



MARGARET SANGER

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WOMAN  
OF THE  
FUTURE

Including  
MARGARET  
SANGER: CRUSADER  
by Mildred Adams  
& a Foreword  
by Michael -  
Fielding

LONDON

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BIRTH CONTROL INTERNATIONAL  
INFORMATION CENTRE

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## PREFACE

**W**HEN, about two years ago, the organisation whose imprint appears on this pamphlet, the Birth Control International Information Centre, held a "Malthusian Ball," to raise funds for its propaganda work, it was taken to task in some quarters for failing to realise that (as one writer put it, very wittily) "birth control, like charity, should begin at home." Nor was this its only lapse from patriotism: it had as its president an American; in fact an alien, Margaret Sanger. The two offences are closely related and may be examined together.

Margaret Sanger was the first person to realise, not merely as a matter of theory but in planning her life-work, that the problems of population, like every other great problem to-day, are world-wide in scope and must be considered internationally. This is far from implying that she has not concerned herself with these problems in their parochial aspects—if their application to the United States may be so designated. In the birth control movement of that country she is the recognised leader and the most brilliant propagandist. As far back as 1916, in defiance of the New York State laws, she founded a birth control clinic at Brooklyn—the first of its kind in the world—and for this enterprise paid by thirty days' imprisonment. A few years later, in 1923, after a protracted struggle in the courts, which culminated in the legal decision that licensed physicians were permitted to give birth control information "for the cure or prevention of disease," she founded the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau, New York, which has grown into an enormous Centre of contraceptive treatment and research, and directly or indirectly has stimulated

the formation of well over a hundred birth control clinics in twenty-nine States of the Union. To-day, as president of the National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control, and at the head of the movement to which her genius gave its name, she is devoting her energies to bringing about a change in the laws which in her country classify works on birth control with obscene literature, and contraceptives with articles to be used for "indecent or improper purposes," and impose petty but all too effective restrictions upon the freedom of physicians, hospitals, clinics, and medical schools in the matter of giving birth control instruction.

But Margaret Sanger's views have never allowed her to confine her propaganda to her own fellow countrymen and women. For her, the problems of population are as far-reaching as those that arise whenever and wherever a man and woman marry and reproduce a family. These problems have indeed their domestic aspect. They are problems in human relationships, health problems, problems for the nation of which the children will form the next generation of citizens: but equally—and this is crucial for an understanding of Margaret Sanger's life-work—they are problems for the outer world in which these children will have to find a place if their own country cannot supply one. Against the cultural nationalism that stands for birth control at home but unrestricted fertility abroad, a strange patriotism that favours the multiplication of other peoples but not one's own, Margaret Sanger proclaims the view that birth control, in this respect but none other like charity, must be directed to wherever it may happen to be needed: at home to families unable to provide their

children with the necessities of civilised life, abroad to the countries that in present conditions are least well adapted to supporting large and increasing numbers of people. When the Birth Control International Information Centre decided to elect as its president one who stood in the public mind for world-wide birth control it was inevitable that its choice should fall upon Margaret Sanger.

During its lifetime—it has been in existence only six years—the Centre has formed close contacts with birth control workers and organisations in every Continent. In thirty countries its correspondents maintain constant communication with Margaret Sanger in New York or with her colleagues, Edith How-Martyn and Gerda Guy, at the headquarters of the Centre in London. With the advance of the movement for birth control, the Centre is receiving appeals in increasing numbers from doctors and social workers in all parts of the world to help them in creating clinics and other organisations for spreading a knowledge of birth control in their countries. It responds to these appeals by every means in its power.

This year Edith How-Martyn has gone to India, in the first place to take part in the discussion on birth control at the All India Women's Conference, and after that to conduct a propaganda tour through the length and breadth of the country. During her absence Gerda Guy will supervise the work of the Centre at home: she will have her work cut out! Margaret Sanger will continue to lead the campaign in the United States, but, as ever, will find time to do her share of the work of the Centre and give to the international movement the benefit of her initiative and ripe experience.

God speed them all.

MICHAEL FIELDING.

