catholic. Her innate piety and conservatism, in contrast to her husband's atheism and radicalism, was to have a great effect on Margaret Sanger in her early years. Anne Higgins had eleven children and a few miscarriages, and this weakened her health greatly. As a result, she caught tuberculosis early in their marriage which plagued her for many years until it eventually killed her. Anne was for this reason confined to the home where she raised her children.¹⁸

Michael and Anne Higgins' sixth child was born September 14, 1879 in Corning, and they named it Margaret Louise Higgins.¹⁹ In a

¹⁵Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 15-17; Transcript of interview between William Morehouse and Margaret Sanger, May 21, 1965, Sanger Collection, Box 7; Margaret Sanger's Diary, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 29; Sanger, "Manuscript of My Fight," Sanger Collection, 14.

¹⁶"Unauthored Article," Sanger Papers.

¹⁷Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 15-17.

¹⁸Ibid., 27-28; Lawrence Lader, The Margaret Sanger Story and the Fight For Birth Control (Garden City, 1955), 18.

¹⁹Higgins Family Bible, Sanger Collection; Interview with Grant Sanger.



ANNE PURCELL HIGGINS

sense, Margaret's youth was conventional, even though she described it as "a strange, hard, barren life."²⁰ She was raised by her older brothers and sisters, and when she grew up, she took care of her younger brothers and sisters. She went to school as did the rest of the family, and, being influenced by her mother's Catholicism and not by her father's atheism, she was ^P~~X~~ baptized at age 13 on March 26, 1893 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Corning.²¹

Her father kept life from being too conventional as he educated his children at home and tried to make them into free thinking individuals. He read to them such works as "St. John's Gospel" from the Bible, Tom Moore's Poetical Works, Gulliver's Travels, Aesop's Fables, Henry George's Progress and Poverty, Mark Twain's Innocents Abroad, plus selection from Gray's Mythology, Edgar Allen Poe and Shakespeare. In addition, he took them to hear speakers like Henry George and "Col. Bob" Ingersoll. One speaker who made a great impression on young Margaret was Susan B. Anthony.²² As Margaret later wrote, "She was what she advocated, the living representative of a principle. I have never forgotten the impression she produced on my mind and I confess that I still hold her in memory as a model speaker."²³

²⁰ Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 47.

²¹ Ibid., 21-22.

²² Ibid., 13-22; Sanger, "Manuscript of My Fight," Sanger Collection, 6-13.

²³ Sanger, "Manuscript of My Fight," Sanger Collection, 15.

In her childhood, which she could "never look back on... with joy,"²⁴ we see two conflicting elements.²⁴ On the one hand is the mother, Anne Higgins, a devout Catholic who, burdened with eleven children and tuberculosis, led a conventional domestic life and managed to keep the house in working order even when in poverty. On the other hand was Michael Higgins, the artist, rebel, and philosopher, who attacked the church, invited Henry George and "Col. Bob" Ingersoll to Corning, worked for the Knights of Labor, and educated his children in the importance of free thinking and truth free from dogma. Somewhere between these two worlds was Margaret Higgins. For the first years of her life she was under the influence of her mother in a desire to lead the life of an average American. Underneath all this lay the rebellious spirit of her father which, upon occasion, broke through to govern her actions.

The first time this happened was in 1896 when she went to school one day with a brand new pair of gloves on. The teacher teased her about them, and Margaret walked out of class and never returned.²⁵ She was sent to a school at Chautauqua for two weeks in August as a trial period to see if she was ready for boarding school.²⁶ Apparently she was, and with her sister Nan paying the

²⁴Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 43.

²⁵Ibid., 56-59.

²⁶Sanger, "Manuscript for My Fight," Sanger Collection, 15.

expenses, Margaret was sent to Claverack College and Hudson River Institute in Claverack, New York. Claverack was a co-educational school of 500 persons, headed by the Methodist minister Rev. Arthur Flack.²⁷ Margaret spent three very happy years there, working her way through as a waitress and setting for herself the goal of going to medical school at Cornell.²⁸ At Claverack she was well liked; she learned a lot and, as she admitted, had a lot of fun. She had two very close girl friends, Esther and Amelia, who gave her some sorely needed affection after her harsh life in Corning.²⁹ From Esther, who was quite wealthy, she developed a keen interest in clothes and the general trappings of wealth, and came to envy her and her way of life. Showing that she was in part her father's daughter, she made a speech on woman's suffrage and debated for Free Silver.³⁰ But her main concern at school was acting. She had the lead in many of the school plays, and, after discovering she couldn't go to Cornell because of her age, she decided to go

²⁷Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 56-59, 174.

²⁸Ibid., 43, 60; Margaret Sanger, My Fight For Birth Control (New York, 1931), 23.

²⁹Margaret Sanger to Amelia Stuart, July 9, 1937, Sanger Collection, Box 47; M. Sanger to A. Stuart, January 3, 1939; Sanger Collection, Box 47; Margaret Sanger to Mrs. James Pyott, June 1, 1954, Sanger Collection, Box 47.

³⁰Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 47, 63-64; Fryer, Controllers, 201; Margaret Sanger, Manuscript entitled "Girlhood," Sanger Papers, Box 105 and 106.



MARGARET SANGER IN HER FIRST DRESS

into acting.³¹ She applied to an acting school in New York, but, revealing the Victorianism of her feelings toward the body, she refused to give the measurements of her legs when requested on the application form, and thus gave up her hopes for an acting career.³² After three years, she graduated from Claverack, having a "mutual understanding" with a classmate named Corey Albertson that they would be married.³³

She decided to go into teaching and went to teach first grade in Little Falls, New Jersey, where she tried to instruct 84 immigrant children, few of whom could speak English.³⁴ After a short while, Michael Higgins asked her to come home to help care for her mother who was dying of tuberculosis. Margaret's and her father's care was to no avail, and Anne Higgins died on March 31, 1899.³⁵ Margaret stayed home for six months, but found that she could no longer live with her father. Secretly, Margaret blamed him for the death of her beloved mother. It was he who had caused her to have all the children. It was he who had made the family live in poverty, thus causing Anne Higgins to catch

³¹Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 60.

³²Ibid., 65; Margaret Sanger, An Autobiography (New York, 1938), 37.

³³Sanger, "Girlhood," Sanger Papers.

³⁴Ibid.; Margaret Sanger, Manuscript entitled "Memoirs," Sanger Papers, Box 105.

³⁵Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 1-2; Mary Higgins' Diary, Sanger Collection, Box 80, entry for March 31 and April 1, 1899.



MARGARET SANGER AND COREY ALBERTSON
AT CLAVERACK, ca. 1898

tuberculosis. Furthermore, Margaret was tired of her father's ideals. She wanted to move away - to a new life. She wanted a husband, children, a home.

Margaret left Corning and lived with her Claverack friend, Esther, in New York for six months. Impelled by her still strong desire for medicine and her realization that she had to make a living, she entered White Plains Hospital in June, 1900 for a three-year course in nursing.³⁶ The White Plains Hospital was small, only five rooms, and poor, lacking heating and plumbing.³⁷ The nurses worked hard; Margaret complained to her sister, Mary, that she once got "ten hours sleep all last week."³⁸ Yet she remained cheerful and confident in her new career. She immediately became interested in obstetrics; this becomes obvious when one looks at her old textbook which is devoid of underlining in every chapter except for the one on obstetrics in which there is underlining in every paragraph.³⁹ She became so competent in this field that within two weeks of the beginning of her training, she

³⁶Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 69; Margaret Sanger to Mary Higgins, June 20, 1900, Sanger Collection, Box 80; M. Sanger to M. Higgins, July 15, 1900, Sanger Collection, Box 80.

³⁷Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 74-75.

³⁸M. Sanger to M. Higgins, June 20, 1900, Sanger Collection.

³⁹Clara S. Weeks-Shaw, A Textbook of Nursing (New York, 1900), preserved in Sanger Papers, Box 104.



MARGARET SANGER IN NURSE'S UNIFORM, ca. 1901

was made the head nurse in the women's ward.⁴⁰ In her obstetrical work she discovered the evils of woman's ignorance of the sexual functions of her body and the evils of abortion. Sex was never discussed in her home in Corning as her father, radical in many ways, was very much of a prude in sexual matters. What she learned about sex at home was from witnessing her mother's many pregnancies and miscarriages.⁴¹ In her work in the hospital with poor people, she discovered that they were suffering like her mother did from ignorance about sex, and that because of this many of them were driven to early graves as her mother had been. She also discovered the evil that accompanied this ignorance - abortion. She witnessed the results on women from abortion - infection, permanent damage to the body and even death.⁴²

During this exhaustive training, Margaret's health failed. She wrote to her sister, Mary, in December, 1900 that she had not been well for a while.⁴³ The cause of this illness was soon discovered to be tuberculosis which she had contracted while nursing her mother, dying of the same disease. The hard work at the hospital had made the tuberculosis active, and in

⁴⁰M. Sanger to M. Higgins, July 15, 1900, Sanger Collection.

⁴¹Harsey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 44-46.

⁴²Ibid., 77-79; Ada Patterson, "Margaret Sanger, The American Apostle of Family Limitation," unpublished article in the Sanger Papers, Box 108.

⁴³M. Sanger to M. Higgins, December 29, 1900, Sanger Papers, Box 108.



MARGARET SANGER, SHORTLY BEFORE MARRIAGE, 1902

May, 1901, her glands were operated upon. Two weeks later she was back on duty, working as hard as ever.⁴⁴ Because of her health, she seriously considered moving to Colorado to nurse out there.⁴⁵ She kept at her nursing, using for her motto "Seek honor first, not pleasure,"⁴⁶

She had reason to ignore pleasure in her training. She was isolated and worked hard and had little time for romance. Her boy friend from Claverack, Corey Albertson, came to visit her early in her training but soon stopped coming.⁴⁷ She still longed for the comfortable life, but the desire to nurse and to give women the help that her mother had lacked, remained strong within her.

Margaret decided not to finish the full nursing course in White Plains, and early in 1902 she was transferred to the Manhattan Ear and Eye Hospital in New York City to finish her training.⁴⁸ Either while finishing up at White Plains or while studying in New York, Margaret met a young architect named

⁴⁴Lader, Margaret Sanger, 27; Manuscript at Sanger Collection, Box 5; Interview with Grant Sanger.

⁴⁵M. Sanger to M. Higgins, June 2, 1901, Sanger Papers, Box 108.

⁴⁶Written in Margaret's handwriting on Page 24 of her nursing textbook.

⁴⁷M. Sanger to M. Higgins, June 20, 1900, Sanger Collection, Box 80.

⁴⁸Lader, Manuscript of Margaret Sanger, Sanger Collection, Box 6; Manuscript of Planned Parenthood Federation of America Library, New York.

William Sanger.⁴⁹ Sanger's father was an Englishman who had emigrated to Australia where he was a successful sheep rancher. Eventually he sold his ranch and, on his travels through Europe, met and married the daughter of the "burgermeister" of Konigsberg, Germany. The couple came to the United States and a son, William, was born in Brooklyn in 1875.⁵⁰ Bill wanted to be an artist and studied at the Art Student's League of New York and the Artists and Artisans Institute of New York.⁵¹ He then went to work for the famed architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White as a draftsman. He helped in the work on the Brooklyn Bridge, the Woolworth Building, Grand Central Station and other fine buildings by that firm, and was reputed to be one of the finest draftsmen in the country.⁵² But Bill Sanger was not content with being a fine draftsman. He wanted to paint and found himself caught between his talent and romantic temperament, calling him to paint, and the financial necessity of being an architect.⁵³

⁴⁹Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 82; Sanger, Autobiography, 56. These two books give two different versions of how Margaret and William Sanger met, and Grant Sanger gave me a third in an interview.

⁵⁰Interview with Grant Sanger; M. Sanger to Trena C. Senger, September 11, 1939, Sanger Collection, Box 85.

⁵¹Mantel Fielding, Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers (New York, 1965).

⁵²Interview with Grant Sanger; Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 82.

⁵³Lader, Margaret Sanger, 28; Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 83.



WILLIAM SANGER

This romantic artist was what Margaret Higgins was looking for in her life. Bill would write and phone every day and was continuously sending flowers. She discovered that he was a Socialist, which added to his romantic appeal. After a short courtship, they were married on August 18, 1902 in New York City by a Rev. Norris.⁵⁴

Margaret continued her nursing, but her tuberculosis flared up again because she was pregnant, and she moved to the Adirondacks in the summer of 1903 to get some well-deserved rest. She returned to New York in November of 1903 for the birth of her first child, Stuart. The delivery was hard, and Margaret greatly increased her awareness of the trials of motherhood by having this child.⁵⁵ Showing increasing signs of middle-class morality, she ignored Bill's Socialist objections and had Stuart baptized in St. Michael's Episcopal Church in New York.⁵⁶

Her tuberculosis reoccurred, and she returned to the Adirondacks where she remained for over a year. The treatment in

⁵⁴M. Sanger to M. Higgins, undated, probably July, 1902, Sanger Papers, Box 108; M. Sanger to Nan Higgins, undated, probably late August, 1902, Sanger Papers, Box 108; William Sanger to M. Higgins, August 18, 1902, Sanger Papers, Box 108.

⁵⁵Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 87-88; Byron Caples to M. Sanger, February 4, 1930, Sanger Papers, Box 116.

⁵⁶Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection 21-22, 86.



MARGARET SANGER WITH HER FIRST SON, STUART

the sanitarium didn't help her condition, and until 1921 Margaret was plagued almost daily with a temperature over 100° and with accompanying weakness and illness.⁵⁷ One day Margaret, suddenly aware of the stagnant life that she was living in the sanitarium, packed up and returned to Bill in New York. They immediately made plans to build a house in the suburbs where Margaret could get fresh air and rest.⁵⁸ In 1906, they bought a half-acre lot in a development organized by a group of Columbia University professors called Locust Hill in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. Bill designed the house and supervised the construction of a hollow-tile stucco home which was considered one of the "show houses" of Westchester.⁵⁹ The happy couple moved into the house on February 19, 1908, looking forward to a gay, carefree life together in their own home in the country.⁶⁰ At one o'clock on that first night in their new home, a fire started in the cellar which rapidly spread through the whole house. The family escaped, and half an hour later the fire trucks arrived to extinguish the flames which had totally destroyed

⁵⁷ Interview with Grant Sanger; Manuscript handwritten by Margaret Sanger, Sanger Papers, Box 108.

⁵⁸ Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 87-88.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 86; William Sanger to Grant Sanger, October 21, 1952, Sanger Collection, Box 85.

⁶⁰ W. Sanger to M. Sanger, May 25, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 85.



THE HOUSE AT HASTINGS, DESIGNED BY WILLIAM SANGER, 1906-8.

the interior of the house.⁶¹ The couple went back to rebuilding the house, disheartened and unsure of the future. Bill kept up his architectural work in New York, and Margaret busied herself with educating Stuart and caring for her two new children, Grant and Peggy, who were born in 1908 and 1909 respectively. Grant, like Stuart five years earlier, was baptized in a Protestant church, Grace Church at Hastings in August 1908. She also founded a literary club in which Dickens, George Eliot and other authors were discussed.⁶² This provided the only intellectual activity in her otherwise typically suburban way of life.

This ends the first thirty years of Margaret Sanger's life. There were two sides to her character, one influenced by her father and the other by her mother. Her early years were an attempt to synthesize these two sides. Her father, a rebel, artist, atheist and philosopher taught her to think, to want to learn, to be concerned with the needs of the poor and the workers. Her mother, a religious, quiet and content housewife, though often ill, gave her a more stable, secure outlook on life. At times she could be rebellious as when she quit school or spoke out for woman's suffrage and Free Silver at Claverack; and at

⁶¹Newspaper clipping from a local Hastings paper, February 20, 1908, Sanger Papers, Box 108.

⁶²Interview with Grant Sanger; Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 89-90; M. Sanger to L. Lader, October 27, 1953, Sanger Collection, Box 5.

times she could be domestic and middle-class as in her concern for clothes and her "secret understanding" to marry Corey Albertson. Caught between these two sides of her personality, she was insecure. She gravitated from job to job, from desire to desire - medicine, acting, teaching, then finally nursing. After the death of her mother, she rejected her father and his ideals and buried herself in her nursing. One day Bill Sanger entered her life. Here was her chance for the happy, secure life that she dreamed of, and in this marriage she achieved the synthesis of the two sides of her personality. For not only was she getting the kind of life that her mother had inspired her to lead, but she was getting a husband much like her father, a rebel, an artist, a philosopher. Margaret, like her mother, got tuberculosis which was compounded by childbearing. Margaret, like her mother too, might have gone to an early grave had not Bill given her rest and relaxation in the Adirondacks and again in Hastings.

Yet in the midst of all this, there were the seeds that would break Margaret out of her contented life at Hastings. The seeds were first sown by her father, who taught her to be a free-thinker. Her nursing experience had made her realize the sufferings of women from ignorance of sex. Behind all this there was the memory of her mother, buried at age 49 after having eleven children. These memories of freethinking and the problems of women were hiding beneath the surface of the middle-class

mentality she had acquired in her contented life at Hastings. After the house burned down, she became doubtful of her future. She looked to the father figure in her life, her husband, and it was his Socialist ideas, which she had ignored for eight years of marriage, that were to break up the ideal life she had created for herself in Hastings, and, combined with the latent influences of her father and her nursing, were to turn Margaret Sanger into an ardent radical with a primary concern and understanding for the problems of women.

CHAPTER III
RADICALISM 1910-1913

"You'll get pie in the sky when you die - It's a lie."
I. W. W. Song

Margaret Sanger's conversion to Socialism came in 1910 in Hastings. She was walking in front of her house one day and heard the foreman of a street gang berating the workers for laziness and for retarding the cause of Labor. Margaret drew him aside and began talking with him about Labor. The foreman gave her some literature on Socialism which Bill found her reading when he came home from work that night. Surprised at his wife's interest in this subject, Bill began to tell her of his radical activities in New York; he was a member of the International Workers of the World (I. W. W.) and was on the executive committee of Local No. 5, Socialist Party in New York City.¹ A few weeks later, Bill took her to hear Karl Liebknecht, the German Socialist leader, speak at the Yonkers Local of the Socialist Party.² Liebknecht spoke on the German Socialist Party and its activities in trying to prevent war and to raise the living standards of the

¹Harold Hersey, Margaret Sanger, The Biography of the Birth Control Pioneer, unpublished biography, Rare Book Collection (New York Public Library), 91-92.

². Ibid;

²Karl W. Meyer, Karl Liebknecht: Man Without a Country (Washington, 1957), 2-20, 34.

worker. Margaret was a changed person when she left the lecture hall. She immediately began to read everything she could find on the subject of Socialism and joined the Yonkers Local soon after.³ As William Sanger later said, "Gone forever was the conservative Irish girl I had married; a new woman, forceful, intelligent, hungry for facts, tireless, ambitious and cool, had miraculously come into being."⁴

Early in 1911, the Sangers moved back to New York City to an apartment on 135th Street, leaving behind the suburban life of Hastings and entering the turbulent world of American radicalism. There were three mainstreams of radical philosophy and activity in 1911, and Margaret Sanger was to be associated with and influenced by all three of these branches. One of these branches was the Anarchist group led by Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. This group had a highly individualistic philosophy that hoped for the development of human character to such a high degree that laws and governments would no longer be necessary. Margaret, following the heritage of her free thinking father, was immediately attracted to this philosophy and read Kropotkin, Bakunin and

³Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 92-93; Hersey, "Margaret Sanger: A Brief Study," unpublished manuscript in Library of Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Margaret Sanger Diary, 1911, Sanger Collection, Smith College Library, Box 29.

⁴Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 92-93.

Fournier.⁵ At her apartment on 135th Street, she met Berkman and through him, Emma Goldman and other anarchists like Leonard Abbott, Gilbert Roe and Theodore Schroeder.⁶ This group had started an anarchist educational institution called the Modern School in which Stuart was enrolled.⁷ The School also held public lectures where Margaret heard such people speak as Goldman, Berkman, Lincoln Steffens, Hutchins Hapgood, Clarence Darrow and Bill Haywood.⁸

Margaret liked Berkman, and occasionally they would go out together and have long philosophical discussions. She was greatly influenced by his ideas on direct action and by the fact that he acted by his ideas, as when he shot Henry Clay Frick during the Homestead Strike in 1892.⁹ Through Berkman, Margaret met Emma Goldman, the chief American spokesman for Anarchism and the emancipation of women. Goldman, like Margaret, had been a nurse among the poor and was influenced by Moses Harmon and had attended the Neo-Malthusian Conference in Paris in 1900. Goldman often lectured on family limitation as a means for the emancipation

⁵Margaret Sanger, An Autobiography (New York, 1938), 75.

⁶Ibid., all these people contributed regularly to Mother Earth, Emma Goldman's magazine.

⁷Sanger, Autobiography, 75.

⁸Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 103; Mother Earth, V (1910), 1.

⁹Alexander Berkman to Margaret Sanger, September 26, 1924, Sanger Collection, Box 41; A. Berkman to M. Sanger, December 9, 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 41.

of women:

Her development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself. First, by asserting herself as a personality, and not as a sex commodity. Second, by refusing the right of anyone over her body; by refusing to bear children unless she wants them; by refusing to be a servant to God, the State, society, the husband, the family, etc.; by making her life simpler, but deeper and richer....Only that, and not the ballot, will set woman free.....¹⁰

Margaret was immediately attracted to this philosophy and she probably received her first concrete ideas on birth control from Emma Goldman, from talking with her and listening to her lecture in the city.¹¹ It was probably also Emma Goldman, greatly influenced by Havelock Ellis, who directed Margaret to the writings of that great man on sexual questions.¹²

The second branch of the radical movement was the International Workers of the World, the "Wobblies" or I. W. W., led by "Big Bill" Haywood. This was a radical labor group founded in 1905 as a protest against conservative labor as

¹⁰Richard Drinmon, Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman (Chicago, 1961), 166; Floyd Dell, Women as World Builders (Chicago, 1913), 60, quoting "The Tragedy of woman's Emancipation;" by Emma Goldman.

¹¹Drinmon, Rebel, 169; Hutchins Hapgood, A Victorian in the Modern World (New York, 1939), 170.