## MARGARET SANGER: CRUSADER\*

SOMETIMES there stands, behind one of those fragments of human evolution called causes, an individual so remarkable in herself that the story of her as a person, her development as a human being, her struggle against the barriers set up for her by the world and the vocation of her choice, is even more stirring than the story of her crusade.

The best of these crusaders are apt to hide very far back behind the surface of their jobs. But, if you succeed in disentangling them from their causes, you may find that you have a genius where you knew only a name. Such a person is Margaret Sanger.

She was born in Corning, New York, the sixth child in a family that was to have eleven children before the weary body of her mother rebelled and died. Her father was a stone-cutter by trade, a stormy, powerful Irishman who adored Bob Ingersoll, the agnostic, worshipped Henry George, the single-taxer, and would rather hold forth in argument than earn a living any day. Her mother was a devout Catholic. Between their two diametrically opposed views the child grew up, half persuaded by the mystic power of her mother's church, half swayed by the down-right words and the biting wit of her father's argument.

When Margaret was only sixteen her mother, worn out by hard work and constant child-bearing, died. Her father was half crazed with grief. The household was desolated. Her elder brothers and sisters were already beginning to earn; the five children younger than she were almost a separate family still to be brought up. Margaret herself was half way

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\* From an article by MILDRED ADAMS in *The Delinquent*, September, 1933.

between the two, and, deprived of her mother's wise patience, she became for the moment almost a problem child, too active and too pretty to be allowed to run wild, too old and sure of her own strength to submit to the authority of the older sister who took command of the household. Her father was torn between his theories of freedom for the individual and his tendency to solve all problems by saying "No."

Margaret found the solution herself—and that was characteristic. She had had all the dreams of conquest that fill the heart of every girl who is bright and ambitious. Romance, adventure, the stage, all called to her, but it is significant that only medicine was insistent. She dreamed of going to Cornell University and studying in the medical school, but she had neither the money nor the necessary preparation. A chance visit to an old schoolmate brought her the opportunity to become a probationer in a new hospital, north of New York City. It was the open door she craved. The unknown daughter of a poor Irish stone-cutter took her first step toward becoming the famous Margaret Sanger when she put on a nurse's cap.

But first there was a whole section of life to be lived. Young, vivid, beautiful, in her own words "incurably romantic," she fell in love with an architect who was almost equally young and romantic, and married him. They moved to a New York suburb, and for a while her restless spirit seemed contented in the familiar ways of wife and mother. They had three children, a girl and two boys. For twelve years Mrs. Sanger was a cheerful housewife, a devoted mother, a good neighbour. She even had a bout with tuberculosis, and beat it. There are people who will feel it a pity that the normal feminine activities did not fill her time,



satisfy her spirit, take all her energy. But something was working within her, some fever of necessity pushed her on to tasks that another would have been "too busy" to do.

Hospital training had been the first step toward the fulfilling of her destiny; social service with its insights and its tragedies was the second. The helpless sorrows of the poor filled her hands and her head, the injustices, the miseries, the makeshifts, above all the endless series of pregnancies and the pitiful succession of children for whom there was not strength or room or money, who were born in agony, and lived short lives filled with suffering.

"There seemed no sense in it all," she says, "no reason for such a waste of mother life, no right to exhaust women's vitality and throw them on the heap before the age of thirty-five. Their houses were too crowded, their hands too full. The menace of another pregnancy hung like a sword over the head of every poor woman I came in contact with." And in her innocence she conceived the idea that if you could teach women how to keep from having so many children it would make life a little easier for them.

Out of such passionate pity was born the movement that has shaken churches, courts and countries, and bids fair to change laws on statute books throughout the world.

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Looking back over these twenty years that have passed since Margaret Sanger made her first public appeal, it is easy to note the points of the drama and the stretches where the movement seemed asleep. But that is true of most movements in retrospect. Two things, perhaps three, distinguish this movement from others. It has been to an astonishing extent a personal movement, yet the person has always stayed submerged in the cause. It has asked for legislation

last instead of first, preferring to arouse people with agitation and education before going to Congress to demand a law. And in the third place it has proceeded from the simple to the complex. The birth-control movement became a crusade for the right of free speech, and progressed to scientific discussions of population growth, the subsistence level, the limitation of the food supply.