¹²Emma Goldman to Havelock Ellis, May 15, 1925 and May 30, 1928, Emma Goldman Papers, Manuscript Division (New York Public Library). These letters were on microfilm. The original letters are in the Goldman-Berkman Archives, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

represented by the A. F. L.¹³ The I. W. W. was not afraid to use violence and other forms of direct action when necessary. Margaret met Bill Haywood at her apartment on 135th Street and through him and her husband met the other great I. W. W. leaders, Carlo Tresca and his wife, Elisabeth Gurley Flynn.¹⁴ Margaret, like her husband, eventually joined the I. W. W. in 1912 and worked for them in numerous strikes in and around New York. In turn, Bill Haywood was to one of her most earnest supporters and gave her valuable advice in her early years in the movement.

The third branch of the American radical movement was the Socialist Party, founded in 1901 by Victor Berger and Eugene Debs. This party had grown rapidly and was the most powerful of the three branches in the radical movement.¹⁵ Bill Sanger was a friend of Debs and John Spargo, a member of the executive committee of the party, and through Bill she met these and other leaders of the Party.¹⁶ Bill Sanger was already a member of Local No. 5 of the Socialist Party and when they moved into their apartment, a mere ten blocks from the local's headquarters, Margaret, too,

¹³Harvey Goldberg (ed.), American Radicals (New York, 1957), 179.

¹⁴Lawrence Lader, The Margaret Sanger Story and The Fight for Birth Control (Garden City, 1955), 37.

¹⁵Goldberg (ed.), Radicals, 167; McAlister Coleman, Eugene V. Debs A Man Unafraid (New York, 1930), 256.

¹⁶Sanger, Autobiography, 69; Lawrence Lader, Manuscript of Margaret Sanger, Sanger Collection, Box 6.

joined. It was through the Socialist Party that Margaret Sanger was to enter radical politics, although she soon became involved with the other branches of radicalism.

Because of the influence of her husband, Margaret immediately became one of the inner circle that ran Local No. 5. This Local was considered a renegade in that it supported the "radical" policies of "Big Bill" Haywood and the I. W. W. and in that it didn't follow the party line set by Morris Hillquit and other conservative socialists. The local was continuously arguing with the Central Committee in New York for more autonomy in their meetings and speakers.¹⁷ Bill Sanger was a central figure in this movement, and it was he who arranged for "Big Bill" to speak at the Local in November, 1911. The Central Committee, through its organizer, Julius Gerber, object to "Big Bill," but Bill Sanger held fast and Bill Haywood spoke.¹⁸ Bill Sanger and Bill Haywood often worked together after this incident at various protest meetings as at the one for Alexander Aldamas, a member of the Marine Fireman's Union who was being railroaded to jail,¹⁹ and the one for the strikers at Little Falls, New York in December, 1912.¹⁹

¹⁷ Samuel Romansky to Julius Gerber, September 19, 1911 and October 12, 1911, Local New York Socialist Party Collection (Tamiment Institute), Box A-66.

¹⁸ William Sanger to J. Gerber, September 14, 1911 and September 26, 1911, Socialist Party Collection, Box A-66; S. Romansky to Executive Committee of Local New York Socialist Party, September 28, 1911, Socialist Party Collection, Box A-66.

¹⁹ New York Call, November 30, 1912; Dec. 4, 1912.

²⁰ Ibid., December 4, 1912.

In addition to these activities, Bill Sanger ran for the Board of Aldermen of New York City in November, 1911, as the Socialist candidate from the 21st Aldermanic district. Out of 9,925 votes cast, Bill received 352, which was considerably better proportionate than other Socialists fared in the election.²¹ At the convention of Socialist Locals of New York City in 1911, Bill, along with Morris Hillquit, were two of the delegates from Local No. 5.²²

Margaret was quite lucky to have her husband so well placed in the Socialist world with his numerous important friends to whom Margaret was introduced. One of the first persons that Margaret met through Bill at Local No. 5 was Anita Block, the editor of the "Woman's Sphere," a section of the "New York Call," the daily Socialist newspaper. Anita invited Margaret to write some articles for the "Call," and Margaret submitted a series of articles called "How Six Little Children were Taught the Truth," which she had written in Hastings early in 1911.²³ This series began in the Sunday "Call" on October 29, 1911, and continued every

²¹Annual Report of The Board of Elections of the City of New York for the Year Ending December 31, 1911 (New York, 1912); New York Times, November 8, 1911; List of Socialist candidates in Socialist Party Collection, Box A-66.

²²List of Delegates to Convention of Locals, November 26, 1911, Socialist Party Collection, Box A-66.

²³Margaret Sanger, What Every Mother Should Know (New York, 1916); Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 91; Manuscript in Sanger Collection, Box 5.

Sunday for eight weeks. It was a series telling mothers how to tell their children the facts of life.²⁴ The series began explaining the reproduction of flowers, and then proceeded to explain the reproduction of frogs, birds, and mammals.²⁵ The series concluded with an article telling mothers how to tell the truth to their children about human reproduction and about how important it was for this matter to be discussed openly.²⁶

Although these articles were rather tame and simplistic, they showed that Margaret, through the experience of her own child-raising and nursing, was quite concerned with the problem of sexual education of the young, and like her father, she wanted the truth out in the open for all to see and use. This concern for women and children is further shown in other articles written for the "Call" in 1911. Her first article for the "Call", published on March 26, 1911, was a long piece entitled "To Mothers - Our Duty." In it, Margaret talked about the deprived childhoods of many children and about women, working in the factory, forced to abandon their children to earn money. In the article, Margaret began to use some socialist invective which was conspicuously absent from her series on "How Six Little Children were Taught

²⁴New York Call, October 29, 1911.

²⁵Ibid., November 5, November 12, November 19, November 26, December 3, December 10, all 1911.

²⁶Ibid., December 17, 1911.

the Truth," written only months before. She wrote, in attacking the Capitalist system, "Why should these countless fathers and mothers, almost one million times greater in number, surrender to these few monster exploiters - to this Capitalistic system which bases its existence on the fiendish exploitation, and ultimate murder of these children?"²⁷

In another Call article called "Impressions of the East Side" in the September 3, 1911 issue and continued in the September 10 issue, Margaret wrote about the problems of family limitation in the slums. She declared poor women did not want large families, yet they had no way of limiting their families except by visiting quack abortionists.²⁸ This article was the earliest indication that Margaret Sanger was actively concerned with the problem of family limitation and abortion. Yet she did not, in September, 1911, immediately begin the crusade for birth control. She waited for over two years to do this. The realization of the importance of family limitation, first suggested to her in her nurse's training and now in her visits to the East Side of the city, was slow growing within her. There was no snap decision to devote her life to birth control. It was a long process to which her work for the Socialist Party and the I. W. W. and her

²⁷ Ibid., March 26, 1911; also preserved in Sanger Papers, Manuscript Division (Library of Congress), Box 138.

²⁸ New York Call, September 3, 1911.

continued nursing contributed much.

During the summer and autumn of 1911, Margaret worked on the Woman's Committee of the Socialist Party, and on October 31, 1911 was unanimously elected the "Organizer," or chairman, of the Committee at a salary of \$15 per week. Her duties were to recruit women for the Socialist Party, to supervise all propaganda for Socialism and women's suffrage, to organize naturalization classes for immigrant women, and to visit all New York locals to ask their help in distributing propaganda among women in their area.²⁹ She immediately set to work and began arranging many nighttime street corner propaganda meetings for women.³⁰ She began her rounds among all the New York locals and many branches agreed to give up their meeting room once a week to the Woman's Committee for propaganda purposes.³¹ Margaret's propaganda campaign among the women went so well that she repeatedly asked Julius Gerber, the organizer of the Socialist Party in New York, to keep sending her more pamphlets, since all of hers had been distributed to the women.³² Her meetings were all great successes, and many women

²⁹Ibid., November 6, 1911.

³⁰M. Sanger to J. Gerber, November 8, 1911, Socialist Party Collection, Box A-11.

³¹New York Call, November 22, November 28 and December 11, all 1911; J. Gerber to M. Sanger, November 28, 1911, Socialist Party Collection, Box A-66.

³²New York Call, November 6, 1911 and January 5, 1912; M. Sanger to J. Gerber, December 8, 1911, December 26, 1911 and one undated, Socialist Party Collection, Box A-66; J. Gerber to M. Sanger, December 30, 1911, Socialist Party Collection, Box A-66.

were recruited into the party.³³ In organizing naturalization classes, she persuaded some locals to give up rooms for this purpose. Margaret could announce at the end of November that naturalization classes would be held every two weeks in order to speed up the process of getting immigrant women ready for citizenship.³⁴

As Organizer of the Woman's Committee, Margaret also had to direct the Party's campaign for women's suffrage. She organized meetings and speakers and worked on suffrage petitions to be presented to the Socialist Party's only U. S. Congressman, Victor Berger of Wisconsin.³⁵ In the course of this work Margaret realized the weakness of the suffragist position in only demanding political freedom for women. What she wanted was economic, social and intellectual freedom for the working women.³⁶

Early in January 1912, the laundry workers of New York went on strike, and Margaret, as Women's Committee Organizer, went to a meeting of the women strikers and asked their support for a legislative measure that would improve their hours and wages.

³³M. Sanger to J. Gerber, n. d., 1911, Socialist Party Collection, Box A-66.

³⁴New York Call, November 24, November 28, November 29, all 1911.

³⁵Ibid., January 20, 1912; M. Sanger to J. Gerber, November 21, 1911, Socialist Party Collection, Box A-66.

³⁶New York Call, December 24, 1911.

One of the women stood up to her and replied, "Oh! that stuff! Don't you know that we women might be dead and buried if we waited for politicians and lawmakers to right our wrongs."³⁷ This experience convinced her of the inefficacy of the political action she had been doing on the Woman's Committee. In addition to this disenchantment, Margaret had begun to run into difficulties in her work.³⁸ She complained of a lack of cooperation from her fellow members on the committee and of a lack of attendance at meetings.³⁹ Rapidly becoming totally discouraged with her work for the Party, she began to miss meetings.⁴⁰ Finally, on January 25, 1912, the committee decided to let Margaret resign gracefully by having her ask for a \$5 per week raise and having her resign, citing financial reasons when they refused.⁴¹ She had realized in the laundry strike earlier that month that what was needed was "direct action" as practised by the anarchists and the I. W. W. and not the "political action" of the Socialists. She continued to write for the Call and to speak at various locals, but she never worked for the Socialist Party again.⁴²

³⁷ Ibid., January 14, 1912; also preserved in Sanger Papers, Box 138; Margaret Sanger, The Pivot of Civilization (New York, 1922), 5.

³⁸ M. Sanger to J. Gerber, November 21, 1911, Socialist Party Papers, Box A-66.

³⁹ New York Call, November 17, 1911, December 19, 1911, January 17, 1912.

⁴⁰ Ibid., January 11, 1912.

⁴¹ Ibid., January 26, 1912.

⁴² Ibid., February 5, 1912 and March 9, 1912.

In the winter of 1912, Margaret spoke a few times on "Sex Hygiene" to female audiences at various Socialist locals, pursuing her interest in the sexual ignorance of women and attempting to right it.⁴³ But what took most of her time in the winter of 1912 was the textile strike at Lawrence, Massachusetts, during which Margaret joined and went to work for the I. W. W.

On January 11, 1912, the workers in the weaving department of the Everett Mill in Lawrence walked out on strike. The State Legislature had passed a law lowering the maximum hours per week from 56 to 54. In enforcing this, the owners of the mills reduced the pay of the workers accordingly, and the workers struck. The strike spread rapidly, and within a few days, almost 20,000 workers were on strike, demanding a pay raise.⁴⁴ Arturo Giovannitti and Joseph J. Ettor, a member of the executive board of the I. W. W., came to Lawrence and organized a strike committee, which Ettor was elected to lead. Late in January, Ettor and Giovannitti were arrested on trumped-up charges of murdering a fellow striker and were held without bail. This incensed "Big Bill" Haywood who came to Lawrence and took charge of the strike.⁴⁵

⁴³Ibid., February 9, 1912 and April 4, 1912.

⁴⁴Report on The Strike of Textile Workers in Lawrence, Mass. in 1912, Senate Document No. 870, 62nd Congress, 2nd Session, (Washington, 1912), 33.

⁴⁵Ibid., 35; Foster Rhea Dulles, Labor in America (New York, 1949), 215.

"Big Bill" rallied the strikers and inspired them to hold firm in their demands.

It was a cold winter in Lawrence, and the strikers were unable to afford coal for heat or even sufficient clothes and food for their families. Haywood decided to follow an old Southern European custom of sending the children of strikers away to other cities. On February 6, 1912, Haywood announced that for the first time in America, a group of strikers' children would be sent away to other cities, in this case New York City, to live with families who volunteered to have them.⁴⁶ Smaller groups would be sent to Philadelphia and smaller towns in Massachusetts and Vermont, but the biggest publicity came when this first group of 119 children came to New York.⁴⁷ Because of her friendship with "Big Bill" and her training as a nurse, Margaret was selected to be on the committee of four assigned to go to Lawrence to bring the children down by train to New York. The plan was to have the children arrive at 3 P. M. on February 10 at Grand Central Station. There would be a big parade and rally at Union Square where Margaret, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Bill Haywood would speak. The children would then be fed and distributed to their various new families.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Senate Document No. 870, 51; New York Call, February 7, 1912.

⁴⁷Sanger, Autobiography, 81.

⁴⁸New York Call, February 10, 1912.

Margaret and the other three members of the committee, Carrie Zaikner, Oscar Mazzitelli and John D. Gregorio, left New York on February 9 by train for Lawrence.⁴⁹ On the morning of February 10, after examining all the children and finding them all to be emaciated and generally unhealthy, Margaret took the group by train to Boston.⁵⁰ Because of a lack of funds, the children had to walk between North and South Stations in Boston and missed their connection to New York. They got on the next train which left two hours later.⁵¹

Meanwhile back in Grand Central Station, the temperature was 0°, and it was windy. Over 5,000 radicals had gathered at 3 P. M. to greet the children. A brass band played, and the people waved red flags and sang to keep warm. When the first train arrive at 3:50 P. M. and the children were not on it, a wave of panic swept through the crowd, who thought that the militia had prevented the children from leaving Lawrence. Finally at 6:50 P. M., the train carrying Margaret and her 119 children arrived. The children marched off the train chanting

"Who are we, who are we, who are we!
Strikers, Strikers, Strikers!
Yes we are, Yes we are, Yes we are!
Strikers, Strikers, Strikers!"

⁴⁹Ibid., February 11, 1912.

⁵⁰Sanger, Autobiography, 81.

⁵¹New York Times, February 11, 1912.

The band played the "Marseillaise;" the crowd broke through the police lines and hoisted the children onto their shoulders. Because of the late hour, the rally in Union Square was cancelled, and instead the crowd carried the children to the 42nd Street Station of the 3rd Avenue 'El' on which they rode up to the Labor Temple on 84th Street for dinner. After dinner, Margaret arranged the distribution of the children to their new homes.⁵²

The resulting publicity in favor of the strikers was enormous and was instrumental in the final settling of the strike in favor of the workers. Another group of children came down from Lawrence a week later, but Margaret was busy on a nursing case and could not be with them.⁵³ She did her part in maintaining the publicity by writing two articles for the "Call" on the strike, one of which was on the editorial page. Both treated such themes as the international solidarity of the working class and the butchery of the capitalist militia in Lawrence.⁵⁴

Victor Berger, the Socialist Congressman from Wisconsin, had instituted hearings in the House Rules Committee on the Lawrence strike. Samuel Gompers testified, but he felt that the committee needed some human interest material to give it a true

⁵²Ibid; New York Call, February 11, 1912.

⁵³Sanger, Autobiography, 83; New York Call, February 17, 1912.

⁵⁴New York Call, February 15, 1912 and February 18, 1912.

impression of the brutality of the strike.⁵⁵ Margaret took a group of the Lawrence children down to Washington on March 2 to testify to the Committee.⁵⁶ On March 5, Margaret herself was called to testify before the Committee and before Mrs. William Howard Taft who was in the audience.⁵⁷ The Committee began to ask her about the health of the children, and Margaret replied, "Well, the condition of those children was the most horrible that I have ever seen." A few had chicken pox and diphtheria without knowing it. She continued: "They were very much emaciated; every child there showed the effects of malnutrition, and all of them, or almost all of them, according to the doctor's certificate that night, had adenoids and enlarged tonsils....These children were pale and thin." She went on to describe the clothing of the children: of 119, 4 had underwear; 20 had overcoats; very few had good shoes; none had any wool on their bodies, even though they worked in woolen mills. She further asserted that this was the best clothing that the children had. The Committee was impressed by Margaret's testimony on the condition of the children, and this

⁵⁵Sanger, Autobiography, 83; The Strike at Lawrence, Mass.: Hearings Before the Committee on Rules of the House of Representatives, March 2-7, 1912, House Document No. 671, 62nd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1912).

⁵⁶New York Call, March 2, 1912; New York World, March 3, 1912, preserved in Sanger Papers, Box 138; William D. Haywood, Bill Haywood's Book (New York, 1929), 250.

⁵⁷New York Call, March 6, 1912; New York Herald, March 6, 1912, preserved in Sanger Papers, Box 138.

helped swing official Washington opinion in favor of the strikers.⁵⁸

A week after this testimony, the mill owners capitulated to the demands of the workers, and the mills began to reopen.⁵⁹ On March 26, it was decided that the situation was stable enough to send the children back.⁶⁰ As usual, money was lacking; Margaret and her husband arranged an Art Exhibition at the Fifth Avenue Art Gallery, containing works by George Bellows, John Sloan, Bill Sanger and others, the proceeds from which would pay for the return of the children to Lawrence.⁶¹ Margaret was on the committee to get the children back and managed to get all 243 of them safely packed away on a train at Grand Central on March 29, only this time she did not accompany them.⁶² There was still a great deficit, and another art exhibit was organized with more works by Bellows, Sloan and Bill Sanger.⁶³

Now that the children had returned, Margaret did not cease her activities in the Lawrence strike. Ettor and Giovannitti

⁵⁸House Document No. 671, 226-233.

⁵⁹New York Call, March 13, 1912.

⁶⁰Ibid., March 26, 1912.

⁶¹Ibid., March 27, 1912 and March 28, 1912; newspaper clipping, March 30, 1912, Sanger Papers, Box 138.

⁶²New York Call, March 30, 1912; newspaper clipping, March 30, 1912, Sanger Papers, Box 138.

⁶³New York Call, April 2, 1912 and April 17, 1912.

were still in jail awaiting a trial for murder, and Margaret and a few other socialists got together and formed the Lawrence Defense Committee of New York with Sol Bromberg, chairman, Julius Gerber, treasurer, and Margaret Sanger, secretary.⁶⁴ Margaret again went to work issuing statements to the "Call" attacking the prejudice of the Massachusetts judges who were out to "get" foreigners. She called the judges tools of the capitalists: "Scratch beneath the skin of the patriot and you find the blood of the exploiter."⁶⁵ But with summer coming on, Margaret discovered that she had to devote more time to her nursing and her children, and on June 21, she resigned as secretary of the committee, thus ending her first assignment in "direct action" with the I. W. W.⁶⁶

The Sanger family spent the summer vacationing in Dublin, New Hampshire, but Margaret often returned to New York to continue her nursing, mostly in the poor sections of the Lower East Side. One day in July, she was called to a tenement apartment on Grant Street where a Russian Jewess named Sadie Sachs was dying of the after-effects of a self-induced abortion. For three weeks, Margaret, a doctor and Jake Sachs, Sadie's husband, labored to keep her alive and finally succeeded. As the doctor was about to

⁶⁴Ibid., June 11, 1912.

⁶⁵Ibid., May 20, 1912; William E. Trautmann to J. Gerber, June 13, 1912, Socialist Party Collection, Box A-67.

⁶⁶New York Call, June 24, 1912 and July 24, 1912.

leave for the last time, Sadie asked him how to prevent having another baby, and the doctor caustically replied, "Tell Jake to sleep on the roof." Sadie then asked Margaret, and she confessed that she knew no contraceptive methods.

Three months later, Margaret was called back to the Sachs' apartment for this same reason, a self-induced abortion; only this time Sadie died within ten minutes after her arrival. After this traumatic experience, Margaret resolved never to nurse again and never did. She further came to realize the need for poor people to have contraceptive information.⁶⁷ Yet she did not feel too strongly about this because she did not immediately set off either to learn this knowledge for herself or to spread it to others. Instead she went back to her work for the "Call" and the I. W. W., still keeping in the back of her mind the memory of Sadie Sachs.

During the summer, Anita Block and Margaret had discussed a continuation of her articles on "How Six Little Children were Taught the Truth."⁶⁸ Margaret proceeded to write a series of articles entitled "What Every Girl Should Know" which began in the "Woman's Sphere" section of the Sunday "Call" on November 12,

⁶⁷Interview with Grant Sanger; Webb Garrison, "Rebel with a Cause," unpublished article in Sanger Collection, Box 7; Sanger, Autobiography, 86-92; Sanger, My Fight for Birth Control (New York, 1931), 54-55; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 45.

⁶⁸New York Call, February 9, 1913.

1912, and continued every Sunday until February. After an introduction explaining the purpose of the articles, Margaret took up, simply and factually, the subjects of girlhood and the awakening of the senses, puberty, and sexual impulse.⁶⁹ Anita Block decided that it was time to take a break, and, instead of the January 5, 1913 article, there were printed letters from readers, attacking and defending the articles.⁷⁰ The next week the articles continued on reproduction and the "Consequences of Ignorance and Silence," Parts I and II.⁷¹ Part III of the "Consequences of Ignorance and Silence," the final article of the series, which dealt with syphilis and gonorrhea, was scheduled for the February 9, 1913 issue of the Call. On the front page of that morning's paper was found the following in big letters: "Special Attention, Call Readers! Turn to page 15, Magazine Section, of this issue. There is given a striking illustration of the censorship that has been established by the Post Office Department." On page 15 of the Magazine Section, instead of Margaret Sanger's article was found the following: "What Every Girl Should Know: NOTHING! by order of the POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT."⁷²

⁶⁹Ibid., November 17, November 24, December 1, December 8, December 15, December 22 and December 29, all 1912.