In 1914 Margaret Sanger issued her first challenge to a world very busy about a lot of other things, including a threatened European war. The challenge appeared in the shape of an unimposing little sheet called "The Woman Rebel," of which she herself was editor, publisher, circulation manager, and bookkeeper! It spoke out in public about a lot of things that were seldom mentioned even in private. It attacked the obscenity laws which Anthony Comstock had shoved through Congress forty years before. It championed free speech and a free press. And most and worst of all, it actually talked about the right to prevent conception. Even its friends judged it guilty of "rather unconvincing excitedness and intolerance," and Mrs. Sanger herself admits it was "as flaming as possible." Not for nothing was she the daughter of an Irishman who lived on fiery argument.

Labour newspapers carried items about the new crusade; radicals, whose banners she had borne previously, prepared to support a new martyr in the cause of free speech. Requests for contraceptive information poured in from poor women. But to the world at large, beset in those days with women rebels, it was too wild, too unheard of, too exclusively devoted to things one did not say, to make much impression. Even the suffragists, who she had hoped would help her, showed little but displeasure. They had no time for "cranks," no strength to cope with the opposition which

a championing of birth control would bring their own unpopular cause. By painful experience they had learned to concentrate on getting the ballot, and they had no interest in a red-headed insurgent who wanted to teach women their bodily, rather than their political, rights.

But if the world was inattentive, the post-office department was embarrassingly alert. They declared that the issue of March fourteenth could not go through the mails. They said the same thing about issues in May and June. In August, they got the Federal Grand Jury to indict Margaret Sanger under the very obscenity laws she was attacking.

And then, for the first and last time in her life, the little Irish rebel ran away. She says, with a little reminiscent smile in her eyes, that she is still impenitent. She argues now as she argued then; but she always admits that she is one of those people who do things, and then reason about them afterwards. She had a "hunch" that it was time to move, that she'd better go away and learn a great deal more before she faced the implacable processes of the United States Government. It was one thing to go to jail for your principles, but quite another to go before you had accomplished your purpose. She wrote to the judge and the district attorney, telling them that she would not be in court the next day, reminding them that she had asked for a month's postponement to prepare the case and had been denied, announcing that therefore she was compelled to take a year.

That night she calmly boarded a train and escaped from the United States into Canada, where she set sail for Europe.

Margaret Sanger stayed abroad for a year, talking with Havelock Ellis and the Neo-Malthusians in England, working in the British Museum, studying birth control methods

and clinics in Holland. Europe was at war, but that seems to have been the least of her troubles. She was bent on finding the answers to the questions that beat on her brain, and every answer opened new doors and evoked new questions. When she finally came back to America, it was with enough answers, enough knowledge, enough solid foreign support to enable her to get on with her work whatever happened.

That year abroad was really a post-graduate course in the education of Margaret Sanger. She was still naive when she came back—for that matter, even now there is a sort of unworldly walking by herself which haunts you with its charm. She was still enthusiastic, still inclined, like any ardent propagandist, to underrate the opposition and to think that she could work miracles simply because she saw the need for them so clearly. But she no longer looked on her problem as an isolated one. She still felt the burning necessity of helping poor women to lighten their burdens, but she had as a tool the knowledge of what other countries were doing in the same direction. She had made her first contacts with the modern disciples of Malthus, who laid down long ago the principles which made it possible to translate warmly controversial birth control into the cool economic phrases of a World Population Conference.

But that was to come later. First, she had to face the trial she had fled from. Moreover, she had to open a clinic.



Margaret Sanger's own story of her fight for birth control fills a big book. You have only to see the sadness in her eyes to realise that it has not been altogether a happy fight. There can be no particular pleasure in making a speaking engagement and finding the door barred in your face. It is

not fun to be hustled into a police wagon and rushed off to the station house like any common criminal, to serve thirty days in jail, to fight off finger-printing with sheer desperate strength.