⁷⁰Ibid., January 5, 1913; also preserved in Sanger Papers, Box 138.

⁷¹New York Call, January 12, January 19, January 26 and February 2, all 1913.

⁷²Ibid., February 9, 1913.

On February 8, the "Call" had received a notice from the Post Office saying that it would not be mailed under the Postal Laws if it were to print Margaret Sanger's article on syphilis and gonorrhoea.⁷³ The "Call" obliged the Department by not printing the article, but it began a barrage of editorials denouncing the action by the Post Office. On February 12, the "Call" announced that it intended to print the suppressed article in defiance of the edict of the Post Office Department.⁷⁴ On February 25, the "Call" announced that the ban had been lifted by officials in Washington, and on March 2, appeared in the "Call" Margaret Sanger's article on gonorrhoea and syphilis which during World War I was reprinted officially by the U. S. Government and distributed among the troops.⁷⁵ Not even this despotic action by the Post Office Department set Margaret off on a crusade for birth control. She was taking her time, feeling her way. She was not sure of the importance of the knowledge of family limitation in relation to the importance of her other work with the I. W. W. It was only when she encountered failure in her I. W. W. work that she was to turn to birth control.

She was to encounter this failure in her work at the

⁷³Ibid., February 10, 1913.

⁷⁴Ibid., February 10, 1913 and February 12, 1913.

⁷⁵Ibid., February 25, 1913 and March 2, 1913; Fryer, Controllers, 202.

Paterson Silk workers' strike in the spring of 1913. On February 12, 1913, 1500 workers at the Duplan Silk Company in Hazelton, Pennsylvania went out on strike and called for I. W. W. help.⁷⁶ The strike spread, and on February 23, the 8,000 workers in the silk factories of nearby Paterson, New Jersey went on strike.⁷⁷ By the end of March, almost 11,000 were out of work in Paterson, and by then "Big Bill" Haywood was in charge of the strike.⁷⁸ The size of the walkout at Paterson caused more workers to strike across the state line in Hazelton, and "Big Bill" sent Margaret and Jessie Ashley, one of her former comrades on the Woman's Committee, down to Hazelton to be I. W. W. organizers.⁷⁹ Margaret arrived early in April, and immediately began leading the girls on picket lines. Early in the morning of April 7, Margaret and 22 other pickets were arrested in front of the Duplan Silk Mill. Margaret was the last one to get a hearing before Alderman Henry Heidenreich. She vociferously complained of her unlawful arrest, but was found guilty and was fined \$5. She refused to pay the fine and was sentenced to five days in jail. Later that day,

⁷⁶New York Call, February 13, 1913.

⁷⁷Ibid., February 26, 1913; Henry M. Schuler, The Significance of the I. W. W.'s Failure at Paterson, New Jersey, in 1913, (unpublished senior thesis at Princeton University, 1956), iv.

⁷⁸New York Call, March 8, 1913 and March 26, 1913.

⁷⁹Haywood, Book, 268; J. Gerber to Jessie Ashley, February 15, 1911, Socialist Party Collection, Box A-66.

Constable Cyrus Sherry, a sympathizer, paid her fine and she was released.⁸⁰

Margaret immediately went back to the picket lines and once more organized the women pickets, resulting in her arrest three days later. On that day, Alderman McKelvey and Officer Brobst were standing near the picket line, and as Margaret passed in front of them, McKelvey made a wisecrack about her. Margaret demanded that Brobst arrest McKelvey, and Brobst refused, saying he had heard nothing. As one reporter wrote, "McKelvey said that the Sanger woman then explained 'I'll slap his face,' and moved at him. McKelvey stood still and as she swung at him, he caught her arm and turned her over to the police."⁸¹

Margaret was again brought before Alderman Heidenreich and again launched into an attack on lawlessness, police brutality, assault by public officials, illegal arrests and so on. After hearing this, McKelvey asked her whether she believed in direct action. "She said she did because she didn't believe there was any law or no courts where political action existed." She was released without any fine.⁸²

Apparently convinced that Margaret's usefulness had ended at Hazelton, "Big Bill" brought her over to Paterson to help

⁸⁰New York Call, April 8, 1913 and April 20, 1913; newspaper clipping, April, 1913, Sanger Papers, Box 138.

⁸¹Newspaper clippings from local Hazelton papers, Sanger Papers, Box 138.

⁸²Ibid.; New York Call, April 11, 1913.

in the strike there which was being mercilessly put down by the militia and the state and local government. Margaret went and spoke a few times to the strikers; her theme was family limitation, and she was heartened by the great response she received, just as she had when she spoke on the same subject at Socialist locals in the city.⁸³ Her main function at Paterson was the same one as she had performed at Lawrence. As she had predicted over a year earlier, the children were to again be used in labor struggles.⁸⁴ "Big Bill" decided that the children of some Paterson strikers were to be sent to New York City to live, and on April 23, the "Call" announced that the committee in charge included Margaret and her sister, Ethel Byrne, who was a widow and a trained nurse. Margaret and F. Sumner Boyd together were the Press Committee and were in charge of all press releases.⁸⁵ Applications from families to have one of the children were sent to Margaret, and when the first group of children arrived on May 1 for the May Day parade, she was in charge of distributing them.⁸⁶ On May 6, Margaret herself brought 77 more children from Paterson into New York and distributed them to various families.⁸⁷ A few days later,

⁸³Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 108-110.

⁸⁴New York Call, March 31, 1912.

⁸⁵Ibid., April 24, 1913.

⁸⁶Ibid., April 25, 1913 and May 2, 1913.

⁸⁷Ibid., May 7, 1913.

another group of 66 children was brought in and distributed.⁸⁸ The sending away of the children was not having the same magical effect as in the Lawrence strike a year earlier; public opinion was generally apathetic to the strikers' cause. The mill owners, supported by the government and the militia, were too strong for the strikers. The I. W. W. was badly in need of money, and obviously something dramatic and yet financially profitable was needed to help the cause of the Paterson strikers.

During the spring, the Paterson militia had arrested and jailed for ten days John Reed, a young radical just out of Harvard and one of Margaret's close friends. Margaret saw a lot of John Reed that spring down at Mable Dodge's salon at 23 Fifth Avenue, and found him incensed over his arrest and trying to think of some way of helping the strikers.⁸⁹ He came up with the idea of a Paterson Pageant that, with real Paterson strikers, would re-enact the Paterson strike. This was suggested to Bill Haywood by Mable Dodge; "Big Bill" agreed to the proposal and set up an executive committee consisting of himself, Jessie Ashley, Mable Dodge, John Reed, F. Sumner Boyd and Margaret Sanger.⁹⁰ The

⁸⁸ Ibid., May 12, 1913

⁸⁹ Mable Dodge Luhan, Intimate Memories: Movers and Shakers (New York, 1936), III, 190-200.

⁹⁰ Ibid., III, 188-189, 211; John H. Steiger, Memoirs of a Silk Striker, (privately printed, 1914), 43-57.

first meeting was held at Margaret's apartment, and they set the date for June 7, only three weeks off, and the place for Madison Square Garden. The committee worked extremely hard, getting the meeting hall, arranging the transportation of 1500 strikers from Paterson to New York, telling the strikers what to do, arranging the parade. John Reed even taught the strikers to sing one of their radical songs to the tune of "Harvard, old Harvard!" The committee realized that they were going to lose a lot of money and wanted to call the whole thing off, but they decided to keep going.⁹¹

June 7 came and the Pageant was on. Bill Haywood, Carlo Tresca and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn led the Paterson strikers to Washington Square where they were met by Margaret and Patrick Quinlan leading the silk strikers of Hudson County and Greater New York. Margaret and the four other leaders marched up Fifth Avenue to Madison Square Garden in front of brass bands playing the "Marseillaise" and with 2000 silk strikers marching behind. At the Garden in front of 15,000 people, the strikers re-enacted the Paterson Silk Strike. It was a moving and powerful spectacle, but when it was over, the Pageant Committee was \$2000 in debt. Eventually the strike was broken, and the workers went back to the silk mills without having any of their demands met.⁹²

⁹¹Luhan, Intimate Memories, III, 188-211; Steiger, Memoirs, 43-57.

⁹²New York Call, June 8, 1913; Luhan, Intimate Memories, III, 207-211; Steiger, Memoirs, 43-57.

Margaret and the others were greatly disheartened by this failure. Mable Dodge and John Reed left immediately for Florence to recuperate, and Margaret with Bill and the children rented a cottage in Provincetown for the summer.⁹³ This was a period of rest for Margaret. Provincetown was a quiet, easygoing place in 1913; in effect it was "a summer suburb of Greenwich Village," and Margaret found many of her radical friends there.⁹⁴ She often left the children with her sister Ethel and went into Boston to the public library to see if there was any information on family limitation there. Earlier in the year, she had looked through libraries in New York and Washington for information and had not found much. She had read August Fereol and Iwan Block and had read all of Havelock Ellis's Studies in the Psychology of Sex. She had visited with doctors, feminists and her fellow radicals, and either they knew nothing on the subject or advised her to wait.⁹⁵

But Margaret by the summer of 1913 could not longer afford to wait. It had taken her two long years to make up her mind on the importance of birth control. She had written on the problems of women for the Call, as well as writing the two long

⁹³Sanger, Autobiography, 95.

⁹⁴Luhan, Intimate Memories, III, 282; Floyd Dell, Homecoming: an Autobiography (New York, 1933), 243.

⁹⁵Sanger, Autobiography, 93-96; Sanger, My Fight, 57.

series of articles on sex education for that paper. She had worked for "political action" on the Woman's Committee of the Socialist Party and later had come to advocate "direct action" in her work for the I. W. W. Margaret, like Susan Anthony and Alexander Berkman, was living her philosophy of direct action and was enjoying it and was being successful. Yet her work always seemed to be bringing her back to the question of women and children and the problems associated with having too many children. Her failure at Paterson not only made her realize the importance of birth control but also marked the end of her work for the I. W. W. After this failure she retired along with "Big Bill" and Jessie Ashley and other radicals to Provincetown to rest and think.

Bill Haywood saw the importance of family limitation and urged her to go to France where family limitation had been practiced for generations. Bill Sanger, who had wanted to go to Paris to paint after seeing the Armory Show the previous February, readily agreed to the trip.⁹⁶ Anita Block wanted Margaret to write some articles on municipal ownership in Glasgow, so arrangements were made for a quick stop in Glasgow before proceeding on to Paris.⁹⁷ On October 16, 1913, using the proceeds from the sale of the Hastings house, Margaret and Bill with the three children set sail from Boston to Glasgow and Paris where, hopefully,

⁹⁶Sanger, Autobiography, 96; Rudi Blesh, Modern Art U. S. A. (New York, 1956), 3-67.

⁹⁷Sanger, Autobiography, 96.

Margaret could find some valuable contraceptive information and Bill could paint.⁹⁸

Thus her three years of radical activity ended. She had been awakened from her conservative, quiet life at Hastings and had been introduced into New York radical "society" by her husband. Philosophically an anarchist, she moved equally well in the two other branches of radicalism, the Socialist Party and the I. W. W. She tended toward the direct action technique and philosophy of the anarchists and Wobblies. She worked hard and was just as idealistic as her radical friends in her desire to establish a workers' state.⁹⁹ Yet in her radical work and in her nursing, Margaret was brought face to face with the problems of motherhood and the problem of too many children. She was slow to realize how important family limitation could be. When she had finally made her decision on the importance of birth control, she also decided that she had to have factual information on the subject before she began her fight, and thus to Paris.

⁹⁸M. Sanger to Amelia Michell, n. d., 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 47.

⁹⁹M. Sanger to Mable Dodge Luhan, March 13, 1937, Sanger Papers, Box 118.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE WOMAN REBEL

"My candle burns at both ends;
It will not last the night;
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends
It gives a lovely light!"

Edna St. Vincent Millay

The Sangers spent the first two weeks of November in Glasgow inspecting the municipal ownership system that the Socialists were so proud of. The Socialists had indeed done a fine job in Glasgow, but Margaret, with her newly gained perspective of the importance of family limitation, found things not as nice as they seemed. The municipal government could provide good housing for families with a small number of children, but could not for large families who, as a result, were crowded into slums on the outskirts of the city. Margaret was much disheartened at the inability of the socialists to handle the problem of family limitation, and this more than anything began her gradual split with the radicals over the question of birth control.¹

The family proceeded on to Paris and settled in an apartment on the Left Bank. Bill found a studio in Montparnasse

¹Margaret Sanger, My Fight For Birth Control (New York, 1931), 62-65; Margaret Sanger, "Impressions of Glasgow," Sanger Papers, Manuscript Division (Library of Congress), Box 103.

and became acquainted with such painters as Monet, Matisse and Modigliani.² Margaret, along with Jessie Ashley and Bill Haywood who had also come to Paris, began to meet with French radical leaders like Victor Dave and Jean Juarès.³ The rest of her time was spent talking with doctors, midwives and druggists, learning the best contraceptive techniques and buying many devices which she brought back with her. The amount Margaret learned about contraceptives in her one month in Paris was not vast, but it was substantial enough to establish a medico-scientific basis for the movement in its first year. She would return to Europe later on to learn more, but in late December, 1913, she was impatient to get back to New York and begin her campaign.

There remained the problem of her husband, Bill. He had just settled into the life of an artist in Paris, a life he had always wanted.⁴ Margaret too had an ambition, just as strong as her husband's, to return to New York and to help the women of America receive contraceptive information. Although there had been a little trouble between them the summer before, they were still very much in love.⁵ When they decided to part in late

²Interview with Grant Sanger; Sanger, My Fight, 66.

³Sanger, My Fight, 66-67.

⁴William Sanger to Margaret Sanger, February 8, 1914, April 2, 1914, and December 8, 1914, Sanger Collection, (Smith College Library), Box 85.

⁵W. Sanger to M. Sanger, March 10, 1913, September 28, 1913, and September 30, 1913, Sanger Collection, Box 85.

December of 1913, each knew that it was caused by the conflicting ambitions of two strong people, and yet each hoped that it was not to be the permanent separation that it eventually turned out to be.⁶ Bill, always eager to help her in her work, agreed to collect birth control pamphlets for her and to send them over to her.⁷ On December 23, 1913, Margaret left Paris and sailed for New York with the three children, leaving Bill in his studio to paint.⁸

Upon her return to New York City, Margaret settled into a small apartment on Post Avenue in the Bronx. There she conceived the idea of putting out a small monthly newspaper that would attack Anthony Comstock and his Postal Laws, propagandize for birth control, and advocate woman's emancipation from all authority, restrictions and conventions. Margaret's purpose in putting out the paper was essentially to wake up the women of America to the need for birth control knowledge, to force the Postal Authorities to act and to gather friends for her cause.⁹ The name of the paper

⁶Interview with Grant Sanger.

⁷W. Sanger to M. Sanger, December 28, 1913, February 3, 1914, and February 5, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 85.

⁸W. Sanger to M. Sanger, December 28, 1913 and January 5, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 85.

⁹Sanger, My Fight, 80; Margaret Sanger, "Comstockery in America," unpublished article in Sanger Papers, Box 2; Margaret Sanger, notes for a speech, undated, Sanger Papers, Box 107; New York Telegraph, April 18, 1914, preserved in Sanger Papers, Box 138.

was The Woman Rebel. One reporter asked Margaret, "Briefly, what does the "Woman Rebel" stand for? What is its aim?"

"Freedom," she replied without hesitation.¹⁰

The paper was defiant, blatantly radical and extremist. It is clear that Margaret was influenced greatly by Emma Goldman and her paper Mother Earth which was at that time the most radical paper in New York. Not only was Margaret to use many of Goldman's anarchist ideas, but she also borrowed "Mother Earth's" style, tone and rhetoric for use in The Woman Rebel.¹¹

Margaret gathered around her a small group of radical supporters like Otto Bobsein, Ed Mylius, John Rompapas and Robert Parker,¹² all of whom gave her a great deal of help with the paper.¹² Despite the help from this group of loyal supporters, Margaret ran the paper virtually single-handed. In the process of learning about contraception in Paris and of setting up the paper in New York, Margaret came to realize that she was a pioneer exploring new territory. Her Irish pride somehow was transformed

¹⁰Newspaper clipping, undated, Sanger Papers, Box 138.

¹¹Sanger, My Fight, 80; Richard Drinnon, Rebel in Paradise; a Biography of Emma Goldman (Chicago, 1961), 170; Francis Vreeland, The Process of Reform with Especial Reference to Reform Groups in The Field of Population, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis (University of Michigan, 1929), 66.

¹²New York Call, February 20, 1913; Otto Bobsein to M. Sanger, December 27, 1929, Sanger Papers, Box 116; O. Bobsein to M. Sanger, October 25, 1953, Sanger Collection, Box 42; note in M. Sanger's handwriting, Sanger Collection, Box 61.

into an enormous ego which drove her to control personally the movement and consequently to take all the credit. No friend was every going to tell her what to do or to steal the show from her. The birth control movement was to be Margaret Sanger's movement.

The strengths and weaknesses of the movement derive from this fact. The movement was strong because from her end it was run tightly and compactly and because Margaret Sanger, as its leader, was an excellent agitator and capable of rallying public opinion to support her. The movement's weakness derived from the fact that Margaret could not tolerate her friends exercising separate authority. Thus when other agitators entered the fight or when groups of women formed birth control organizations, Margaret deliberately ignored their contributions and made no effort to coordinate their efforts with hers. Thus because of her ego, Margaret lacked the important leadership quality of not being able to delegate authority and to work with others. This same ego combined with her agitational ability drove her to a position of undisputed leadership in the movement from which she could use her great ability to speak to and inspire others to join the fight. It is true that Margaret achieved her desire in getting almost all the credit for the birth control movement, but it is also true that the movement was retarded many years because

of its disorganized efforts.¹³

In late February, she sent out notices to various newspapers announcing The Woman Rebel:

A paper of ideas, not of words - a paper for the advancement of woman's freedom - a paper dealing with the conditions which enslave her and the manner in which she is enslaved - by the machine, by sex conventions, by motherhood, by wage slavery, by bourgeois morality, by customs, laws and superstitions. Mary Wollstonecraft, the great woman rebel said: 'We waste life in preparing to live! Why not live! Let us create our freedom by fighting for it, for courage consists in fighting the enemy, not in flying from it!!!'¹⁴

The first issue of The Woman Rebel appeared in March, 1914.

For its motto Margaret used "No Gods No Masters," which she adapted from the I. W. W. slogan, "No God, No Master," that had been used during the Lawrence and Paterson strikes.¹⁵ She described the aims of the paper on the front page: "to stimulate working women to think for themselves and to build up a conscious fighting character," to help women understand their bodies and sex, "to advocate the prevention of conception and to impart such knowledge in the columns of this paper, to circulate among those women who

¹³Harold Hersey, Margaret Sanger; The Biography of The Birth Control Pioneer, unpublished biography, Rare Book Collection (New York Public Library), 120, 222; Edward Mylius to M. Sanger, February 24, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 61.

¹⁴New York Post, February 27, 1914, preserved in Sanger Papers, Box 138.

¹⁵William Haywood, Bill Haywood's Book (New York, 1929), 252; Henry M. Schuler, The Significance of the I. W. W.'s Failure at Paterson, New Jersey, in 1913, unpublished senior thesis (Princeton University, 1956), 59-60.

work in prostitution; to voice their wrongs...to give free expression to their thoughts, hopes and opinions" and to "advocate economic emancipation."¹⁶ In the seven pages that followed that introduction, there were articles on feminism, unemployment, capitalist exploitation of workers, the prevention of conception and stories about such rebels as Mary Wollstonecraft and Cleopatra.¹⁷ In addition, there were excerpts from Emma Goldman's "Love and Marriage," the I. W. W. preamble, and little nuggets such as the following: "The Rebel Woman claim: the Right to be lazy, the Right to be an unmarried mother, the Right to destroy, the Right to create, the Right to love, the Right to live." Margaret defined a woman's duty as "to look the whole world in the face with a go-to-hell look in the eyes; to have an ideal; to speak and act in defiance of convention."¹⁸

On the last page, Margaret wrote an article called "Why the Woman Rebel," and it provides a clear insight into her ideas and philosophy in the spring of 1914. We see that she is still devoted to the ideas of anarchism and the I. W. W. She says, in part:

"I believe that these things which enslave woman must be fought openly, fearlessly, consciously...I believe in freedom, created through individual action...I believe in the offspring of the immigrant, the great majority of whom make up the unorganized working class of today...I believe that through the efforts of the industrial revolution will woman's freedom emerge...I

¹⁶The Woman Rebel (New York), I (March, 1914).

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

believe that not until wage slavery is abolished can either woman's or man's freedom be fully attained...."¹⁹

Two thousand copies were mailed out to subscribers, and many more were distributed at labor meetings.²⁰ In radical circles, the paper was a great success, although some like Max Eastman called it the "blare of rebellion for its own sake."²¹ Most moderates and conservatives agreed with the Pittsburg Sun which said simply, "The thing is nauseating."²² Apparently the officials of the Post Office agreed, for on April 3, 1914, Margaret received a letter from Postmaster E. M. Morgan which read: "In accordance with advice from the Assistant Attorney General for the Post Office Department, you are informed that the publication entitled The Woman Rebel, for March, 1914, is unavailable under the provision of Section 211 of the Criminal Code as amended by the Act of March 4, 1911."²³

Margaret proceeded to send the paper by express to those who had not received theirs because of the confiscation by the

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Margaret Sanger, An Autobiography (New York, 1938), 109.

²¹The Masses (New York) V, (1914), preserved in Sanger Papers, Box 138.

²²Pittsburg Sun, April 28, 1914.

²³E. M. Morgan to M. Sanger, April 2, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 3.