There is, of course, the exhilaration of a cause to uphold you, the much-advertised Irish love of a fight which may buoy you up. But what of the moment when you see your perfectly legal clinic raided, your furniture broken, your private medical records carted off to police headquarters? How about having spies set on your trail to trip you up by means of the very pity and human kindness that suffering always rouses in you? How about seeing yourself anathematised as a public menace when you know that you are doing a work of public welfare? How about being spat at and clubbed? All those things and many more have happened to her in the slow seventeen years that have passed since she returned home armed with the proper tools of knowledge to fight for the far-reaching cause she believed in.

Her first clinic was opened in October, 1916, in a poverty-stricken section of Brooklyn which swarmed with clothes-lines, push-carts, children. It was raided by the police, and Mrs. Sanger and her sister were arrested and sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment. Her second clinic was opened in 1923, under the protection of a court decision arising out of the first arrest. Six years later it, too, was raided, but this time there was no jailing. The cries of physicians, lawyers, and an outraged public made it quickly apparent to the police and the magistrates that the raid had been a horrid mistake. The best measure of that six years of work lies in the fact that, after the excitement was over, an official apology was tendered Mrs. Sanger.

Meanwhile she had been acquiring an international repu-

tation. In 1922 she went to Japan on the invitation of two titled sociologists who felt that she alone might help their country to stave off just such a situation as exists to-day. It looked for a while as if the authorities would not let her land, but she had been learning tact and diplomacy in a hard school. A Japanese statesman on the steamer found her so charming and wise, so sane and unwild, that he did some influential wiring and won her entrance. In China, as in Japan, her quiet travelling took on the appearance of a triumphant procession. Influential Indians begged her to stop over, if only between boats, and lecture to their hordes. A year previously she had called a national birth-control conference in New York. In 1925 she gathered speakers for an international birth control conference. And two years later she was the power behind the scenes in the World Population Conference of scientists, economists and sociologists in Geneva.

What was happening to the *person* whom her friends call lovingly "M.S."? In spite of the growing approval of her cause, no one was handing her the keys to the city, no one pinned medals on her breast. Famous she was becoming the world over, but it was a personal, not an organised fame. To-day letters pour into her office by the daily hundreds, yet this welling up of gratitude and faith are individual and strictly private things. The mystery, the magic, the secret fear, the intimate deep awe, that have always surrounded birth, all tend to wall off the advocate of birth control from public recognition. Even in these frank days one does not talk much about it, and by an extension of the taboo one does not talk much about Margaret Sanger.

So far as most people are concerned, the individual is completely submerged in the birth control expert. Last

spring the American public knew that a birth control bill was up before the Senate and had actually reached the point of being argued before a committee, but they did not know that, after the hearing was over, the bill's distinguished advocate went with her husband down to Nassau. It is as Mrs. Slee that Margaret Sanger lives in a big country house outside of New York City, where swimming, riding, the care of a garden and the delight of all the music she can crowd into a week-end, keep her body and her mind supple for her absorbing work. There her two boys come—her beloved daughter Peggy died in 1916, and she has never lost the tragic shadow that clouds her face when that name is mentioned. Both boys are intent on medical careers. Stuart, the elder, graduated from the Yale School of Engineering and was settled in a good job when the same deep longing that had moved his mother in her youth proved too much for him. A doctor he must be, even though it meant going back to school again. His younger brother Grant, who at the age of fourteen had accompanied his mother around the world and acquired the fine art of diplomatic manners, went direct to Princeton to medical school. Both of them are her joy, and her fast friends.

She has not many friends. Life has been too busy and too tumultuous for the forming of those swarms of amiable acquaintanceships which are so pleasant a part of life in a big city. She does not belong to clubs or go to teas. She is a good politician in that she has learned to be an extremely clever strategist. She is in no sense a "glad-hander." But the friends she has cleave to her, and talk of her with a kind of adoration.

She and the clinic occupy lovely quarters in a graceful old house that once was a fashionable brownstone mansion.

Intricate Chinese hangings, silk from Japan, bits of lovely o'd furniture in her own rooms on the top floor testify to a real feeling for texture and colour and a passion for beauty. Graciousness dwells here, and a warm human quality that shows itself again in the clinic downstairs, where pleasant colours and gay children's pictures warm the heart of scared applicants for help.

That clinic, the first to be established after the disastrous Brooklyn demonstration of 1916, is her great pride. There are more than a hundred and twenty others established over the United States now, operating legally under their respective state laws, but still hampered by those federal laws she is trying to persuade Congress to remove. This one has facilities for research as well as for education and treatments, and in its ten years of life it has piled up the records of 33,000 women, to be used some day in a thorough scientific study of birth control methods and effects.

Opinions about Margaret Sanger are much gentler than they used to be. In the old days, if you heard her name at all, you were apt to attack or to defend her with passion, in spite of that calm brow and those wide-spaced eyes, she was an impetuous young person, full of undigested phrases, burning with a desire for justice and not yet skilled in the devious ways sometimes necessary to get it. She was liable to moods of exaltation in which she lost sight of everything but the cause. She still says—and it is a key to the understanding of her character—"It is a marvellous sensation to have a period of apparent fanaticism. No obstacle can discourage you. The single vision of your quest obscures defeat and lifts you over mountainous difficulties."

The status of the cause for which she has spent her best years is very different now from what it was when she first



issued her challenge. Then it was an outlaw which shocked the conservatives and moved the Federal Grand Jury to indictment. Now it has the formal endorsement of all sorts of thoughtful people—medical societies, trades unions, even the Committee on Marriage and the Home of the Federal Council of Churches.

She has done marvels, but no one knows better than she that the fight is not yet over. Until the penal code and the tariff act are amended, Margaret Sanger will not stop, and even then she is likely to find some bit of educational work crying out for attention! And it is no use to tell her that "it can't be done." She has been hearing that all her life, and doing it just the same.

## WOMAN OF THE FUTURE

by MARGARET SANGER

**H**UMANITY to-day stands at the crossroads.

One way leads to decay and destruction. It is the way of the shiftless, careless, irresponsible ignorance of the past.

The other is new and narrow. It points upward, demanding of us who inhabit this globe all that we possess in intelligence, knowledge, courage, vision and responsibility. This new road leads to the fulfilment of human destiny on this planet.

Which road shall we take? There is no time to procrastinate, no time for hypocritical evasion. The problem is immediate. As the great French philosopher Bergson expresses it, humanity must make up its mind whether it wants to go on living—not only whether it wants to live as the beasts and insects live, but whether it wants to continue to carry on the torch of progress.

Progress: People have gathered this year [1934] in Chicago from all countries of the world to celebrate a Century of Progress. Nowhere is the advance in the sciences of humanity more impressively shown than in the exhibits of that remarkable Hall of Science. There we find eloquent evidence of man's conquest of the air, of his daring explorations in the realm of the infinitesimally small, his war against microbes and germs: we find there all the miracles of the atom and of radio activity. In brief, in the last one hundred years science has taken remarkable steps in the conquest of the external forces of Nature. Man has tamed and harnessed many natural energies and directed them for his own use.

But before we congratulate ourselves too complacently

upon all these achievements of modern science, it might be a sign of wisdom to evaluate them in terms of a higher and finer civilisation. Unless these and other results of man's creative energies are utilised with vision and foresight they may become not scientific achievements but instruments of human destruction.

How can we boast of the conquest of the air or of the marvels of chemistry when whole nations of innocent men, women and children are compelled to seek protection against these by wearing gas-masks? Why should we take pride in the advance of surgery if its main use is to be the salvaging of the maimed and mutilated? Or of the art of medicine if the physician makes it his business to preserve evils in order to "tinker" at them?

How can we boast of our philanthropy when countless millions continue to be born in conditions of disease, ignorance and misery—depending for their very existence upon the continuation of private and public support?