Post Office.²⁴ She then wrote the Postmaster and asked what he objected to in the paper. Mr. Morgan wrote back an evasive reply, not stating exactly what the objectionable material was.²⁵ What, in fact, he had objected to was the announcement that the paper would give contraceptive information and the article entitled "The Prevention of Conception," which in fact gave no concrete information on contraception.²⁶

The April issue was just as defiant and radical as the first issue, but was not suppressed. It carried articles on the Post Office suppression, abortion and contraceptives, poverty and the working women and on feminists. She concluded the issue with the following observation in large type: "'The Woman Rebel' feels proud that Post Office authorities did not approve of her. She shall blush with shame if ever she be approved of by officialism or 'Comstockism.'"²⁷

The May issue was much like the previous one with articles on labor strikes, the Ludlow Massacre, the Mexican War, feminists, and the hunger strike of Becky Edelson. There were in

²⁴New York Sun, April 4, 1914, in Sanger Papers, Box 138; New York Press, April 4, 1914, in Sanger Papers, Box 138; M. Sanger, Autobiography, 111.

²⁵E. M. Morgan to M. Sanger, April 7, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 3.

²⁶List of Suppressed Articles in Woman Rebel, Sanger Papers, Box 2.

²⁷The Woman Rebel (New York), April, 1914.

addition three articles entitled "Open Discussion," "Can You Afford to Have a Large Family", and "Abortion in the United States" which the Post Office deemed obscene, and the issue was suppressed.²⁸ With two of three issues suppressed, the magazine and the movement were in trouble, and Margaret acknowledged this in the May issue when she wrote that many people had cancelled their subscriptions because of the Post Office ban. She promised that The Woman Rebel would continue and would give contraceptive information despite the Post Office authorities.²⁹

As during the Paterson strike, what was needed was something spectacular to pick up the movement. Margaret decided what was lacking was a name for the movement.³⁰ One night in May, Robert Parker, Ed Mylius, Otto Bobsein, Margaret and her sister Ethel gathered at Margaret's apartment to try to think up a name. Bob Parker was a little inebriated and was ribbing Otto Bobsein about the word "Neo-Malthusian." Otto challenged him to think of a better one, and Bob replied, "Why not just call it 'Birth Control?'" Everyone knew immediately that the name was perfect, and they picked up their hats and left.³¹

²⁸New York Sun, June 4, 1914, in Sanger Papers, Box 138; List of Suppressed Articles in Woman Rebel, Sanger Papers, Box 102; The Woman Rebel (New York), May, 1914 and June, 1914.

²⁹The Woman Rebel (New York), May, 1914.

³⁰Sanger, My Fight, 83.

³¹O. Bobsein to M. Sanger, October 25, 1953, Sanger Collection, Box 42; M. Sanger to O. Bobsein, October 27, 1953, Sanger Collection, Box 42.

On the front page of the June issue, the words "birth control" appeared for the first time and were used often throughout the issue. Except for the usual vituperative attacks on the Post Office Department, the June issue contained fairly mild material and was not suppressed, thus assuring the spreading of the words "birth control" which were to bring immediate strength to the movement.³²

The July issue was another matter. It contained two discussions on contraception called "The Marriage Bed" and "Are Preventive Means Injurious." There was also an article announcing the formation of the Birth Control League of America which would be the first organization ever formed to aid in the fight for birth control in America. This organization never got past the planning stage, but its membership list and proposed organization served as a model for later birth control organizations. The Post Office found all these articles obscene and suppressed the issue.³³ But there was one more article in the July issue which the Post Office authorities found they could not merely suppress. After they read it, they decided that Margaret Sanger had to be brought to trial. That article was "A Defense of Assassination" by Herbert A. Thorpe, "the most daring article ever

³²The Woman Rebel (New York), June, 1914.

³³Ibid., July, 1914; List of Suppressed Articles in the Woman Rebel, Sanger Papers, Box 2; Vreeland, Reform, 68-69; Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 140.

published by a revolutionary leader in the history of the United States."³⁴ This article was considered by Emma Goldman as too dangerous to publish in her Mother Earth. But Margaret was getting impatient with the Post Office. She wanted to force them to arrest her and thus define what was "obscene" under the Postal Laws. Margaret printed the article on assassination and was planning one on arson for the August issue, "but it [the Assassination article] had the desired effect."³⁵

On August 25, Margaret was brought before a Federal Grand Jury in New York and indicted on three counts: two for obscenity and one for inciting to murder and assassination.³⁶ She pleaded not guilty before Judge Hazel who postponed her case for six weeks, and "on the recommendation of Assistant United States Attorney General Harold A. Content, she was released on her own recognizance."³⁷ Besides gaining an enormous amount of publicity for her cause, Margaret had succeeded in gathering around her many free-speech advocates like Theodore Schroeder and Leonard D. Abbott who were incensed at the suppression of honest

³⁴ Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 140.

³⁵ M. Sanger to Upton Sinclair, September 23, 1914, printed in Upton Sinclair (ed.), My Lifetime in Letters (Columbia, 1960), 148-149; Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 122, 136; manuscript on Woman Rebel in Sanger Papers, Box 2.

³⁶ New York American, August 27, 1914, in Sanger Collection, Box 138; New York Evening Globe, August 25, 1914, in Sanger Collection, Box 138; Helena H. Smith to M. Sanger, June 23, 1930, Sanger Papers, Box 3; New York Call, August 26, 1914, in Sanger Papers, Box 138.

³⁷ New York Call, August 26, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 138; New York Times, August 25, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 138; Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 132.

opinions in her newspaper and who were to give her considerable help and money in the coming fight in court.³⁸

Time was getting short. Margaret returned to her newspaper and managed to get out two more issues both of which were suppressed by the Post Office. The August issue primarily was concerned with Becky Edelson and her hunger strike while in jail on Blackwell's Island. Margaret had taken a great interest in the case and had, in early August, led a protest meeting with Rose Pastor Stokes in Becky's behalf. There was nothing particularly offensive in the issue, but it was suppressed anyway.³⁹ The September and October issues, which were combined into one issue which discussed her indictment and the war in Europe that was dominating newspaper headlines, met the same fate at the hands of the Post Office Department.⁴⁰

Besides her newspaper work, Margaret had been working all summer on a little pamphlet that would contain complete contraceptive information. She used the material she had gathered in France, and named the pamphlet "Family Limitation."⁴¹ This pamphlet frankly discussed many methods of contraception such

³⁸ See Box 138 in Sanger Papers.

³⁹ The Woman Rebel (New York), August 1914; Mother Earth (New York), April, 1915; New York Call, August 11, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 138.

⁴⁰ The Woman Rebel (New York), September-October, 1914.

⁴¹ Sanger, Autobiography, 112-113.

as douches, condoms, pessaries, sponges and various vaginal suppositories.⁴² Margaret visited at least 20 printers, and not one would touch it.⁴³ Finally she went to Bill Shatoff, an anarchist and an I. W. W. member, who printed 100,000 copies of the pamphlet after hours in his shop.⁴⁴ Margaret, together with Bill Shatoff and Bill Haywood, got copies into bundles which were sent off to various I. W. W. centers around the country to be released only on a pre-arranged signal from Margaret, which she planned to send after she had been sent to jail.⁴⁵ She had been willing, when first indicted, to go to jail and to be a martyr for her cause.⁴⁶ But she soon came to change her mind.

On the afternoon of October 5, Margaret received a phone call from an officer of the court informing her that her case had been called that morning and that she had not been present. He told her that the case would be called on October 13 and that she was required by law to appear. Margaret walked into court on October 13 without a lawyer with the intention of asking for another long recess which was refused. Margaret sensed immediately

⁴²"Family Limitation," (New York, 1914).

⁴³Sanger, Autobiography, 113.

⁴⁴Ibid., 117; Mother Earth (New York), November, 1912, 270.
Fryer, Controllers, 207.

⁴⁵Margaret Sanger's Diary, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 29; Sanger, My Fight, 87.

⁴⁶New York American, August 27, 1914, in Sanger Papers, Box 138.

that the court was trying to take advantage of the dominance of war news to railroad her to jail without any publicity. She knew that the movement needed publicity to get off the ground and was unwilling to go to jail without it. She wanted a fair trial where she could be heard by the women of America. She knew she would not get it in that courtroom on October 13.⁴⁷

There was only one way - leave the country. She made arrangements with Bill, who had just returned from Paris, to take care of the children. She wrote to the Judge and District Attorney, telling them that she would not be in court the following day, and sent them each a copy of "Family Limitation." Without further ado, she went to Grand Central Station and took the midnight train to Montreal.⁴⁸ After spending a few days there, Margaret, under the assumed name of Bertha Watson, boarded the R. M. S. Virginian bound for London. After three days at sea, Margaret sent telegrams to each of the centers holding her "Family Limitation" pamphlets, ordering them to be released. Within hours, 100,000 copies of "Family Limitation" were circulating among the workers of America.⁴⁹

⁴⁷H. Snowden Marshall to M. Sanger, October 7, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 3; Sanger, My Fight, 91-92.

⁴⁸Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 139; Sanger, My Fight, 91-93; Sanger, Autobiography, 118-120; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 59-60.

⁴⁹Margaret Sanger's Diary, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 29; Margaret Sanger's Diary, entry for November 13, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 105; Sanger, Autobiography, 121-122.

Margaret had been in New York less than ten months, and already she had launched the first phase of her birth control campaign. Through her anarchist paper, The Woman Rebel, she had established herself as the leader of the movement, she had gathered many friends and supporters to the movement and she had put a new phrase in the American vocabulary, "birth control." The fight was essentially one for free speech and free press and because of this she gathered many civil libertarians to her cause who normally would not have bothered with birth control. Behind this free speech fight lay Margaret's desire to give practical information to the American worker. This desire, to establish a medical basis for the movement, was realized in the wide distribution of her pamphlet "Family Limitation," for which she was never arrested.

CHAPTER FIVE

EUROPE

"The world is always worth saving. It has been done many times, and it will have to be done many times more. But it isn't 'sacrifice' to help save it. It is self-expression. It is an interesting game, saving this old world, a live people just can't keep out of it."

A note in Margaret Sanger's Scrapbook

Margaret was destined to spend a year in Europe. She felt that she would probably have to stay at least until the end of the war, but circumstances were to force her permanent return to America. This year in Europe was to change both her and the movement profoundly in that she would be more conservatively oriented and the movement would be more of a medical movement. This was not to happen overnight. As with her decision to devote her life to birth control activities, her new orientation and new personality were to develop slowly. As she wrote in her diary, "I cannot separate myself from my past emotions quickly - all breeches must come gradually to me."¹

Margaret was a profoundly depressed woman as she arrived in Liverpool in early November, 1914. She missed her children terribly; she was saddened by the course of the war, by the

¹Margaret Sanger's Diary, entry on December 16, 1914, Sanger Papers, Manuscript Division (Library of Congress), Box 105.



MARGARET SANGER IN EXILE, 1915

suppression of liberty by church and state, and she was terribly lonely.² She summed up her feelings about the world by saying, "The whole sickly business of society today is a sham."³

In an effort to justify her work, her desertion of her children, and her whole life, Margaret turned to the philosophy of Frederick Nietzsche, whose ideas she was probably acquainted with through reading "Mother Earth."⁴ Margaret's anarchist ideas were close philosophically to the teaching of Nietzsche, and, when she began to read him in earnest in the early months of her stay in Europe, she found the answers to the questions she had been asking about the value and validity of her actions. She established her own morality based on the "master morality" of Nietzsche. She would, like Nietzsche, examine all morals, traditions, ideas and ideals and would accept or reject them according to her own standards.⁵ She would quote a biographer of Nietzsche in an essay she prepared on his philosophy:

....to affirm and reaffirm his ideal, that ideal which he held to be true; to affirm and reaffirm it in the face of the whole world if necessary without compromise. To be able to do this - to be able to attack and reject all that which mankind has hitherto

²Ibid., entry on December 10, 1914 and December 17, 1914; Margaret Sanger's Diary, 1914, Sanger Collection (Smith College Library), Box 29; Margaret Sanger to Stuart Sanger, March 29, 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 84; M. Sanger to Mary Higgins, December 18, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 80.

³M. Sanger's Diary, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 29.

⁴Margaret Sanger, An Autobiography (New York, 1938), 204; See complete files of Mother Earth (New York), 1911-1914.

⁵M. Sanger's Diary, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 105; M. Sanger, "Notes on Nietzsche," unpublished article, Sanger Papers, Box 103; M. Sanger to M. Higgins, December 18, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 80; Havelock Ellis, Affirmations (London, 1898), 1-85.

by almost universal acceptance held sacred, to be able to sacrifice all these ideas which tradition and education have rendered personally of value, to be able to sacrifice friends that one loves and venerates on the altar of one's convictions - to do this requires courage above the ordinary - it requires heroism.⁶

In a sense she was returning to what she admired about Susan B. Anthony and Alexander Berkman: that they lived their philosophy. Margaret wrote about Nietzsche: "One can scarcely separate man's personality from his life - neither can we separate it from his teachings.... The individual is the original source and constituent of all value."⁷ In a sense Margaret had lived by this philosophy ever since her work for the I. W. W. at Lawrence when she first experienced and came to believe in "direct action." She was to continue to live her philosophy of "direct action" at Paterson, Hazelton, with The Woman Rebel and with "Family Limitation." Now she had definitely formulated her own philosophy from Nietzsche, and she was more secure and confident in her work.

Within the context of her own morality, she was to be a pragmatist. All her actions were to be carefully examined for the benefit they would do the birth control movement. What she was to do over the next two years was to separate "direct action" and anarchism from her Nietzschean philosophy and discard them

⁶M. Sanger, "Notes on Nietzsche," Sanger Papers, Box 103.

⁷Ibid.

altogether because she felt that they would harm the movement. Privately, she would retain anarchist sympathies, but publicly Margaret was to divorce herself from all radicals and radical ideas. It was in Europe that this process began.

Margaret arrived in Liverpool on a typically cold, wet November day. On the recommendation of Bill Haywood, she went to the Clarion Cafe where she was invited into a meeting of the local Fabian Society. There she met Lorenzo Portet, the Spanish anarchist who inherited from Francisco Ferrer the job of running Spain's Modern Schools. She saw Portet often in Liverpool and in London, and she made plans to visit him in Spain.⁸ On November 25, Margaret moved to London and rented a small, unheated apartment near the British Museum.⁹ In London she met with such intellectuals as Edward Carpenter, E. P. C. Haynes, H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw, and Neo-Malthusian leaders like Dr. and Mrs. Drysdale and Dr. Alice Vickery.¹⁰

Most of her time in London was spent at the British Museum. She was there ten hours a day in the warm reading room,

⁸M. Sanger's Diary, Entries through November and December 1914, February 2, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 105.

⁹Ibid., Entry on December 13, 1914; Sanger, Autobiography, 124.

¹⁰Margaret Sanger's Diary, Entries on December 24, 1914 and February 1, 1915; M. Sanger to M. Higgins, November 20, 1914 and December 18, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 80; Margaret Sanger's Address Book, 1914-1915, Sanger Papers, Box 105-106.

studying everything she could find on population and contraception beginning with Malthus. This was to be the start of Margaret Sanger's education in the history, economics and science of birth control and population planning. She studied the whole history of the British movement, she studied population graphs, disease charts, infant mortality statistics and many other forms of data that were affected by the widespread use of contraception in society. From the Drysdales and Dr. Vickery, she learned a great deal more about contraceptives, their use and their implications. Gradually Margaret Sanger became an expert and an acknowledged authority on birth control. She was no longer a feminist-radical who merely fought for a hearing. She was developing what H. G. Wells called "The real scientific quality of her mind."¹¹

Margaret had read before her first trip to Paris the works of Forel, Bloch, Freud and Havelock Ellis.¹² She had always wanted to meet Ellis, and Stella Browne, a friend of the Drysdales, arranged the meeting.¹³ Ellis proved to be the most help of anyone she met in Europe. He was the man who had made sex a

¹¹M. Sanger, Autobiography, 125-128; Lawrence Lader, The Margaret Sanger Story and the Fight for Birth Control (Garden City, 1955), 64-68; Margaret Sanger, The Pivot of Civilization (New York, 1922), xvii.

¹²M. Sanger to Vincent Brome, January 6, 1954, Sanger Papers, Box 126A.

¹³Lader, Margaret Sanger, 68; M. Sanger's Diary, Entry on December 16, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 105; Havelock Ellis to M. Sanger, December 19, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 122.

respectable and clean subject worthy of scientific discussion. He knew more than any other man on the subject and in their long talks together shared his great knowledge with her.¹⁴ He was the man who set her course to the scientific side of the birth control question. He helped her in her research at the British Museum, often leaving notes at her desk directing her to new material. He also helped her on a series of pamphlets she was planning on contraceptive methods.¹⁵ Margaret's friendship with Ellis provided her with not only more knowledge on the subject of Sex, but also a sense of direction toward the scientific, the economical and the historical sides of birth control.

The importance of this new sense of direction was to reveal itself almost immediately as the result of a trip she was to make to the Netherlands. As soon as she arrived in England, Margaret had wanted to visit Holland to study birth control activities there.¹⁶ Her study in the British Museum had shown her that Holland, after legalizing contraception, had the lowest birth rate in Europe but also had a lower death rate. As a result, Holland had the fastest growing population in Europe. Margaret was confused by the apparent paradox that as soon as the people

¹⁴M. Sanger Diary, Entry on December 22, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 105; Sanger, Autobiography, 137.

¹⁵H. Ellis to M. Sanger, December 24, 1914, December 26, 1914 and January 6, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 122; M. Sanger to Vincent Brome, January 6, 1954, Sanger Collection, Box 54, also in Sanger Papers, Box 126A.

¹⁶M. Sanger to M. Higgins, November 20, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 80.

began using birth control, the population began to rise. She was to find that this was caused by a lack of child spacing in Holland, a practise that was used in other European countries. Margaret, wanting to solve this paradox and to meet and study with Dr. Rutgers and Dr. Aletta Jacobs, the two birth control pioneers in Holland, left London early in February and on February 10, 1915, arrived at the Hague.¹⁷ She immediately went to visit Dr. Rutgers who befriended her and began to explain to her the theory and practice of birth control clinics. He would send midwives into the congested sections of the city where they would give an individual examination to each woman and would instruct her in the use of the contraceptive that would suit her best. Margaret spent the next few weeks alternating between looking at Rembrandts in the art museums and learning from Dr. Rutgers how to instruct women in contraceptives. She did further study in the Central Bureau of Statistics where she discovered how beneficial birth control was to society from a eugenic point of view.¹⁸ For a week Margaret traveled through Amsterdam and Rotterdam, where she visited many birth control centers and

¹⁷M. Sanger's Diary, Entry on February 10, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 105; Sanger, Autobiography, 142-144.

¹⁸M. Sanger's Diary, Entries on February 10, 1915 and February 12, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 105; M. Sanger, "My Experiences in Holland," unpublished article, Sanger Collection, Box 30.

further studied the beneficial effects of legalized birth control.¹⁹

Margaret's experience in Holland showed her the future course of the birth control movement. Havelock Ellis had directed her on the scientific side of birth control. Dr. Rutgers now extended this scientific orientation to include medicine and birth control clinics. Margaret had come to Europe a radical, fighting for free speech and free press.²⁰ Now in Holland she came to realize that birth control was a medical movement in which doctors and trained nurses were needed to set up clinics where there could be individual instruction on contraceptive methods. Birth control was still to be a free speech fight, but it was also now a fight for the education of the people in specific methods and for the enlistment of the medical profession in the cause of birth control.²¹

Margaret returned to London for a few days and then went to Paris where she took care of some business relating to her husband's paintings and also did more research on contraceptive methods.²² She continued down to Spain to visit with Lorenzo

¹⁹M. Sanger's Diary, Entry on February 15, 1915, Sanger Papers Box 105; M. Sanger, "Holland Experiences," Sanger Collection, Box 30.

²⁰M. Sanger to M. Higgins, December 18, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 80.

²¹M. Sanger to Dr. S. A. Knopf, November 11, 1924, Knopf Collection (National Library of Medicine); M. Sanger, My Fight For Birth Control (New York, 1931), 116.

²²M. Sanger's Diary, Entries on February 15, 1915 and March 11, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 105.

Portet in Barcelona where she could escape from her birth control work and the memories of her family and could relax. She traveled with Portet around the countryside and in Barcelona, playing the role of a typical tourist, shopping and seeing bullfights.²³

The rest of her time in Spain was spent writing. On her various passports Margaret had given her profession as a journalist.²⁴ Just as a year before when she had written the articles on Glasgow for the Call, Margaret now wrote many articles as she traveled around Europe. She had written on the war, on the different types of women in Europe, on freedom of the press, and on her visits to Holland and Paris. As she relaxed on her six-weeks stay in Barcelona, she wrote a series of articles called "Modern Schools in Spain," which were to be published by the Modern School Magazine, and a series call "Essays on Spain" which were unpublished. These articles were a history of Spanish anarchism and education under the leadership of Portet and Ferrer. Margaret wrote sympathetically about the anarchists' attempts to modernize Spain and to eliminate the Church and Monarchy.²⁵ She was

²³Ibid., Entry on April 12, 1915; Sanger, Autobiography, 153-168.

²⁴Margaret Sanger's Passport, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 105-106; Margaret Sanger's Visa, 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 1. Both are under the name of Bertha Watson.

²⁵See Sanger Papers, Box 103 for all the articles she wrote; See also Modern School Magazine, May 1916, July 1916, September 1916, October 1916, November-December 1916, January 1917, February 1917.

especially impressed with a man named Angelilo who in 1897 had shot to death the Prime Minister of Spain, Canabas. Margaret saluted him as a man of action who gave his life to avenge the deaths of others: "Here's to your name and your memory Angelilo, may your spirit and courage be born again - your kind is needed if the rulers and despots shall be overthrown!"²⁶

Some very interesting observations can be made about these articles. They showed that Margaret was still an anarchist and "direct-actionist" who could support assassination for the right cause, as she had done in The Woman Rebel, by printing the "Defense of Assassination." Although she had come under the moderating influence of Havelock Ellis and Dr. Johannes Rutgers and had decided on the new moderate direction of the birth control movement, she had not yet changed her anarchist philosophy.