"National Recovery" is the great slogan of to-day. We hear on all sides of codes—codes for producers, codes for consumers, codes even for the control of pigs. But have we heard of a biological code for the race? I propose a Code for Unborn Babies, so that each child brought into the world shall be assured of a welcome, so that each child may help toward permanent national recovery by coming into this complex realm with a heritage of health—a sound body and mind—and with the certainty of a happy home and proper nourishment to arm him for life's unending struggle. Unless this is assured to each and every child born into the world, lasting recovery can never be realised.

Consider for a moment the millions of money we shovel every year into the bottomless pit of so-called charities.

Futile extravagance it has become—to keep alive and to perpetuate the delinquent, the defective, the gangster, that should never be brought into the world at all!

Science may well pride itself on the conquest of the external forces of Nature—electricity, radio-activity, atomic energies—but, despite all the miraculous achievements of the past century, science has not succeeded in getting humanity out of the man-made muddle in which we find ourselves to-day. For strangely enough this great conquest of external nature has been accompanied by a gross neglect, a misuse, a tragic waste of the greatest creative force within human nature itself: the creative force of womankind.

The prophetic American poet, Walt Whitman, wrote:—

*Be not ashamed, Woman,*

*Your privilege encloses the rest, and is the exit of the rest,*

*You are the gates of the body, and you are the gates of the soul.*

Not only the gate of the body and soul, but the main portal to the future. Only through the emancipation of woman's creative energies, the liberation of her sex force, can humanity redeem itself. Civilisation is marking time; mankind cannot choose the road upward to the fulfilment of its true destiny until the other half of itself—woman—is released, emancipated. Emancipated? I hear you say. Has she not the right to vote? to work? the right to engage in any activity where man goes? Yes, and she has fought for these activities and shown an equal ability in her undertakings, but I do not consider such superficial rights as sufficiently important to be called emancipation.

On the other hand, age after age has shown woman taken from her lofty heights, where previously she was referred

to as a Creative Deity, Giver of Life, Goddess of Wisdom, Divine Mother, and placed on the level of the nurse-maid, permitted to care for man's offspring, allowed to compete with his pack animals as burden-bearer—slave, servant, instrument of his comfort and pleasure, whose honoured destiny it was to suffer and to serve.

Christianity preached the suppression and sublimation of the sex instinct. People were and still are as ignorant and confused about sex as they are about God. We must cast the light of science upon the former in order to understand the latter. For while the mental attitude and religious teachings on the basic function of life confuse it with shame and sin, mankind cannot rise to its highest possibilities. Our ecclesiastical fathers decreed that there were only two states of respectable womanhood open to women—virginity or motherhood. Sex in any of its manifestations was akin to sin and, for the woman, only the bearing of a child sanctioned its expression.

Thus we find that woman's bondage in the past as well as to-day is based solely on the biological task of child-bearing. Consequently, until that function is under her complete control woman can never hope to rise to the heights of her own spiritual destiny.

Throughout the centuries it has been the Church which has decreed that woman's first and only duty to man and God is child-bearing. Did not Martin Luther assert that women shall bear and bear and bear even though they lose their lives in an endless waste of sacrifice! And to-day, from that great Church with its headquarters in Rome, where sits a celibate Pontifical Dictator whose office and sex exclude the possibility that he has ever borne a child or known the problems of fatherhood, yet whose voice reaches

into the lives of millions of women throughout the world comes the decree forbidding the liberation of scientific knowledge through which children may be wanted, children conceived in marital love, born of the parents' conscious desire and given the heritage of healthy bodies and sound minds! Until this voice is stifled, this influence checked, the slavery of futile child-bearing will continue.

Why this clerical glorification of breeding? Why this idolatrous urge to reproduction, a function in which the human race is surpassed, from the point of view of quantity, by the housefly and the fishes of the sea—a function which has blindly plunged the world into chaos and confusion so grave that its future progress is threatened? Breeding orders to women in the past were:—

For the sake of the Clan.

For the strength of the Tribe.

For the pride of Man and Family.

For the glory of God and the Church.