Another observation can be drawn from the mere fact that Margaret spent her time writing such articles, none of which apparently was published except for "Modern Schools in Spain." It is an oft-repeated assumption that the reason Margaret Sanger accomplished so much was that she concentrated her whole life and energies on birth control. In essence, this statement is true, but it must be modified to include the fact that Margaret was not a one-sided fanatic for the cause. Using her Nietzschean morality,

²⁶ M. Sanger's Diary, Entry on April 19, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 105; M. Sanger, "Portet and Ferrer," manuscript for article published in Modern School Magazine, November-December 1916, January 1917 and February 1918, Sanger Papers, Box 103.

she became involved in other activities outside the birth control field if these activities would not impede the progress of the movement. In this way she could write these articles and lead protest meetings for Becky Edelson without any fear of retarding the course of birth control.

Early in May, Margaret returned to Paris and then proceeded on to London where she spent the rest of the summer.²⁷ She spent her time with friends like Alice Vickary, Hugh de Selincourt, Harold Cox, E. P. C. Haynes, Marie Stopes and Edith How-Martyn.²⁸ Upon occasion she gave a speech; one at the annual meeting of the Neo-Malthusian League and one at Fabian Hall on July 5. During this speech she revealed her own new morality which she hoped would be transferred to the women of the world:

The object [of birth control] is to inject into the working woman a class independence which says to the masters 'produce your own slaves,' keep your religion, your ethics and your morality for yourselves - I'll have none of it and we refuse to be longer enslaved by it for we are creating our own and are building up a new society through the process of which we are creating our own morality and individuality.²⁹

Most of Margaret's time was spent preparing three pamphlets on the English, Dutch and Magnetation methods of Birth Control.

²⁷ M. Sanger's Diary, Entry on May 4, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 105.

²⁸ Sanger, Autobiography, 169-173.

²⁹ Manuscript of Fabian Hall Speech, Sanger Papers, Box 2; M. Sanger to M. Higgins, March 1, 1917, Sanger Collection, Box 80.

The English and Dutch Pamphlets were largely reprints of pamphlets issued by the Neo-Malthusian Leagues of these respective countries. They discussed many of the methods already treated in "Family Limitation," and Margaret added some extended introductory comments to each of these pamphlets. All the Magnetation pamphlet was written by Margaret, and in it she described the idea and the practice of the Magnetation method. These pamphlets were sent to the subscribers of The Woman Rebel, and were not confiscated by the Customs or Post Office officials.³⁰

By autumn, Margaret was making arrangements with Lorenzo Portet to go to work for his publishing company in Paris. Margaret was going to be editor in charge of selecting worthy books in English to be translated into French and Spanish. The pay was good, and Margaret was sorely tempted to take the job.³¹ But she decided that, before she accepted the job, she would return to America. She had been urged to stay in Europe by her close friends and had agreed with them enough to arrange the publishing job.³²

Two circumstances were impelling her to go home, if only

³⁰Sanger, Autobiography, 173-174; M. Sanger, "English Methods of Birth Control" (n. p., 1915); M. Sanger, "Dutch Methods of Birth Control" (n. p., 1915); M. Sanger, "Magnetation Methods of Birth Control" (n. p., 1915).

³¹Charles Malato to M. Sanger, July 19, 1917 and August 1, 1917, Sanger Collection, Box 61; M. Sanger to L. Lader, December 3, 1953, Sanger Collection, Box 5.

³²Edith How-Martyn to M. Sanger, July 25, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 219.

to pick up the children and return. One circumstance was a persistent mystical feeling that something was wrong with her daughter, Peggy. Over a year earlier in June, 1914, Margaret had joined the Rosicrucian Society, and in December, 1914, she had a vision in London that her father had died. He had not and was to live on for ten more years.³³ In the autumn of 1915, Margaret began to feel that something was wrong with Peggy, and the date "November 6" became fixed in her mind. She was determined to be home by November 6, to make sure nothing happened to her daughter.³⁴

The other circumstance was that her husband, Bill, had been arrested for distributing a copy of "Family Limitation." On December 18, 1914, Charles J. Bamberger of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice came to Bill's studio at 10 East 15th Street and, Bill not being there, left a card saying he was a Mr. Heller, dealer in rubber goods. The next morning Bamberger returned and asked Bill for a copy of "Family Limitation" which he wished to copy and distribute among the poor. Bill refused, but Bamberger kept insisting. Finally Bill rummaged around in his papers and found a copy of the pamphlet which he gave to Bamberger who then departed. On January 19, 1915, Bamberger returned with

³³M. Sanger's Diary, Entry on December 13, 1914, Sanger Papers, Box 105; Rosicrucian Society to M. Sanger, April 10, 1914 and May 8, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 24; M. Sanger to Rosicrucian Society, April 19, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 24.

³⁴Sanger, Autobiography, 175; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 79.

Anthony Comstock, and Bill was arrested.³⁵ Bill spent 36 hours in the Yorkville jail before Leonard Abbott of the Free Speech League could provide \$500 for bail. He was arraigned at the Yorkville Police Court on February 2, and the case was sent to the Court of Special Sessions.³⁶

Bill had his own ideas as to how the case was to be tried. Being an anarchist, Bill felt that he would get no justice in the courts. He decided to try and fight the case on the principles of free speech and free press.³⁷ Throughout the long summer, Gilbert Roe of the Free Speech League endeavored in the courts to get Bill a jury trial, but failed.³⁸ The Masses,

³⁵William Sanger to M. Sanger, January 21, 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 85; James Waldo Fawcett, "The Trial of William Sanger" (New York, 1917), 12.

³⁶New York Call, January 20, 1915; Newspaper clippings in Sanger Papers, Boxes 2 and 122; W. Sanger to M. Sanger, n. d., 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 85.

³⁷W. Sanger to M. Sanger, January 17, 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 85; Telegram from W. Sanger to M. Sanger, January 22, 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 85.

³⁸New York Times, July 25, 1915; Newspaper clipping, n. d., Sanger Papers, Box 2; Mother Earth (April, 1915), 69; For William Sanger's appeals to higher courts see: New York Criminal Reports (Albany, 1916), XXXIII, 415; The New York Supplement (St. Paul, 1915), CLIV, 414; Report of Cases Heard and Determined in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of The State of New York (Albany, 1915) CLXVIII, 835; Supreme Court, Appellate Division, 2nd Dept.; Papers on Appeal from order, Appellant's Brief, Statement (n. p., n. d.), Vol. 3203.



Drawn by K. R. Chamberlain, May 1915

Family Limitation—Old Style

FACITORY PRE, 1915

"Mother Earth," and the Free Speech League ran campaigns to raise money for the case and they raised about \$500 to help pay court expenses.³⁹ When the "Masses" published articles in defense of Bill Sanger, the magazine was deluged with letters asking for contraceptive information. Floyd Dell, one of the editors, answered each letter personally, saying that it was illegal to send that sort of information through the mails. He then proceeded to give each letter to a friend who sent the requested information.⁴⁰

Leonard Abbott was justified in writing to Margaret in June, 1915: "The whole atmosphere, so far as the subject of birth control is concerned, is changing for the better."⁴¹ On March 31, 1915, Mary Ware Dennett, former secretary of the National Suffrage Association, founded, with the help of Otto Bobsein, who gave her the subscription lists of The Woman Rebel, Anita Block, Jessie Ashley and Lincoln Steffens, The National Birth Control League with the aim of repealing all anti-Birth Control Laws.⁴²

³⁹ Leonard Abbott to M. Sanger, May 1, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 2; New York Times, February 6, 1915; newspaper clipping, n. d., Sanger Papers, Box 138; Free Speech League Circular, Sanger Papers, Box 103; The Masses, April 1915, May 1915; Mother Earth, May 1915, June 1915.

⁴⁰ Floyd Dell, Homecoming; an Autobiography (New York, 1933), 252.

⁴¹ L. Abbott to M. Sanger, June 1, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 2.

⁴² M. Sanger to L. Lader, October 27, 1953, Sanger Collection, Box 5; National Birth Control League Statement of Principles, Sanger Collection, Box B. C.-39; Manuscript on N. B. C. L., Sanger Papers, Boxes 2 and 3; Francis Vreeland, The Process of Reform with Especial Reference to Reform Groups In the Field of Population, unpublished Ph. D. thesis (University of Michigan, 1929), 68-70.

On May 27, The Academy of Medicine in New York came out in favor of birth control, formed a committee to study the subject, and released a statement saying that it recommended the amending of Sec. 1142 of the Penal Code of New York to permit physicians to give out contraceptive information.⁴³ Emma Goldman and Ben Reitman reported in "Mother Earth" on their various speaking tours where they found much interest in the subject of birth control.⁴⁴ Perhaps the most encouraging sign of all, as William Sanger's trial approached, was that, on June 30, Anthony Comstock had been fired from his position as Special Agent for the Post Office after 42 years of service because of complaints that he was too zealous and fanatical.⁴⁵

As his trial approached, Bill became more aware that he "hated the courts" and would have nothing to do with their despotic procedures. Consequently, he fired Gilbert Roe and announced that he would go into court without a lawyer, would not participate in the cross-examination and would only read a prepared statement for his defense.⁴⁶ The trial was set for September 11 before Judges

⁴³Survey, (New York), June 5, 1915, 211; Mother Earth, July, 1915, 164; New York Tribune, May 15, 1915, May 26, 1915, in Sanger Papers, Box 2.

⁴⁴Mother Earth, May 1915, 122-123; Mother Earth, September 1915, 245.

⁴⁵Buffalo Express, June 12, 1915, in Sanger Papers, Box 138.

⁴⁶New York Times, September 5, 1915; New York Call, September 10, 1915; W. Sanger to M. Sanger, n. d., September 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 85.

Salmon, Herbert and McInerney, who was a Tammany appointee and a Catholic.⁴⁷ The authorities, just as a year before at Margaret's trial, were in a quandry. They wanted to get Sanger convicted without creating any publicity. But the radicals had filled the newspapers with publicity, and on the day of the trial, such radicals as Alexander Berkman, Carlo Tresca, Elizabeth Gurley Flym, and Leonard Abbott packed the courtroom in support of Bill and his case for birth control. Also in the courtroom was Mrs. Amos Pinchot, the wealthy wife of a respected Wall Street lawyer and a supporter of liberal and radical causes. Mrs. Pinchot was the first "society" lady to support Margaret's birth control campaign.⁴⁸ The Radicals gave Bill a great deal of help during the preparations for his trial, but he failed to appreciate this and saw them all as cowards, insincere and unreliable. He often expressed this opinion in his letters to his wife, and she took this advice to heart for at her upcoming trial she depended very little on her radical supporters and turned to people like Mrs. Pinchot for support.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Fawcett, William Sanger, 12; Vreeland, Reform, 65.

⁴⁸Fawcett, William Sanger, 12; Mrs. C. V. Drysdale to M. Sanger, October 26, 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 50; Mother Earth, October 1915, 268-269; W. Sanger to M. Sanger, September 14, 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 85; clippings in Sanger Papers, Box 138.

⁴⁹W. Sanger to M. Sanger, May 31, 1915, September 14, 1915, and September 27, 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 85.



WILLIAM SANGER, SHORTLY BEFORE HIS TRIAL

At the trial, the prosecutor presented the evidence of Bamberger and Comstock and then rested his case. Bill got up and proceeded to read his statement:

"....I am charged with having violated a statute of the Penal Law of this State which makes it a crime to furnish information regarding the prevention of conception....I admit that I broke the law, and yet I claim that, in every real sense, it is the law and not I, that is on trial here today."⁵⁰

Bill launched into a long attack on Comstock and his Postal Laws, in the middle of which he was interrupted by Judge McInerney and told to stop. He then said to Bill:

"Such persons as you who circulate such pamphlets are a menace to society. There are too many now who believe it is a crime to have children. If some of the women who are going around advocating equal suffrage would go around and advocate women having children they would do a greater service. This, however, is my personal opinion."⁵¹

Bill tried to continue reading his statement, but McInerney interrupted him to tell him that he was found guilty and had a choice of a fine of \$150 or 30 days in jail. At this, Bill stood up, leaned forward, raised his right fist and said: "It is indeed the law on trial here today. I would rather be in jail with my convictions than be free at a loss of my manhood and self-respect."

⁵⁰Fawcett, William Sanger, all; W. Sanger's Statement, Sanger Collection, Box 85.

⁵¹Fawcett, William Sanger, 13.

McInerney looked at him and said calmly, "Then you will go to jail."

Bill cried out "This court can't intimidate me," and was hustled out of the courtroom by the police.

At this, the radicals in the courtroom stood on their seats, began a volley of handclapping and shouted their support for Bill Sanger. McInerney pounded his gavel, but this only added to the confusion and noise. Finally court attendants, reinforced by police, were able to clear the radicals out of the building. Even Bill had to admit that "it was inspiring."⁵²

Bill Sanger's trial with its ensuing publicity made "birth control a household word."⁵³ It had brought suffragists in support of birth control because of McInerney's attack on their ideas.⁵⁴ It had marked the first time where a society lady had openly supported birth control. And finally, it made Margaret Sanger to decide to come home. The trial, coupled with her apprehensions for Peggy's health, forced her to come home for a short while, if only to return to Europe with the children to

⁵²Ibid., 14; New York Times, September 11, 1915; New York Globe, September 12, 1915 in Sanger Papers, Box 138; Survey, September 18, 1915, 567; W. Sanger to M. Sanger, n. d., September 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 85.

⁵³W. Sanger to M. Sanger, n. d., September 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 85.

⁵⁴Braun and Leech, Comstock, 249; clipping in Sanger Papers, Box 130.

work for Portet's publishing house.

She was to return a different person. She was confident in herself and in her work. She had seen Europe, met new people, and had learned a great deal about population problems and contraceptive practices. She was ready to make any sacrifice for the movement, yet she was not sure whether the time was right for her to face the charges against her. She would have to return home to see the circumstances for herself before she would decide.

CHAPTER SIX

HOME

"Spread the word and together we will work for a world
which shall be free from censors, poverty and stupidity."
Leonard D. Abbott

On October 4, 1915, Margaret Sanger arrived home in New York after a year in exile. Her first business was a reunion with the children and with Bill who was shortly released from jail. She discovered that her old enemy, Anthony Comstock, had caught a chill during Bill Sanger's trial and had died soon after. Comstock's dismissal from the Post Office the summer before had indicated a now more lenient attitude on the part of the authorities, and now his death, in the minds of many, seemed to indicate the end of the Post Office persecution. This portent was the only thing in Margaret's favor as she returned from Europe.

She found that the three indictments, even though a year old, were still pending against her. She began to search for support, financial and moral. She asked the National Birth Control League, under the leadership of Mary Ware Demmett, Clara Stillman and her old friend, Anita Block, for help and received the answer that, since the purpose of their organization was to change the law peacefully, they disagreed with Margaret's tactics in breaking the law. She asked Dr. William J. Robinson, the head

of the birth control committee of the Academy of Medicine, for assistance, and he replied that the committee was virtually defunct and that they could not help her.¹ Margaret could expect little or no support from anyone. Only Leonard Abbott and his Free Speech League were collecting funds for her.²

Finding that she had few allies, Margaret thought of taking her children back to Paris to work for Portet's publishing firm. But tragedy intervened and forced Margaret to change her mind, to stay in America and to fight out her case. On November 6, the date that had come to her in her visions in London, her daughter Peggy died of pneumonia after a few weeks' illness. Margaret nursed the child during her illness, but to no avail. Margaret was emotionally and psychologically destroyed by her daughter's death, and as she later said, "The following two years were the darkest years of my life."³

The death of her daughter was the ultimate sacrifice that could be made for the movement. If her daughter's life was to achieve any meaning, it must come through Margaret's continued

¹Margaret Sanger, An Autobiography (New York, 1938), 180; Lawrence Lader, The Margaret Sanger Story and the Fight for Birth Control (Garden City, 1955), 84-86.

²Margaret Sanger, My Fight For Birth Control (New York, 1931), 124-126; Sanger, Autobiography, 180-1; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 85.

³Margaret Sanger to Lawrence Lader, December 3, 1953, Sanger Collection (Smith College Library), Box 5; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 86-7; Sanger, Autobiography, 181-2.



PEGGY SANGER

birth control activity. Peggy had come to symbolize all that she had been working for in the last two years. In a sense, it was because of her work that Peggy had died. It was no time to run to Paris. It was time to stay and fight for her ideals.

On November 9, Harold Content notified Leonard Abbott that Margaret's case would be postponed until she wanted it put on the calendar. Margaret asked that it be put on the December schedule, but the case was postponed until January.⁴ By this time, the news of Peggy's death had reached all around the country, and sympathetic letters and money began to come pouring in from miners, lumberjacks, and other laborers and their wives. This show of sympathy and support gave Margaret great strength to go on with the fight. Many friends and radicals advised her to plead guilty to the charges and get off with a suspended sentence. Only the faithful Alexander Berkman And Emma Goldman urged her to plead not guilty and to fight it out in the courts. Margaret agreed with them and decided to plead not guilty

in order to separate the idea of prevention of conception and birth control from the sphere of pornography, from the gutter of slime and filth where the lily-livered legislators have placed it, under the direction of the late unlamented Anthony Comstock, and in which the forces of

⁴H. Snowden Marshall to Leonard Abbott, December 15, 1915, Sanger Papers, Manuscript Division (Library of Congress), Box 3; Harold Content to L. Abbott, November 9, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 3; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 89.

reaction are still attempting to hold it.⁵

Under the tension of Peggy's death and the impending trial, Margaret's frail health cracked. Already weakened with her continuous tuberculosis and her daily temperature of over 100°, Margaret suffered a mild "nervous breakdown from excessive mental and physical strain."⁶ But not even bad health could stop her, and she was back on her feet in a short time.⁷

Margaret, sensing the need for something spectacular and dramatic to get publicity for birth control, toyed with the idea of a hunger strike that her friend Becky Edelson had used the year before. Her health was too weak for that course of action, and she decided against it.⁸ Once more the example of anarchist friends Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman came to her aid. Berkman, when he was being tried for shooting Henry Clay Frick, refused to employ a lawyer as "it was inconsistent for an anarchist to employ lawyers."⁹ Bill Sanger had followed his

⁵Alexander Berkman to M. Sanger, December 18, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 2; Emma Goldman to M. Sanger, December 8, 1915 and December 16, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 2; A. Berkman to M. Sanger, December 9, 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 41; clipping from The Blast (San Francisco) n. d., Sanger Papers, Box 139; Mother Earth, January, 1916, 363; M. Sanger, circular letter, January 5, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 2; See Box 2 in Sanger Papers for some letters about Peggy Sanger's death; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 89-90.

⁶Dr. Morris Kahn's Statement, December 30, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 3.

⁷New York Call, January 15, 1916, in Sanger Papers, Box 139; Brooklyn Standard Union, January 15, 1916, in Sanger Papers, Box 139; Interview with Grant Sanger.

⁸New York Mail, January 13, 1916, in Sanger Papers, Box 139.

⁹Emma Goldman, Living My Life (New York, 1931), 100.

anarchist principles at his trial and had refused to be represented by a lawyer. Now Margaret saw that she too would have to go to court alone without a lawyer to face the charges against her. She would defend herself and birth control, not by legal trickery, but by the principle of birth control and by the facts and statistics she had amassed during her year in Europe. This act caught the imagination of liberals and radicals all over the world and "new support came almost immediately."¹⁰

In response to Margaret's request that her supporters write to Judge Clayton, who was to try her case, and to President Wilson, her supporters deluged these men with mail protesting the arrest and persecution of Margaret Sanger.¹¹ A group of her English supporters banded together and wrote a letter to President Wilson which was printed in newspapers all over the country. It protested against Margaret's arrest and asked that Wilson use his influence to call off the trial. The letter was signed by Lena Ashwell, Dr. Percy Ames, William Archer, Arnold Bennett, Edward Carpenter, Aylmer Maude, Prof. Gilbert Murray, Marie Stopes and H. G. Wells.¹²

¹⁰Lader, Margaret Sanger, 91.

¹¹M. Sanger to Edith How-Martyn, February 8, 1916, in Sanger Papers, Box 219; Manuscript about protest letters, Sanger Papers, Boxes 2 and 3.

¹²Marie Stopes to M. Sanger, September 20, 1915, Sanger Collection, Box 73; M. Stopes to M. Sanger, September 26, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 2; Copy of letter sent by Prominent Englishmen to President Wilson, Sanger Papers, Box 2.

Further publicity and support was received when a casual acquaintance suggested to Margaret that she have a picture taken with her two sons to reveal her maternal instincts as well as her great beauty. Underwood and Underwood made the portrait which, when circulated widely before the trial, won her great sympathy and support.¹³

In January, a group of socially prominent women, led by Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, Mrs. Lewis Delafield, Mrs. William H. Colt and Mrs. Mary Beard, petitioned Judge Clayton to have half the jury at the trial made up of women.¹⁴ After the isolated appearance of Mrs. Amos Pinchot at Bill Sanger's trial, this group was to be the first organization of society women to support birth control. This development was to foreshadow the future course of the birth control movement. Margaret and her husband, at his trial, had found that they could not always count on radical support. The only people to stick by Margaret were her few anarchist allies, and she was quick to realize that birth control could not be built into a great movement on the backs of a handful of anarchists. She further realized that there might be a war with Germany, and in that case, radicals and their ideas would be unwelcome in America. Continuing the process that had begun the year before in England and Holland where she decided that birth control was not

¹³ See Box 138, Sanger Papers; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 91-2.

¹⁴ New York Times, January 15, 1916; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 91.



MARGARET SANGER WITH HER TWO SONS, GRANT AND STUART

merely a free speech movement but a medical, scientific movement, Margaret decided that the brunt of birth control activity must be carried by socially prominent and middle-class volunteers for the cause.

Margaret had wanted to hold a big rally at Cooper Union before her trial, but was unable to do so.¹⁵ One day, Henrietta Rodman and Alice Carpenter had the idea of a night-before-trial dinner to be held at the Brevoort Hotel on January 17, 1916, the night before her trial. A distinguished guest list was drawn up, and among those at the dinner were: from the intellectual world, Walter Lippmann, Herbert Croly, Fola La Follette, John Reed and Mary Heaton Vorse; from the medical profession, Dr. Mary Halton, Dr. Ira S. Wile, Dr. A. L. Goldwater, Dr. W. J. Robinson, Dr. Abraham Jacobi; and from the New York Social Register came Mrs. Willard Straight, Mrs. Ogden Reid, Mrs. Lewis Delafield, Mrs. Frances Brooks Ackerman and Mrs. Thomas Hepburn.¹⁶

Margaret was the first speaker and gave a short 600-word speech. She talked mainly about the problem of arousing public opinion and educating the public about birth control:

I might have taken up a policy of safety, sanity and conservatism - but would I have got a hearing?