While now the pleas are for the military strength of the Nation and the preservation of peace! All these pleas emanate from that classic in Psalm 127:—

*As arrows in the hand of a mighty man*

*So are the children of youth,*

*Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them;*

*They shall not be ashamed*

*When they speak with their enemies in the gate.*

In this we find the suggestion not of peace but of war. Men are advised to have sufficient children to hurl at their enemies, just as the militarists of the world to-day clamour for an increased population to enlarge their armies. Certainly for people who, in spite of world conditions, still believe in the possibility of "Peace on earth, goodwill

among men," it would be well to refrain from quoting this war appeal to increase the birth-rate.

Against this and other quoted biblical texts may well be set the following verses from Ecclesiasticus (chapter 16):—

*Desire not a multitude of unprofitable children, neither delight in ungodly sons.*

*Though they multiply, rejoice not in them, except the fear of the Lord be with them.*

*Trust not thou in their life, neither respect their multitude: for one that is just is better than a thousand;*

*And better it is to die without children than to have them that are ungodly.*

To the pleas of the militarists woman must refuse to listen. She must awaken to the responsibility which is hers as a creative force. She shall become an instrument to a World of Peace. Until this consciousness becomes a reality all grandiose schemes for "world improvement" must fail. Birth control is the first sign of an awakening consciousness in mankind. It signals a new moral responsibility, a higher regard for life, not only after birth but even before life has been conceived. It is the conscious control of the birth-rate by means that prevent conception: not only a health and economic expedient, but also a moral principle, a spiritual factor in the lives of women upon which the development and advance of the race depend.

It is truly strange and ironical that the women's movement in the United States and many other countries has kept itself apart from any cause connected with sex reform. It is even stranger that its leaders have been silent on the subject of birth control knowing, as we do, that only because of its practice among themselves, as the birth-rate among the educated, intelligent, and wealthy indicates,

could they have battled for the suffrage or other social or cultural movements during their child-bearing years. For what woman constantly in the condition of pregnancy, or who is submerged in the daily fears of pregnancy, can compete with men in social or economic efficiency? Where are the women with large families? In the grave-yards, or in the kitchens slaving to make an inadequate wage feed too many hungry babies.

Women in all lands of all creeds and nations look to this new freedom as to a blessing. To the poor and destitute it comes as if in answer to prayer.

In England, the Women's Co-operative Guild, a league of more than 75,000 married working women, mostly mothers, was the first to endorse this cause. Practically every liberal, labour and feminist group of women in England has followed the Women's Co-operative Guild in an overwhelming endorsement of the principles and practice of birth-control.

In India, in the spring of 1933, the All India Women's Conference passed a resolution in favour of birth-control, and demanded that the Government should give contraceptive information to mothers. This Conference represents many millions of enlightened women of India. The great Hindu poet and mystic, Rabindranath Tagore, says: "I am of the opinion that the birth control movement is a great movement not only because it will save women from enforced and undesirable maternity, but because it will help the cause of peace by lessening the number of surplus population of a country scrambling for food and space outside its own rightful limits. In a hunger stricken country like India it is a cruel crime thoughtlessly to bring more children into existence than can properly be taken care of, causing



endless suffering to them and imposing a degrading condition upon the whole family. It is evident that the utter helplessness of a growing poverty very rarely acts as a check controlling the burden of over-population. It proves that in this case nature's urging gets the better of the severe warning that comes from the providence of civilised social life. Therefore I believe that to wait till the moral sense of man becomes a great deal more powerful than it is now, and till then to allow countless generations of children to suffer privations and untimely death for no fault of their own, is a great social injustice which should not be tolerated."

Another grave problem concerning women now forces itself upon the attention of the medical world. Women in all lands of every religion and creed are forced to resign themselves to unlimited pregnancies unless they have proper information in contraception. When this is denied them their only resort is to abortion. Out of fear—because of their misery, poverty and ill health—they seek to evade a motherhood which would bring with it destitution and possible starvation to an unwanted baby. Medical men are discovering that if they withhold from the awakened womanhood of the world a proper, safe and dependable means of birth control they are bound to be confronted by the infinitely more complicated problem of abortion.