¹⁵New York Times, January 7, 1916.

¹⁶William M. Morehouse, The Speaking of Margaret Sanger in the Birth Control Movement from 1916 to 1937, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis (Purdue University, 1968), 72; newspaper clippings, Sanger Papers, Boxes 3 and 139; Sanger, Autobiography, 188; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 92.

And as I became more and more conscious of the vital importance of this idea, I felt myself in the position of one who has discovered that a house is on fire; and I found it was up to me to shout out the warning. The tone of the voice may have been indelicate and unladylike and was not the tone that many of us would like to hear....They tell me that "The Woman Rebel" was badly written; that it was crude; that it was emotional and hysterical; that it mixed issues; that it was defiant and too radical. Well to all these indictments I plead guilty.¹⁷

The defiant and yet defensive tone of the speech indicated that Margaret already realize the importance of those few society ladies in the audience. She was trying to defend her past actions to these ladies and was hinting that the radical phase of the movement might be over. Immediately after the thundering applause subsided, Mary Ware Dennett got on her feet and announced that the National Birth Control League was supporting Margaret in her court fight the next day.¹⁸

The scene at the Federal Court Building on the morning of January 18 was pandemonium. Hundreds of Margaret's supporters from the disparate worlds of the Colony Club and Greenwich Village jammed into the courtroom and overflowed into the corridor. She broke all records for having the most number of newspaper reporters and photographers at her trial. Rather "modishly attired" in an English outfit and accompanied by her sister Ethel and Mrs. Frank

¹⁷Morehouse, Speaking of M. Sanger, 74-82; Brevoort Speech Manuscript, Sanger Papers, Box 103.

¹⁸Lader, Margaret Sanger, 92.



MARGARET SANGER AND ETHEL BYRNE IN COURT, Jan. 1916

Cothron, Margaret arrived at nine, and spent an hour meeting with her supporters. The trial opened a half hour late, at ten-thirty, and immediately Assistant District Attorney Knox asked for a postponement of one week. Margaret objected, but Judge Clayton overruled her and agreed to the postponement.¹⁹ A few perceptive reporters got the idea that the government was going to drop its indictments against Margaret, but at this stage she discounted this possibility.²⁰

By January 24, Judge Clayton was engaged in another Federal court, and the government was unable or unwilling to get another Judge.²¹ The case was postponed to February 7, and then again to February 14. By February 14, the government had a judge, but Margaret got caught in a subway blockade on her way to the courthouse and was late getting to the courtroom. The government used this pretext to put the case over for another week.²² As one friend of Margaret's put it: "...the government

¹⁹ New York Evening Mail, January 18, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139; New York Evening Telegram, January 18, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139; New York Morning Telegraph, January 19, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 93; Sanger, Autobiography, 189.

²⁰ Brooklyn Times, January 18, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139; New York Evening Sun, January 18, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139; Assistant Attorney General to Mrs. May Wolden, January 22, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 3.

²¹ New York Morning Telegraph, January 25, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139.

²² New York Evening Mail, February 7, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139; New York Sun, February 15, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139.

is somewhat in the situation of the man who had the bear by the tail."²³ The Sun editorialized:

Mrs. Margaret H. Sanger, editor of "The Woman Rebel," appeared before Judge A. G. Dayton of the Criminal Branch of the United States District Court yesterday to make her weekly demand that she be placed on trial for using the mails in her advocacy of birth control and other subjects which the Government considers improper. Because of the Government's reluctance to be used as an instrument in giving publicity to sex theories as this time the Sanger case presented the anomaly of a prosecutor loath to prosecute and a defendant anxious to be tried.²⁴

Try as they might, the Government could not stop the tremendous publicity for birth control and the steady stream of letters to Judge Dayton and President Wilson. Finally, on February 18, the Government gave up and issued, through U. S. District Attorney Marshall a "nolle prosequi," thus dismissing the indictments against Margaret Sanger. The District Attorney's Office explained to the press that there were three reasons for dismissing the indictments: first, the indictments were almost two years old; second, Margaret Sanger was not a disorderly person who made a habit of breaking the law; and third, there had been assertions that she was being persecuted and the government had

²³W. D. Matthew to M. Sanger, January 28, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 2.

²⁴New York Sun, February 15, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139.

never had any intention of persecuting her.²⁵ The real reason for dropping the indictments was that the government had temporarily decided to close its eyes to birth control agitation and ~~would~~ hope that it would cease. It was a great victory for birth control and a vindication of Margaret Sanger's methods in propagandizing her ideas. Because of the enormous publicity, Margaret was now a well-known public figure. She was in an unique position to carry on her work. She gave up all thought of returning to Europe to work for Portet, and at a victory celebration at the Bandbox Theatre she announced her intention of making a coast-to-coast speaking tour, leaving New York on April 1.²⁶ She announced that The Woman Rebel was dead and would not be revived, it having fulfilled its mission.²⁷ She would go on tour to publicize her cause all around the country, and then return to New York hopefully to open America's first birth control clinic.²⁸

²⁵New York Times, February 19, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139; Harold Hersey, Margaret Sanger; The Biography of The Birth Control Pioneer, unpublished biography, Rare Book Collection (New York Public Library), 132; Sanger, Autobiography, 190-1; Sanger, My Fight, 139; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 94-95; Interview with Grant Sanger.

²⁶Lorenzo Portet to M. Sanger, February 10, 1916, Sanger Collection, Box 40; New York World, February 21, 1916, Sanger Collection, Box 139.

²⁷New York World, February 20, 1916, Sanger Collection, Box 139.

²⁸Ibid., February 21, 1916.

Margaret left New York on April 1 for Pittsburg, and from there she visited Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Portland, Seattle and Spokane.²⁹ The tour was not entirely without incident. She was refused halls in Akron and Chicago. She was arrested in Portland for distributing her pamphlet "Family Limitation" and was found guilty but not fined.³⁰ It was in St. Louis that Margaret encountered the worst trouble. Her friends had rented the Victoria Theatre for the night of May 21, but when she arrived to speak, she found that the doors of the theatre were locked. Apparently the Catholic Church in St. Louis had threatened the manager with a total boycott, and he had locked the theatre and fled the city. Margaret tried to speak to the 1500 people in the street, but could not be heard. She finally yelled out, "We're not in St. Louis. We're in Russia." The driver of her car, fearing a riot, drove her away. This was the first time that the Catholic Church had used illegal measures in trying to stem the tide of birth control. The Church had long adhered to the Biblical dictum, "Be fruitful and multiply," and the Catholic press had attacked birth control ever since Margaret

²⁹Morehouse, Speaking of Margaret Sanger, 88; newspaper clippings, Sanger Papers, Box 139.

³⁰San Francisco Call, June 30, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139; newspaper clippings, Sanger Papers, Box 139; Miriam Van Walters to M. Sanger, July 3, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 2; Sanger, Autobiography, 196-206; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 98-103.

had begun her work to publicize the issue. Now the Church decided it had to fight her more openly, but it made the crucial mistake of fighting illegally. Margaret exploited the illegal closure of the theatre to the fullest and used the press of St. Louis and the rest of the country to publicly denounce the Catholic Church's action in suppressing free speech. Editorial opinion supported her unanimously, and the movement received enormous publicity as well as more support from civil libertarians.³¹

In the middle of July, Margaret returned to New York concluding her successful, but exhausting, three and one half month tour of the country. She had formed birth control leagues in almost every city she visited. She had distributed many copies of "Family Limitation" and had gained more support and publicity for the cause from her arrest in Portland and the actions of the Catholic Church in St. Louis.

Upon her return, Margaret found that a great deal had happened since her departure over three months before. On February 11, Emma Goldman had been arrested for lecturing on birth control. After numerous meetings and dinners in her honor, she was tried on April 20 without a lawyer with only supporters like Bill Sanger in the courtroom. She received 15 days in the workhouse.³²

³¹Lader, Margaret Sanger, 100-101; Sanger, Autobiography, 199-201; Sanger, My Fight, 146-7.

³²Goldman, My Life, 60-70, 570; Mother Earth, March, April, May 1916; New York Evening Journal, February 12, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139; Richard Drinnon, Rebel in Paradise; A Biography of Emma Goldman (Chicago, 1961), 161; Vreeland, Reform, 74.

In April, Dr. Ben Reitman, one of Emma Goldman's close friends, was arrested for distributing birth control pamphlets and was given 60 days in the workhouse.³³ In May, Jessie Ashley, Ida Rauh Eastman and Bolton Hall were all arrested for distributing one of Emma Goldman's pamphlets on birth control. They were all convicted and fined.³⁴

In July, in Boston a young radical just out of Columbia University, named Van Kleeck Allison, was arrested for distributing birth control pamphlets to a group of factory workers. Allison was sentenced to three years in the House of Correction. This aroused the anger of birth control supporters everywhere; protest meetings were staged, and Margaret traveled to Boston to speak in Allison's behalf. Eventually his sentence was reduced to sixty days.³⁵

Margaret Sanger had opened the floodgates for birth control agitators after her case was dropped by the Government in February. The authorities felt that they could not longer close

³³Goldman, My Life, 572; Mother Earth, June 1916; Francis Vreeland, The Process of Reform with Especial Reference to Reform Groups in the Field of Population, unpublished Ph. D Thesis (University of Michigan, 1929), 76-77.

³⁴New York Sun, October 31, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 140; Vreeland, Reform, 76-77; Sanger, Autobiography, 207.

³⁵Boston Traveler and Evening Herald, July 29, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139; Mother Earth, August 1916; Vreeland, Reform, 78; Sanger Autobiography, 207-8; For the case of Commonwealth vs. Allison see 227 Mass. 57, and 116 N. E. 265 (1917).

their eyes to the activities of birth control agitators as they had done at Margaret's trial in February. Therefore Emma Goldman and her fellow agitators were brought to justice and were inevitably convicted. These radicals were doing a great service to the birth control movement by creating publicity and fighting for the right of free speech. But Margaret did not appreciate these efforts for two reasons. First, her ego would not countenance the unsolicited efforts of friends who, in her opinion, were merely stealing her thunder and disrupting the movement. Second, she felt that the important part in the fight for birth control was no longer free speech but actual giving of contraceptive information to the poor women of America. On her tour, she had distributed her pamphlet, but she felt that this was not enough. The movement must move in this new medical direction. The only way was to open a birth control clinic.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CLINIC

"Foxes think large families among the rabbits highly commendable. Employers who want large supplies of cheap labor, priests who want large numbers of parishoners, military leaders who want plenty of cheap food for gunpowder, and politicians who want plenty of voters, all agree in commending large families and rapid multiplication among the poorer classes."

Thomas Nixon Carver

In addition to her desire to make the birth control movement into a medical movement and to give the poor contraceptive information, Margaret had other reasons for opening the clinic. First, she wanted to establish herself as the undisputed leader of the movement by getting all the publicity and honor of being the first person in America to open a birth control clinic. And secondly, she wanted to establish a test case in the courts for the reinterpretation of the New York State laws on distribution of contraceptive information.¹ Section 1142 of the New York Penal Code stated in effect that "no one can give out contraceptive information to anyone for any reason." Sec. 1145 made an exception to this law by stating that doctors could give this

¹Francis Vreeland, The Process of Reform with Especial Reference to Reform Groups in The Field of Population, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis (University of Michigan, 1929), 80.



MARGARET SANGER, ca. 1917

information for the cure or prevention of disease.² Margaret's opening of the clinic would be a form of civil disobedience in which she would expect to be arrested and would try for a reinterpretation of Sections 1142 and 1145 in the courts.

As soon as she arrive back in New York in July from her tour, Margaret announced that she planned to open a clinic in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn on or about September 1.³ As usual there were many problems; friends, money and doctors being the most pressing ones. Her radical friends were skeptical of the whole idea of clinics; Walter Lippmann made one of the worst predictions of his career when he wrote that he didn't think that clinics were a good idea and said, "Besides, Margaret Sanger is not the person to do it."⁴

Sec. 1145 stated specifically that doctors could give contraceptive information only in certain cases. Margaret had to find a doctor who would run the clinic and distribute the information. Two woman doctors, who had previously volunteered their services, now withdrew. She visited many other doctors, but none would dare work in a clinic for fear of jeopardizing

²Margaret Sanger, An Autobiography (New York, 1938), 211-2; Copy of Section 1142, Penal Code of New York, Sanger Papers, Manuscript Division (Library of Congress), Box 3.

³New York Times, July 22, 1916; New York World, July 23, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 139.

⁴Walter Lippmann to Mable Dodge Luhan, quoted in Luhan, Intimate Memories (New York, 1936), III, 70.

their private practice or, even worse, losing their license. Perhaps also doctors resented the fact that a mere nurse had set herself at the head of a medical movement.⁵ Money, the greatest of all her problems, was scarce, but eventually enough trickled in for her to begin her search for suitable rooms. At 46 Amboy Street in Brownsville in the midst of an Italian-Jewish community, Margaret and her helper, Fania Mindell, found and rented two first floor rooms in an old tenement.⁶

September 1 came and went, and the clinic was not opened. Margaret, instead of trying to open one clinic, was trying to open two, and she was overwhelmed with twice as many problems. She announced on September 11 that she planned to open a clinic on the Lower East Side of Manhattan within two weeks. Soon she rented a suite of rooms on Avenue A between 20th and 21st Streets.⁷ She finally decided to concentrate her efforts on opening the Brownsville clinic first, and her sister Ethel, Fania and she fixed up the rooms with curtains and furniture. Five thousand handbills were printed up and distributed. They stated in English, Yiddish and Italian:

⁵Harold Hersey, Margaret Sanger, The Biography of the Birth Control Pioneer, unpublished biography, Rare Book Collection (New York Public Library), 76; Lawrence Lader, The Margaret Sanger Story and the Fight for Birth Control (Garden City, 1955), 108; Sanger, Autobiography, 212-3.

⁶Sanger, Autobiography, 213-5; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 108-9.

⁷New York Times, September 12, 1916; Birth Control Review (New York), Vol. 2, No. 3.



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

WHERE THE CAUSE WAS BORN

BROWNSVILLE, BROOKLYN, 1917

MOTHERS!

Can you afford to have a large family?

Do you want any more children?

If not, why do you have them?

DO NOT KILL, DO NOT TAKE LIFE, BUT PREVENT

Safe, Harmless information can be obtained from trained nurses at

46 AMBOY STREET

Near Pitkin Avenue - Brooklyn

Tell your friends and neighbors. All mother welcome.
A registration fee of ten cents entitles any mother to this information. ⁸

The clinic opened early in the morning of October 16, 1916. Out in the hall were waiting over a hundred women, many with children in tow. Fania went about taking comprehensive histories of each patient: how much illness, how many children, abortions and miscarriages. Margaret recalled that Dr. Butgers had not bothered to take histories in his Holland clinics. But Margaret needed these histories to show the authorities the improvements that could be made by legalizing contraception. Fania would often read aloud sections of What Every Girl Should Know to the waiting mothers. The children would be left with Fania, and small groups of mothers would go into the inner room where Margaret and Ethel would explain the theory of contraception and would recommend various types to be used. Since there was no doctor, they could not examine each patient and give individual

⁸Circular, Sanger Papers, Box 2.

recommendations.⁹

On October 25, Margaret was out preparing to open the other clinic on Avenue A. A large woman named Mrs. Margaret Whitehurst came to the clinic and told the usual story of having too many children and not enough money to care for them. Ethel and Fania gave her literature and explained methods of contraception to her. The next day at four in the afternoon, Mrs. Whitehurst arrived with three plainclothesmen from the vice squad and announced "I'm a police officer. You're under arrest."¹⁰ All the 464 case histories were confiscated and the names of each of the mothers waiting were taken down. Margaret refused to ride in the police van, and walked to the Raymond Street Jail where she spent the night in a filthy cell. The next day she was released on \$500 bail. The case was heard before Magistrate Steers at the New Jersey Avenue Court in East New York on October 30, November 3, and November 6. He directed that the case be sent to the Court of Special Sessions and the date and trial set for November 20. Three separate cases were involved: Margaret and Ethel were charged with violating Section 1142 of the Penal Code, and Fania was charged with selling an indecent book, What Every Girl Should

⁹Birth Control Review, Vol. 1, No. 2; W. J. Robinson to M. Sanger, September 13, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 2; Margaret Sanger, My Fight for Birth Control (New York, 1931), 154-8; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 109-112; Sanger, Autobiography, 216-219.

¹⁰Birth Control Review, Vol. 12, No. 3; Sanger, Autobiography, 220; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 112-3.

Know.¹¹

Margaret decided that she was wasting valuable time waiting for the trial to open, and on November 13, she reopened the Brownsville clinic. On November 15, the police forced the landlord to sign eviction papers; the clinic was closed for good, and Margaret was charged with violating Sec. 1530 of the Penal law, "maintaining a public nuisance."¹²

Since Margaret had opened the clinic as a form of protest within the context of civil disobedience, she felt that she ought to have a good lawyer to achieve the reinterpretation of the law that she wanted. The days of appearing in court without a lawyer in anarchist fashion were over. The lawyer she picked was J. J. Goldstein, a young Tammany Democrat with strong pro-birth control opinions. Goldstein saw that there was no hope of getting a favorable interpretation in a lower court. The only hope was to take the case all the way to the Supreme Court, and this involved many intricate legal maneuvers to qualify for such an appeal.

Her trial for violating Sec. 21530 was set for Nov. 20 before Judge McInerney who had made the biased comments at Bill Sanger's trial. Margaret's attorney tried to get the trial postponed but was unable to. Margaret then wrote McInerney an open

¹¹ Mother Earth, November, 1916, 660; Manuscript on Brownsville Cases, Sanger Papers, Box 2; Sanger, Autobiography, 220-4; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 114-115.

¹² New York Call, November 16, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 111; Sanger, My Fight, 188; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 119.

letter saying:

...In those birth control cases at which you have presided, you have shown to all thinking men and women an unfailing prejudice and exposed a mind steeped in the bigotry and intolerance of the Inquisition. To come before you implies conviction...¹³

The next day McInerney applied to the district attorney to get off the case. Goldstein succeeded in getting Margaret a jury trial for this charge, but the indictment was eventually dropped because she had been duly punished on her violation of Sec. 1142 and the authorities did not feel they had to punish her again.¹⁴

On the other indictments Goldstein began a long series of legal maneuvers to get the woman tried by jury and to get Section 1142 to be declared unconstitutional. His application for a trial by jury was dismissed on December 4 and the appeal was also dismissed.¹⁵ His writ of habeas corpus saying that Section 1142 was unconstitutional was dismissed on December 22 and the trial was set for January 4, 1917.¹⁶

¹³Copy of open letter from M. Sanger to Judge J. J. McInerney, November 26, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 3; Sanger, My Fight, 188.

¹⁴Brooklyn Times, November 27, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 141; Birth Control Review, Vol. 1 No. 1, Vol. 2 No. 3.

¹⁵Birth Control Review, Vol. 1 No. 1; List of court dates, Sanger Papers, Box 108; For the various cases see: New York Law Journal, December 5, 1916; New York Supplement (St. Paul, 1917), Vol. 163, 680-1; See also copy of Justice Kelby's opinion in Sanger Papers, Box 3.

¹⁶Birth Control Review, Vol. 1, No. 1; List of court dates, Sanger Papers, Box 108; Supreme Court, Appellate Division, 2nd Dept., Appellant's Brief in Support of Motion for stay of Proceedings in People vs. Sanger (New York, n. d.).

During all this pre-trial legal battle, Margaret was busy lining up support. She no longer turned to the radicals but to a newly founded ad hoc organization called the Committee of One Hundred headed by Mrs. Amos Pinchot. Its Vice Chairmen were two Park Avenue ladies, Mrs. William L. Graves and Mrs. John H. Williams. Among the hundred members were such distinguished women as Jessie Ashley, Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, Mrs. Lewis Delafield, Mrs. Mary Ware Dennett, Mrs. Borden Harriman, Mrs. Juliet Rublee and others. Through this group Margaret was able to raise a great deal of money for her trial and other activities.¹⁷

In addition to this group there was the Birth Control League of New York, founded on December 18, 1916, by Frederick Blossom, an assistant of Margaret's who had moved from Cleveland to New York to help Margaret in her work for six months. Blossom's League had for its aims: 1) to help Margaret Sanger in her court battles and, 2) to amend the State and Federal laws to allow the use and distribution of contraceptives. This group formed a Defense Committee to raise \$5000 to cover the cost of appealing the court cases.¹⁸

The Brownsville mothers had formed the Birth Control League of Brownsville which gave Margaret much moral support at

¹⁷M. Sanger to Mrs. Amos Pinchot, April 16, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 3; Form Letter, December 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 3; List of Committee of 100, Sanger Collection (Smith College Library).

¹⁸Vreeland, Reform, 88; Birth Control Review, Vol. 1, No. 1.

her trial. The Committee of One Thousand, another ad hoc group, headed by Dr. Ira S. Wile, The National Birth Control League, The Child Welfare League and the Women's City Club also gave Margaret moral and financial support.¹⁹ It is interesting to note that Margaret refused to join any of these groups. She always saw herself primarily as an agitator and propagandist and not as an organizer of large groups. She wanted to maintain her freedom of movement and not get trapped by any institution. She clearly saw the need of organizations supporting her and working for birth control, but she herself was psychologically and strategically unwilling to get involved with them.

One powerful organization that refused to support Margaret Sanger in her court battle was the New York County Medical Society which on December 26, 1916 voted 210 to 72 against any modification of the present birth control laws.²⁰ But other than this, she received a large amount of support throughout New York and the country for her legal battle.

The first of the three offenders to be brought to trial was Ethel Byrne, Margaret's sister. Her case was called on January 4, but, since it was late in the afternoon, the case was put off until the morning of January 8. The three judges were

¹⁹Vreeland, Reform, 82-5; Sanger, My Fight, 170; Birth Control Review, Vol. 1, No. 1.

²⁰Hartford Post, December 27, 1916, Sanger Papers, Box 131; Birth Control Review, Vol. 1, No. 2.

Garvin, Herrman, and O'Keefe, the latter a Catholic. On January 8, Ethel admitted freely that she had given out contraceptive information at the clinic. The prosecution did not stop there though. They made charges that the clinic was a money-making organization because of the ten-cent registration fee and that it was anti-semitic because it was trying to reduce the size of the Jewish race. Further, Dr. Morris Kahn, one of the defense's key witnesses, was not allowed to testify on the beneficial effects of the clinic. Goldstein was only allowed fifteen minutes to argue for the unconstitutionality of Sec. 1142 because the judges said that they were bound by precedent to hold that statute constitutional. At the end of the day Ethel was found guilty and was instructed to return to court on January 22 to be sentenced.²¹

During those two weeks Margaret and Ethel discussed what she should do in the event of being sent to jail. Before her arrest, Ethel had never really been a part of Margaret's world. She had helped Margaret at times during the Paterson strike and for The Woman Rebel. Margaret often complained to her sister Mary that Ethel was wasting her life: "I only wish Ethel would do something and not sit and grow fat."²² She wrote in the same letter: "...she has her own life to live and her own personality to develop, and she

²¹Mother Earth, February 1917; Birth Control Review Vol. 1, No. 1; Sanger, Autobiography, 226-7; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 120.

²²M. Sanger to Mary Higgins, December 18, 1914, Sanger Collection, Box 80.

must choose the ways of developing it - some do it thru sacrifice, others in fight..."²³ Ethel was to do this through the sacrifice, and perhaps the resulting death, of a hunger strike. The hunger strike had begun in Russian prisons in the 1880's to protest poor living conditions. The idea was taken up and used extensively by English suffragettes.²⁴ One such suffragette had just recently come to New York to work for Margaret Sanger. Her name was Kitty Marion, and, during one fourteen week sentence in an English jail, she had to be forcibly fed 232 times.²⁵ The hunger strike had first been used in America by imprisoned members of the I. W. W. in Denver in 1913.²⁶ Becky Edelson in August 1914 had also used this form of protest, and Margaret had led a parade in her behalf. But both the I. W. W. strike and Becky Edelson's failed because they did not carry it through. Ethel realized that, once she started a hunger strike, she would have to persevere to the end. On January 21, the night before she was to be sentenced, Ethel ate a large meal of turkey, "with plenty of ice cream." Before going to court the next morning, Ethel had a cup of coffee.²⁷

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Mother Earth, August, 1914.

²⁵ Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 219; Peter Fryer, The Birth Controllers (New York, 1966), 209.

²⁶ New York Call, April 18, 1913.

²⁷ New York Sun, January 24, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 127; New York World, January 23, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 127; List of Court Dates, Sanger Papers, Box 108.

This was to be her last voluntarily accepted food or liquid for ten days.

On January 22, Judge Garvin spoke for the court and said:

The court cannot substitute for the solemn act of the legislature the opinion of the individuals, however high may be their character or praiseworthy their motives, and no one may defy the law as it exists.

The judgement of this court is that you stand committed to the workhouse for a period of thirty days.²⁸

That afternoon in the detention cell Ethel announced to reporters that she was going on a hunger strike and a thirst strike, as well as not to do any work while at the workhouse. She concluded, "I shall die, if need be, for my sex."²⁹

Goldstein got a writ of habeas corpus to suspend the sentence pending appeal from U. S. District Court Justice Augustus N. Hand. On January 23, Ethel was brought back to court where the writ was dismissed. She returned to jail and her hunger strike. On that same day Goldstein got Judge Callahan to sign a writ for a certificate of reasonable doubt in the case of Ethel Byrne, and two days later the motion was argued before Judge Crepsey. By the time he came around to dismissing the writ, other factors

²⁸ Brooklyn Standard Union, January 22, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 127.

²⁹ New York World, January 23, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 127; Brooklyn Eagle, January 22, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 127.



ETHEL BYRNE

had intervened.³⁰

Ethel's hunger strike immediately became front page news not only in New York but all over the country.³¹ Ethel had last eaten on Sunday night, January 21, and as the week stretched on, she grew weaker and weaker. Burdette Lewis, Commissioner of Correction, at first refused to issue information on her condition, but reporters somehow got this information and revealed that she was rapidly approaching death. Finally on Friday night, January 26, at 11:45 P. M. after 124 hours of no food and 112 hours without water, Ethel was forcibly fed by prison authorities. She was rolled into a blanket, and a mixture of 1 pint of milk, two eggs, and a little brandy was forced down a tube in her throat. For the next few days she was repeatedly fed forcibly.³² Kitty Marion kept up the publicity by issuing stories to reporters describing her 232 forcible feedings saying, "Forcible feeding is the most hellish torture to which a human being could be subjected."³³ Margaret issued bulletins saying that Ethel was dying and had been

³⁰List of Court Dates, Sanger Papers, Box 108; Birth Control Review, Vol. 1, No. 1; New York Supplement (St. Paul, 1917), CLXIII, 682; Criminal Reports (Albany, 1917), XXXV, 406-12; Miscellaneous Reports (Albany, 1917), XCIX, 1.

³¹New York Times, January 26, 1917; See also Box 127 in Sanger Papers.

³²Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 218; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 121-3; Sanger, Autobiography, 226-9.

³³Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 217-8.

brutally beaten by prison guards. Commissioner Lewis issued bulletins saying how healthy Ethel was, but these bulletins were generally discounted, and people everywhere were very concerned about her condition.³⁴

On January 29, Fania's and Margaret's trials began. Before the proceedings began, they announced that they too would go on a hunger strike if sent to jail. At the end of the day Margaret hedged a bit and said that her decision would depend on the circumstances.³⁵ Fania was brought to trial first, before Judges Freschi, O'Keefe and Hermann, for distributing copies of What Every Girl Should Know. Fania's health was bad, and Goldstein, under instructions from Margaret, told the judges privately that Fania could not undergo the strain of a prison sentence. The proceedings were brief, for Fania admitted distributing the book. What was discussed was whether the book was indecent. Apparently this had not been decided when the Post Office Department permitted Margaret to print the "obscene" chapters in the "Call" in 1913. The judges of the court wanted time to read the book, and the case was adjourned.³⁶

³⁴New York Evening Globe, January 29, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 127; See rest of clippings in Sanger Papers, Box 127; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 121-3; Sanger, Autobiography, 226-9.

³⁵New York Evening Telegram, January 29, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 141; Brooklyn Eagle, January 29, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 141.

³⁶New York Times, January 30, 1917; Birth Control Review, Vol. 1, No. 2; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 127; Sanger, Autobiography, 230.



OUTSIDE THE COURTHOUSE, JAN. 1917

Unknown, Ethel Byrne, Unknown, Unknown, Margaret Sanger, and
J.J.Goldstein

Margaret's case was called next. The prosecution presented the testimony of Mrs. Whitehurst and the other arresting officers and offered as exhibits all the contraceptive supplies that had been confiscated. Judge Freschi raised Margaret's hopes when he held up a cervical cap and said that it could be used legally or illegally and that there was no proof as to what purpose Margaret had intended it to be used.

The prosecution then put on the stand about thirty of the Brownsville mothers who had been caught in the raid. One by one they innocently said how nice it was of Mrs. Sanger to give them contraceptive information. Goldstein saw how this testimony could be used to Margaret's advantage. He asked each of the mothers how many children they had, how many miscarriages, how much illness there was in the family, and how much the husband earned. The statistics poured out by these poverty-stricken mothers clearly illustrated their arduous lives and their need for contraception. Finally one woman was asked how many children she had:

"Eight and three that didn't live."

"What does your husband earn?"

"Ten dollars a week - when he works."

At this Judge Freschi pounded his fist on the desk and said, "I can't stand this any longer." He asked attorneys for both sides to submit briefs to him and adjourned the court until Friday, February 2.³⁷

³⁷New York Times, January 30, 1917; Sanger, Autobiography, 230-1; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 128-9.



MARGARET SANGER, WITH J.J.GOLDSTEIN(in rear)
OUTSIDE COURTHOUSE IN Jan. 1917.

That night in Carnegie Hall there was a giant birth control rally arranged by the Birth Control League of New York.³⁸ The boxes were filled with members of the Committee of One Hundred and such figures as Isadora Duncan, Rupert Hughes and Mr. and Mrs. John Sloan. The rest of the seats were filled with poorer people, and on stage was a delegation of Brownsville mothers. Helen Tood was the chairman, and the Rev. John Haynes Homes, Dr. Mary Halton, and Margaret were the speakers. Margaret got up with a prepared speech in her hand which she had written before her trial, expecting to be convicted. The text of the speech had already been released to the newspapers, and it was a virulent attack on the courts and the judges. The judges of the court were to read that copy of the speech in the newspapers. The Times quoted her prepared text: "I come to you tonight from a crowded courtroom, from a vortex of persecution. I come not from the stake at Salem where women were once burned for blasphemy, but from the shadow of Blackwell's Island, where women are tortured for obscenity."³⁹ But when she spoke, she departed from her text and softened her attacks on the judges who had not convicted her on that day. The audience liked her speech, and she was twice given standing ovations.

³⁸ Marion Rawson to Mrs. Heidelberg, n. d., 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 3; Birth Control Review, Vol. 1, No. 1.

³⁹ New York Times, January 30, 1917; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 123-4; Sanger, Autobiography, 231-2.

She said later, "I was quite overwhelmed with joy."⁴⁰

On Wednesday, January 31, Margaret and Mrs. Amos Pinchot led a delegation of women from the Committee of One Hundred to Albany to see Governor Whitman. Their mission was to get a pardon for Ethel who was in critical condition in the prison and was being forcibly fed three times a day. The Governor offered a pardon if Ethel would promise not to break the law again. Margaret was unwilling to make that promise in Ethel's behalf, but she got the Governor's permission to visit her sister in prison to ask about the pardon.⁴¹

Margaret took the train back to New York, and on Thursday, February 1, she was driven by Amos Pinchot and his wife to Blackwell's Island to visit Ethel. Margaret went alone to Ethel's cell and saw her emaciated sister for the first time in ten days. Ethel could not see Margaret because of the poor condition of her eyes and could not make coherent sentences. She kept mumbling about "liberty" and saying "I must go away," Margaret realized that Ethel was too sick to accept the pardon and that she would have to take her sister's life as her responsibility.

The Pinchots took her to the St. Regis Hotel where Governor Whitman had just arrived from Albany. She asked the

⁴⁰M. Sanger to M. Higgins, March 1, 1917, Sanger Collection, Box 80.

⁴¹New York Call, January 31, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 127; New York Times, February 1, 1917; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 124; Sanger, Autobiography, 232.

Governor for a pardon, promising that her sister would never break the law again. The Governor signed the pardon, and Margaret with the Pinchots raced back to the prison where they secured Ethel's release. She was taken by ambulance to Margaret's apartment where Margaret, two nurses and a doctor stayed up all night to nurse her back to health. After many months of convalescence, Ethel regained her normal health.⁴²

On Friday, February 2, Margaret returned to the courthouse in Brooklyn where, after more evidence was produced by the prosecution, she was found guilty. Court was adjourned until Monday, February 5, when she would be sentenced. On Monday, Fania Mindell was called up first. She was fined \$50 which Mrs. Amos Pinchot quickly paid. Then Margaret was called. Goldstein and Judge Freschi got in a long argument over the appeal and how quickly it could be filed. Margaret was tired from staying up all night with her sister and was beginning to doze off when she heard Goldstein saying that Margaret would promise not to break the law again in return for clemency. Margaret immediately objected and told the court that she would never make a promise on those conditions and would only promise not to break the law "pending the appeal." A long argument ensued in which the court tried to persuade Margaret to promise not to break the law again, and she kept on refusing. For the last

⁴²New York Times, February 2, 1917; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 125-6; Sanger, Autobiography, 233-4.

time Judge Fresché asked Margaret:

All we are concerned about is this statute, and as long as it remains the law will this woman promise here and now unqualifiedly to respect it and obey it? Now, is it yes or no. What is your answer, Mrs. Sanger? Is it yes or no?
I can't respect the law as it stands today.

At this point the women in the courtroom began to cheer and applaud. When Judge Freschi finally established order, he said, "...The judgment of this court is that you be confined to the Workhouse for a period of thirty days."

A woman in the corner cried "Shame," then Margaret was taken from the courtroom.⁴³ She now had a choice to make, whether or not to go on a hunger strike. She had said before the trial that if sent to jail, she would strike as her sister had done. She came to realize that her sister's sacrifice had done the job of getting great publicity for the movement. Germany had just declared unrestricted submarine warfare, and the United States had just broken off relations with Germany because of this. Margaret had good reason to suspect that news like this would be crowding the front pages, and the news of another hunger strike would be buried in the back pages and not publicized on the front page like Ethel's. She further realized that, with her frail health,

⁴³ New York Times, February 3, 1917, February 6, 1917; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 129-131; Sanger, Autobiography, 235-7; Birth Control Review, Vol. 1, No. 2.

she would probably die if she attempted a hunger strike.⁴⁴ She took the advice her friend Edith How-Martyn had given her over a year earlier:

After my experience in the suffrage movement, I think that causes can be very merciless things and that many fine workers are ruined in health quite uselessly in them. It is so difficult to find the right point where sacrifice is furthering the propaganda and beyond which it becomes useless.⁴⁵

Ethel's hunger strike had helped the cause, but Margaret's probable death from one would only harm the cause by depriving it of its great leader. Consequently she decided to serve her term of thirty days without a hunger strike.⁴⁶

Margaret was taken to a side room in the courthouse where she was to be fingerprinted. She refused, saying that she did not want to be classed with common criminals. The police did not force the issue, and she was taken to the Raymond Street Jail for the night. Here she refused to take a physical examination because this too would class her as a common criminal. The authorities again did not force her to be examined. After a brief stop-over at Blackwell's Island, Margaret was taken to Queens County Penitentiary in Long Island City to serve her

⁴⁴Lader, Margaret Sanger, 132; Sanger, Autobiography, 234.

⁴⁵Edith How-Martyn to M. Sanger, July 19, 1915, Sanger Papers, Box 219.

⁴⁶Lader, Margaret Sanger, 132; Sanger Autobiography, 234; Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 240; M. Sanger to M. Higgins, March 1, 1917, Sanger Collection, Box 80.

sentence. She spent her thirty days relaxing and writing letters to friends. She was on the sanitary squad and worked diligently cleaning the corridors of the jail. She began to instruct a few of the inmates in reading and gave talks on birth control.⁴⁷

Prison gave Margaret a much needed opportunity to think. She reminisced over the past history of the movement and the activities of the previous six months. The opening of the clinic had changed the movement from one for free speech to a medical movement even though it lacked widespread support among doctors. She found that society women had taken the dominant role in the movement from radical agitators. Accompanying this was greater financial support as well as greater support from important people. In addition, war was coming. Headlines would not be so easy to get now, and because the radicals were pacifists anything propounded by a radical would be labeled a dangerous thought or un-American.

Therefore Margaret decided that the days of agitating were over for birth control. What was needed was a three stage program of educating the people and especially doctors to the ideas and benefits of birth control, organizing popular and medical support, and using these organizations to repeal anti-birth control laws. There would be no more arrests, jail terms and futile court

⁴⁷New York Times, March 6, 1917; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 132-6; Sanger, Autobiography, 238-249.

battles and appeals. The oncoming years would be used in unobtrusive but extensive education, organization and legislation. Birth control was to be separated from all "isms," especially the increasingly unpopular radicalism and pacifism.⁴⁸

Margaret was due to be released at 8 A. M. on March 6, 1917. Just before eight o'clock, the warden made one last attempt to get her fingerprinted. Margaret struggled with the guards for two hours and succeeded in not being fingerprinted. She claimed that political prisoners should not be classed with cutthroats and thieves.⁴⁹ This attitude revealed the fundamental change that had taken place in Margaret Sanger's philosophy since the days of 1912. Back then it was part of the anarchist-socialist philosophy to associate oneself with the lower elements of society.

As her friend Eugene Debs wrote:

While there is a lower class I am in it;
While there is a criminal element I am of it;
While there is a soul in prison I am not free.⁵⁰

Now in the spring of 1917 Margaret no longer looked at life from this same radical viewpoint. Her philosophy was more all-encompassing. Her concern was for all women and their right to contraceptive knowledge. She retained some radical sympathies but

⁴⁸Lader, Margaret Sanger, 139; Sanger, Autobiography, 251.

⁴⁹New York Journal, March 6, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 140; Lader, Margaret Sanger, 136; Sanger, Autobiography, 249.

⁵⁰Eugene V. Debs, "Walls and Bars," quoted in McAlister Coleman, Eugene V. Debs (New York, 1930), 332.

these remained hidden from the public.

Her friends had been waiting outside since 7:30 that morning. It was about 22° out and windy.⁵¹ Among those shivering in the courtyard were Goldstein, Fredrick Blossom, Kitty Marion, a delegation from the Woman's City Club, a delegation from the Birth Control League of Brownsville and her sister, Ethel, who was now strong enough to travel.⁵² They all kept warm by singing the "Marseillaise." It was the same tune that had been sung at Grand Central Station on that cold February day in 1912 when she brought the striker's children from Lawrence to New York. Now the words were different:

Arise ye women of a land that vaunts its liberty
Make reckless rulers understand that women must be free.
That women will be free!
...Our comrades greatly daring
Through prison bars have led the way
Who would not follow in the fray
Their glorious struggle proudly sharing.
To Freedom's cause!⁵³

⁵¹New York Times, March 7, 1917; New York Call, March 7, 1917.

⁵²New York Mail, March 6, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 140; Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 243.

⁵³Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 243; Copy of "Marseillaise," Sanger Papers, Box 2.

Margaret left the jail at ten o'clock and was immediately taken by limousine to a luncheon at the Hotel Lafayette. That afternoon she visited Fleischmann's Baths where she took a long, leisurely bath.⁵⁴ In the evening Margaret went to the Metropolitan Opera House to see Isadora Duncan dance to the music of Franck and Tchaikowsky. At the end of the evening she announced, "Already I feel fit to begin my work again."⁵⁵

⁵⁴New York Times, March 7, 1917; New York Call, March 7, 1917; New York Mail, March 6, 1917, Sanger Papers, Box 140.

⁵⁵New York Times, March 7, 1917; Interview with Grant Sanger.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

"The grotesque failure of the campaign to put down propaganda for birth control in the Republic has a lesson in it for those romantic optimists who believe that in the long run, by some mysterious hook or crook and perhaps with divine help, Prohibition will be enforced."

H. L. Mencken

Margaret's release from jail in the spring of 1917 marked the end of the first phase of the birth control movement in America. In trying to sum up the themes and ideas of the paper, I will first look at the development of Margaret's ideas and personality over this period and will then discuss the development of the movement itself.

Philosophically Margaret went through three stages from 1910 to 1917. The first stage was in the years 1910 to January, 1912, during which time she was a tame socialist who worked diligently for the Party and wrote articles for the "Call." In her second phase, from January 1912 to the spring of 1915, Margaret was essentially an anarchist, following the ideas of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. In the spring of 1915, Margaret entered the third phase when she moved beyond anarchism to establish her own code of conduct based on the ideas of Nietzsche. The effects of these philosophical changes on the movement I will examine later.

Margaret's personal character also had a great effect on the course of the movement. She was essentially a cautious and thorough person. She thought things over carefully and for a long time before making any decision. She always made sure she knew her subject better than anyone else. She made sure her feet were on solid ground and thus avoided attacks that she was a fanatic.

The other personal characteristic that had a great effect on the movement was her enormous ego. Her ego combined with her caution and thoroughness to drive her to be the leader of the movement. Once she had made the agonizing decision to devote her life to the movement in 1913 and to change the course of the movement in 1915 and once she became an expert on birth control after two trips to Europe, her ego drove her to implement these decisions and to use her vast knowledge to establish herself as the chief leader and agitator of the movement and to bring success to the cause. Her ego also lessened her leadership ability as it made it impossible for her to work coordinately with independent friends of the movement. She demanded that she run the whole movement. Many faithful workers refused to agree to this, and as a result the movement suffered from a lack of organization.

The birth control movement from 1914 to the spring of 1917 was characterized by a preponderance of agitation, publicity and free speech battles. These characteristics are explainable because the fight was carried on by mainly anarchists whose forte was agitating, creating publicity and having their right of free

speech denied them and fighting in court to get it back. The anarchist character of the movement was set by Margaret in "The Woman Rebel," an anarchist newspaper which agitated for many radical ideas and created a lot of publicity. Eventually the authorities denied her the right of free speech, and the fight was on. After this beginning many anarchists began to actively take part in the movement; to name a few, Bill Sanger, Emma Goldman, Leonard Abbott, Ben Reitman and Bolton Hall. All these radicals agitated for birth control, created publicity and inevitably were arrested and sent to jail.

Margaret, after "The Woman Rebel," followed this same basic pattern. She agitated all over the country for birth control; she created a vast amount of publicity in her two court battles; and she was arrested many times and even sent to jail. Behind this essentially anarchist character of the movement in these early years lay a medical orientation which eventually took precedence in the cause. This element derived from Margaret's nurses training and was first shown in the plan to distribute "Family Limitation." During her second trip to Europe, Margaret established her new Nietzschean morality and came under the moderating influences of Havelock Ellis and Dr. Johannes Rutgers. It was in Europe that Margaret decided to eliminate the anarchists and the anarchist tone and strategy from the movement and to base the future movement on doctors and society women. During the next year and a half in America, Margaret gradually achieved these aims by gathering a group of wealthy supporters around her and by

opening the clinic.

What then did Margaret Sanger accomplish in the years 1910-1917? The laws against birth control remained unchanged; her newspaper and the clinic had been closed down; she, her husband and her sister had all gone to jail; her sister had almost died; and her family life was irreparably destroyed. To what end? First of all, she had developed herself into an excellent agitator and competent leader, capable of being the central figure in the future birth control movement. Secondly, by the publicity she generated, she made birth control a prominent issue in American life. Thirdly, she had improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people by her distribution of contraceptive information. And finally, she had built the foundations for the future movement for the legalization and general use of birth control.

CHAPTER NINE

EPILOGUE

"There is no force in the world so great as that of an idea whose hour has struck."

Victor Hugo

A month after Margaret was released from prison, America declared war on Germany. Soon after this Margaret said to a friend:

I'm against all war, just as any father is - just as all my friends and associates are - but if I take a stand against it, become an active pacifist, the birth control movement will suffer. I cannot let this happen just as I have gotten order out of chaos. The other pioneers have all made the same mistake: they have not concentrated on the one object to the exclusion of everything else. Their work was important, but their sacrifices were in vain. I am determined to bide my time, consolidate my forces, continue my studies, my lectures, my letters to the countless women who are writing me every week, and the publication of the Birth Control Review, until this madness is ended and one can think and work with the hope that something may be accomplished.¹

She devoted the next twenty years to her threefold campaign for education, organization and legislation. The days of agitating were over. After Margaret's arrest for maintaining a public nuisance in November 1916, there was not another arrest of a birth control worker until Kitty Marion's arrest in January

¹Harold Hersey, Margaret Sanger, The Biography of the Birth Control Pioneer, unpublished biography, Rare Book Collection (New York Public Library), 106.

1919. Margaret herself was not arrested again until November 1921.² In an effort to educate the American public, Margaret wrote a number of books and pamphlets, gave numerous lectures and edited The Birth Control Review, a monthly magazine that was the mouth-piece of the movement.³

For her organization Margaret, temporarily dismissing her fear of institutions, founded the American Birth Control League in 1921. Under its auspices, Margaret arranged many conferences and meetings to discuss birth control and population problems. In 1924 she founded in New York City another birth control clinic which is still functioning today.

In the legislative field, the various state birth control leagues tried to change state laws, and Margaret with her own organization tried to change the Federal law.⁵ All these legislative efforts were unsuccessful. This failure was the only setback that the movement suffered during this twenty-year period, and it derived directly from one of the few strategical errors that Margaret ever made. After the Brownsville trials in 1917,

²Francis Vreeland, The Process of Reform with Especial Reference to Reform Groups in the Field of Population, unpublished Ph. D Thesis (University of Michigan, 1929), 423.

³Margaret Sanger, An Autobiography (New York, 1938), 252.

⁴Margaret Sanger Research Bureau, One Hundred Fifty Years of Birth Control (New York, 1948).

⁵Ibid.

J. J. Goldstein appealed the verdicts to higher courts. In Fania's case, the Appellate Division overruled the decision of the Court of Special Sessions in declaring that What Every Girl Should Know was not obscene.⁶ In Margaret's case the Court of Appeals, although it upheld the decision of the lower court, gave a wide interpretation to Section 11145, in effect permitting doctors to give out contraceptive information any time they wished.⁷

These two great court victories did not register in Margaret's mind. She kept on with her legislative efforts, ignoring the possibility of a judicial reinterpretation of the law. Finally in 1935 her lawyer persuaded her to try for a reinterpretation of the Federal postal laws in court. A test case was set up and in 1936 the U. S. Court of Appeals decided that contraceptive information and supplies could be sent through the U. S. mail. This decision made birth control a legally established part of American society and eliminated all possibility of governmental interference. The only powerful enemy left in the field was the Catholic Church, and it remains there even today.

Margaret's radical friends were unwelcome in America after the war. Only Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Carlo Tresca were permitted to remain, and in 1923 Tresca served a one-year sentence

⁶People vs. Mindell in New York Supplement (St. Paul, 1917), Vol. 166, Page 1107.

⁷People vs. Sanger in The Northeastern Reporter (St. Paul, 1918), Vol. 118, Page 637.

for advertising birth control in his newspaper.⁸ The rest of her friends went to Russia. John Reed died of typhus in Moscow in 1920 and was buried in the Kremlin Wall.⁹ Bill Haywood died there in 1928; half his ashes are next to Reed's, and the other half are in Waldheim Cemetery in Chicago next to the four anarchist victims of the Haymarket riot of 1886.¹⁰ After their deportation from America in 1919, Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman went to Russia but soon became disillusioned with the Communist system and left. They wandered from country to country searching for a home which they never found. Berkman shot himself in Nice in 1936, and Goldman died of a stroke in Toronto in 1940. She was buried next to "Big Bill" and the Haymarket anarchist in Chicago.¹¹

Margaret and Bill were divorced in 1920, and a few years later she married a wealthy industrialist.¹² Her sons grew up to be prominent doctors. Margaret led the movement until old age forced her to retire in 1959, and by this time there were chains of

⁸ Manuscript in Sanger Papers, Manuscript Collection (Library of Congress), Box 121.

⁹ Granville Hicks, John Reed; the Making of a Revolutionary (New York, 1936), 400-1.

¹⁰ Harvey Goldberg (ed.), American Radicals (New York, 1957), 195.

¹¹ Hersey, Biography, Rare Book Collection, 291; Richard Drinnon, Rebel in Paradise; the Biography of Emma Goldman (Chicago, 1961), 300-313.

¹² M. Sanger to Lawrence Lader, March 7, 1954, Sanger Collection (Smith College Library), Box 5.

birth control clinics from coast to coast, and American society was showing the beneficial effects of the general use of birth control. Margaret Sanger died quietly in a nursing home in Tuscon, Arizona in 1966 at the age of eighty-seven and was buried next to her second husband in a rural cemetary in Fishkill, New York.

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1. United States Government

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2. New York State

As Margaret Sanger and her associates spent much times either in court or in jail, records of these various cases and their appeals are very important to the historian. Records of her husband's trial in 1915 and of her 1916 trial are at the Criminal Court of Manhattan at 100 Center Street. The records of the Brownsville cases of 1917 are at the Civil Court, 120 Skimahonk Street, Brooklyn. Each of these cases went through many appeals which I shall list here. William Sanger's appeal for a trial by jury (33 Cr. R. 415) is in the New York Criminal Reports (Albany, 1916) Vol. 33; The Appellants brief is in Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Dept., Vol. 3203; the decision (154 N. Y. S. 414 and 168 A. D. 835) is located in The New York Supplement (St. Paul, 1915) Vol. 154 and in Report of Cases in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York (Albany, 1915) Vol. 168. In her Brownsville trial in 1917, Margaret Sanger first appealed for a trial by jury; the decision is in the New York Law Journal, Dec. 5, 1916; after conviction she appealed to the Appellate Division (179 A. D. 939 and 166 N. Y. Supp. 1107) and the decision is carried in Report of Cases in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York (Albany, 1918) Vol. 179 and in The New York Supplement (St. Paul, 1917) Vol. 166; the briefs for this appeal are in Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Second Department, Vol. 2239. She then appealed to the Court of Appeals (222 N. Y. 192 and 118 N. E. 637) whose famed Crane decision is in Report of Cases decided in the Court of Appeals of the State

of New York (Albany, 1918) Vol. 222 and in The Northeastern Reporter (St. Paul, 1918) Vol. 118. She finally appealed to the United States Supreme Court (40 Sup. Ct. 55), 64 L. ed. 403, 251 U. S. 537). The decision is in The Supreme Court Reporter (St. Paul, 1921) Vol. 40; in Cases Argued and Decided in the Supreme Court of the United States (Rochester, 1920) Book 64, Lawyer's Edition; and in United States Reports (New York, 1920) Vol. 251.

Margaret's sister, Ethel Byrne, was also convicted at the Brownsville cases. She appealed for a trial by jury; the decision (163 N. Y. Supp. 680) is in The New York Supplement (St. Paul, 1917) Vol. 163. After conviction, she appealed to the Supreme Court of Kings County; the decision is located in the aforementioned New York Supplement (163 N. Y. Supp. 682); it is also in The New York Criminal Reports (Albany, 1917) Vol. 35 (35 Cr. R. 406) and in The Miscellaneous Reports (Albany, 1917) Vol. 99, (99 Misc. 1). One of Margaret's assistants, Fania Mindell, was also convicted at this same trial. She also appealed and was the only one to get her conviction reversed. The briefs for the appeal are in Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Second Department, Vol. 2238; the decision (166 N. Y. Supp. 1107) is in The New York Supplement (St. Paul, 1917), Vol. 166.

3. New York City

For William Sanger's election result in the 1911 election for the Board of Aldermen see Annual Report of the Board of Electors of the City of New York for the Year Ending Dec. 31st, 1911. (New York, 1912).

B. Personal

Manuscript Collections

Margaret Sanger began to collect every bit of correspondence and other material related both to her personal life and the movement as soon as she began her work in the movement. These voluminous papers are divided between the Library of Congress and the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College, with the majority of the papers being at the Library of Congress. There is all of her family, personal and business correspondence, as well as her diaries, for every year since 1912. There are speeches that she gave, materials related to the publication of the "Woman Rebel" and "Birth Control Review," as well as papers related to her birth control clinics and to the various birth control organizations that she was involved in. There are materials related to her legislative efforts as well as her numerous court battles and arrests. There is a complete collection of

the numerous pamphlets that she wrote. In addition there are scrapbooks which contain newspaper clippings concerning her activities in the movement. These two collections, needless to say, are invaluable for any study of birth control and Margaret Sanger.

In addition, there is a smaller collection relating to birth control at the Planned Parenthood Association in New York.

There is a large collection related to the Local Socialist Party of New York at the Tamiment Library in New York. Other collections which contain material on Margaret Sanger are: the Adolphus Knopf Collection at the National Library of Medicine; the Emma Goldman Papers at the New York Public Library; the Halbert L. Howard Papers and the Edward A. Ross Papers at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin; Hoover Institution of War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University and the Lilly Library of Indiana University.

2. Collected Writings

The following two collections of letters have a little material on Margaret Sanger, Upton Sinclair, My Lifetime in Letters (Columbia, 1960), and The Unpublished Letters of Havelock Ellis to Joseph Ishill (Berkeley Heights, 1954).

3. Autobiographies

Margaret Sanger wrote two autobiographies. The first, My Fight for Birth Control (New York, 1931), is not well written and is propagandistic in tone. It does contain some interesting facts on the early movement. Her second, An Autobiography (New York, 1938), improves many of the deficiencies of the first and gives a fuller picture of her life and feelings during this period. Neither work has many dates in it, as Margaret Sanger had an aversion to being dated. Often there are many misstatements and omissions which are explainable by the fact that she wanted to appear as ~~well~~ as possible.

The following autobiographies by some of Margaret's friends are helpful in studying the period and various phases of birth control and of Margaret Sanger: Louis Untermeyer, From Another World (New York, 1939); Hutchins Hapgood, A Victorian in the Modern World (New York, 1939); Floyd Dell, Homecoming (New York, 1933); Max Eastman, Love and Revolution (New York, 1964); Max Eastman, The Enjoyment of Living (New York, 1948); Max Eastman, Venture (New York, 1927); Havelock Ellis, Impressions and Comments (Boston, 1921); Emma Goldman, Living My Life 2 Vol. (New York, 1931); William D. Haywood, Bill Haywood's Book (New York, 1929); Morris Hillquit, Loose Leaves From

A Busy Life (New York, 1934); Mable Dodge Luhan, Intimate Memories Vol. 3, (New York, 1936); Ben Reitman, An Autobiography, unpublished, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Sheridan, Chicago; John H. Steiger, Memorial of a Silk Striker, (privately printed, 1914); Mary Heaton Vosse, Footnote to Folly (New York, 1935)

C. Contemporary Newspapers

Margaret Sanger's newspaper, The Woman Rebel, 1914, gives a clear picture of her thinking in 1914. The newspaper that gave the most complete coverage was the New York Call, the city's leading socialist newspaper. On major events the New York American, Globe, Mail, Post, Press, Telegraph, Times and World gave good coverage, as did the Brooklyn Eagle and Standard Union. These papers were used 1912-1917, inclusive dates used .

D. Contemporary Magazines

Margaret Sanger's magazine, The Birth Control Review 1917-1918, has many good articles on the history of the movement. Radical magazines like The Masses 1914-1917, and Mother Earth 1911-1917, also gave extensive coverage to the movement. Other magazines also carried articles on the movement: Current Opinion, Eugenics Review, Medical Critic and Guide, New Republic, Physical Culture, Survey, and Truth Seeker, all used 1914-1917, inclusive.

II Secondary Sources

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B. Biographies

There are two biographies of Margaret Sanger. Harold Hersey, Margaret Sanger; the Biography of the Birth Control Pioneer is unpublished and the only copy is in the Rare Book Collection of the New York Public Library. This work is most valuable factually for the years preceding 1914, but it also has some interesting theories about the later years. Lawrence Lader, The Margaret Sanger Story and the Fight for Birth Control (Garden City, 1955) is an unsuccessful rehash of Margaret Sanger's autobiographies.

It adds little new material and corrects few mistakes in Margaret Sanger's versions.

Many of Margaret's friends had biographies written on them and they are often useful: Revere Allen (ed.), Adventurous Americans (New York, 1932); Vincent Brome, H. G. Wells (London, 1951); Heywood Broun and Margaret Leech, Anthony Comstock (New York, 1927); Arthur Calder-Marshall, Havelock Ellis (London, 1959); McAlister Coleman, Eugene V. Debs (New York, 1930); Francois Delisle, Friendship's Odyssey (London, 1946); Floyd Dell, Women as World Builders (Chicago, 1913); Granville Hicks, John Reed (New York, 1936); Max Eastman, Heroes I Have Known (New York, 1942); Harvey Goldberg (ed.), American Radicals (New York, 1957); Harvey Goldberg, Life of Jean Juarez (Madison, 1962); Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt (New York, 1956); Herman E. Kitteredge, Ingersoll (New York, 1911); Karl W. Meyer, Karl Liebknecht; Man without a Country (Washington, 1957); Houston Peterson, Havelock Ellis (Boston, 1928); Richard Drimmon, Rebel in Paradise; the Biography of Emma Goldman (Chicago, 1961).

C. Monographs and Special Studies

1. Margaret Sanger

Some very interesting studies exist on Margaret Sanger. One on the reform aspect of the movement is Francis M. Vreeland, The Process of Reform with Especial Reference to Reform Groups in the Field of Population, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis (University of Michigan, 1929). A Good study of her speaking is William Morehouse, The Speaking of Margaret Sanger in the Birth Control Movement from 1916 to 1937, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis in Smith College Library, 1968. Two very interesting profiles of Margaret Sanger exist in the New Yorker, April 11, 1925 and July 5, 1930. Other works to be consulted briefly are: Peter Fryer, The Birth Controllers (New York, 1966); R. M. Bartlett, They Did Something About It (New York, 1939); Devere Allen, Adventurous Americans (New York, 1932); Robert W. Mack, Margaret Sanger and the Crusade for Birth Control, unpublished senior thesis in Princeton University Library, 1962.

Margaret Sanger wrote many books herself but most of these were written after the period I am studying. But they should be read anyway: Woman and the New Race (New York, 1920), the best book she wrote; Pivot of Civilization (New York, 1922); Motherhood in Bondage (New York, 1928); The Case for Birth Control (New York, 1917); The New Motherhood (London, 1922); Women, Morality and Birth Control (New York, 1922).

Among her pamphlets are "Family Limitation" (New

York, 1922); "English Methods of Birth Control" (London, 1915); "Dutch Methods of Birth Control" (London, 1915); and "Magnetation Methods of Birth Control" (London, 1915)

Her two series of articles for the New York Call on sex were put out in book form: What Every Mother Should Know (New York, 1916), and What Every Girl Should Know (New York, 1916). See also her series of articles in The Modern School Magazine, 1916-1917.

2. Population

The following works by nineteenth century birth control reformers are indispensable for any study of population: T. R. Malthus, Essay on the Principle of Population (London, 1914); Francis Place, Illustrations and Proofs of the Principle of Population (London, 1822), the first work on birth control and population to appear in the United States; Charles Knowlton, Fruits of Philosophy (New York, n. d.), a generally medically oriented work that describes the working of the organs of the body and different types of contraception; Archibald Alison, Principles of Population and Their Connection with Human Happiness (Edinburgh, 1840) 2 Vols.; Thomas Doubleday, True Law of Population (London, 1843); Annie Besant, The Law of Population: Its Consequences and its Bearing on Human Conduct and Morals (London, 1878).

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3. History of the Movement and Nineteenth Century Reformers

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5. The Radicals

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On the topic of the emancipation of women one should begin with Marquis de Condorcet, First Essay on the Political Rights of Women (Letchworth, 1908). A must is Emma Goldman's article on "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation" in Mother Earth, March 1906. This fascinating article declares that what is wrong with woman's emancipation is that woman has ceased to be a woman. Perhaps never in her life, except on the topic of birth control, has Emma Goldman been so right on any matter. A book which takes the same point of view and which influenced Emma Goldman greatly is Laura Markolm Hansson, Six Modern Women (Boston, 1896), a series of psychological studies on prominent women. For a slightly different position see Freda Kirchway, Our Changing Morality (New York, 1924).

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9. The Law and the Right of Free Speech

The most thorough discussion on birth control laws is in M. W. Dennett's Birth Control Laws (New York, 1926). See also T. C. Ruppenthal, "Criminal Statutes on Birth Control" in Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, Vol. 10, 1919; and Margaret Sanger, Laws on Birth Control in the USA (New York, n. d.).

The law and its interpretation in the courts is fully discussed in the following reviews: Harry Kalven, "A Special Corner of Civil Liberties" in New York University Law Review, Vol. 7, No. 2, Dec., 1938; "Contraceptives and the Law" in The University of Chicago Law Review, Vol. 6, No. 2, Feb., 1939; "Judicial Regulation of Birth Control under Obscenity Laws" in The Yale Law Journal, Vol. 50, No. 4., Feb., 1941; "Legislation" in the Harvard Law Review, Vol. XLV, No. 4, Feb., 1932. For other discussions of the law see F. A. Blossom, "Some Medico-Legal Aspects of the Birth Control Question" in Medico-Legal Journal, Vol. 33, No. 10; E. B. Foote, "The Law's Vulgarity" in the Winsted Press, July 27, 1876; I. B. Louis, "Remedial Legislation Relative to the Prevention of Conception" in Medical Pharmaceutical Guide, Vol. 16, 1913; and "Numbering the Day of Penal Section 1142" in Survey, Vol. 34, 1915.

For the best discussion of free speech and obscenity see Theodore Schroeder, What is Criminally Obscene? (New York, 1906), and Obscene Literature and Constitutional Law (New York, 1911). Mary Ware Dennett in her Who's Obscene? (New York, 1930) describes various obscenity cases in the birth control movement. A more general study is Morris L. Ernst and Alexander Lindey, The Censor Marches On (New York, 1940). Important Radical articles on the subject are: T. F. Morton, Jr., "Freedom of Speech and Birth Control" in Paladin, Vol. 1, No. 3; and B. L. Reitman, "Right of Free Speech Strangled in St. Louis" in Melting Pot, Vol. 14, No. 7, a description of a Margaret Sanger lecture suppressed by the Catholic Church.

10. Medicine and Eugenics

The literature of the medical aspect of birth control is nothing short of enormous. The following list is my selection of the best articles and books. A book on old medical opinions is C. R. Drysdale (ed.) Medical Opinions of the Population Question (London, 1901). Other articles are: L. I. Dublin "Mortality among Women for Causes Incidental to Childbearing" in American Journal of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children, Vol. 78, No. 1, 1918; L. I. Dublin, "The Fallacious Propaganda for Birth Control" in Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 78, No. 2, Feb., 1926, an article in which the author attacks radicalism and

urges scientific discussion of birth control; M. S. and T. W. Edgar, "The Physician and Birth Control" in Medical Times, Vol. 51, 1923; A. L. Goldwater, "Minority Report on Birth Control" in Pediatrics, Vol. 29, 1917; A. L. Goldwater, "Birth Control; Its General and Medical Aspects" in Medical Review of Reviews, Vol 23, 1917; M. D. E. Groszman, "The Whys and Why-Nots of Birth Control" in Medical Times, Vol. 50, 1922; A. Jacobi, "My Position on Birth Control" in Medical Critic and Guide, Vol 20, 1917, an article by one of the influential and earliest doctor to support birth control; S. A. Knopf, "Legalization of Birth Control" in Woman's Medical Journal, Vol 25, 1915; S. A. Knopf, "Birth Control and Tuberculosis" in Survey, Vol. 34, 1915; S. A. Knopf, "Some Results of Birth Control" in New York Medical Journal, Vol. 104, 1916; S. A. Knopf, "Birth Control, Its Medical, Social, Economic and Moral Aspects" in Survey, Vol 37, 1916; S. A. Knopf, "Preventive Medicine and Birth Control" in Medical Times, Vol. 45, 1917; G. W. Kosmak, "Birth Control: What Should be the Attitude of the Medical Profession Toward the Present Day Propaganda" in Medical Records, Vol. 91, 1917; M. D. Ordway, "Birth Control" in Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, Vol. 179, 1918-19; E. C. Podvin, "Birth Control" in Medical Journal, Vol. 105, .9.7; G. W. Quillian "Concerning Birth Control, The Physician's Obligation" in American Journal of Surgery, Vol. 32, 1918.

The literature on eugenics and birth control is even more extensive than that on medicine. The first work to discuss birth control from a eugenic view was T. H. Clapperton, Scientific Meliorism and the Evolution of Happiness (London, 1885). The two best books on this subject are Harrison Brown, The Challenge of Man's Future (New York, 1954) and William Vogt, Road to Survival (New York, 1948). Another excellent work on race and eugenics is Lothrop Stoddard, The Revolt Against Civilization (New York, 1922). A good introduction to the subject of eugenics is Mark H. Haller, Eugenics (New Brunswick, 1963). C. U. Drysdale, Neo-Malthusianism and Eugenics (London, 1922) looks at eugenics from the Malthusian point of view. Other excellent British opinions are W. R. Inge, Outspoken Essays (London, 1922), the author was Dean of St. Paul's and an early supporter of birth control; and Havelock Ellis, Essays in Wartime (New York, 1917). Dr. W. T. Robinson's works Eugenics, Marriage and Birth Control (New York, 1917, Practical Eugenics (New York, 1912), and Small or Large Families (New York, 1917) are very competent works, but not as well written as his English counterparts' are.