Since this expedient has as yet not been legalised (except in Russia), women who refuse to bring miserable, sickly offspring into the world are thrust into the channels of quackery, where profit is made out of their ignorance and misery. It is the opinion of competent medical observers during the last twenty-five years that there are more criminal abortions performed in the United States than in any other country in the world. The total of abortions, which does

not include the number of those brought about by drugs or by instruments used by the pregnant woman herself, has been estimated to top 2,000,000 per year.

All this vast activity is carried on in defiance of laws, penalties, or the possible consequence of death. And this harsh and violent means of securing freedom from undesired pregnancy will continue in the future as it has in the past, for nothing short of contraceptive practice can put an end to the horrors of abortion. The history of abortion shows that it has long been opposed by law, by religious canon, by public opinion, and the penalties range from ostracism to imprisonment; yet how little these have availed is demonstrated by two million abortions annually in this great country. Women will deceive and dare. They will resist and defy the power of Church and State. They will march to the gates of death to gain that freedom from unending child-bearing which the awakened woman demands.

Intricate as is this problem of woman's control of her procreative function, it remains the pivot of a new civilisation. A great cosmic paradox lies hidden here: that the union of male and female—a communion that seems so private, so personal, that it can scarcely be spoken of in public—is actually of the most public significance for the future of the race as well as for the peace of the whole world! In that intimate relationship lies concealed not only the joy or misery of the individuals sharing it, but of their children and the children of their children. Here indeed are the gates of the body and here are the gates of the soul!

Never in the whole history of this planet has woman's place in the creation of the structure of the future been so important. To-day we seem to stand at the close of an era. We witness the bankruptcy and the collapse of man's at-

tempt to conquer the universe—of man's one-sided, womanless battle for supremacy. Man has successfully spanned the oceans, flung railroads and air-lines across continents, conquered the air, harnessed the endless torrents of water-power. Through the lenses of his telescope he has explored distant universes, through the lenses of his microscope waged war against bacteria; with the power of broadcasting he has girdled the globe in the fraction of a second.

Everything has been accomplished in the desire to *unite* peoples and nations, to bring them closer together. Yet because of the ceaseless hordes of human beings ever increasing their numbers, we find mankind goaded to a frenzy of exploitation and war. We may blame the capitalist, but before there was a capitalist there were hungry mouths to feed. In going forth to battle, to subjugate other nations and races, man has found himself mutilated and almost destroyed by his victories.

• I assert my faith that the bearing and nurture of children are *not* the aim and end of women's existence. Nor do I consider the first duty of every married couple to be "non-stop" perpetuation of their kind. I go further and say that in many cases it is man's duty to refrain from this crime against posterity and world peace.

Let the present crisis in the Far East serve as a warning to us. According to statistics made public by the Statistical Bureau of the Japanese Cabinet there were last year in Japan a total of 2,182,743 births: four babies a minute, twenty-four hours a day, day in and day out, through the whole year. Japan is breaking her own record for population increase! The crisis in the Far East—so menacing for the peace of the world at large—grows out of this "full speed ahead" cradle competition between Asiatic races.

Japan's determination to find an outlet for her surplus population precipitated the so-called "undeclared war" against the Chinese, the creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo, the breaking of solemn treaties, the sowing of the seeds of another world-war. Japan has a most serious population problem: she has an area about equal to that of the state of California, in which there are not sufficient natural resources to maintain her teeming millions. A population can become as explosive as steam and, like the chick inside the shell, it breaks its barriers in order to live.

Japan is only one of the "danger spots" in the world today. Thanks to our opponents who keep human beings in ignorance regarding contraception, each day reveals about 50,000 extra babies on earth. For every 10,000 who die between dawn and dawn, 150,000 are born. These new inhabitants who survive daily have contributed to the 230,000,000 which have been added to the world's population since 1920.

Man has seemingly conquered everything but his own ignorance. As Dean Inge has said, "nothing fails like success," and this is the kind of success we are bound to witness unless we attack the population problem at its source.

In all this slaughter, woman has been the real victim, but she has also been the unconscious culprit. While crying aloud and wringing her hands at each rumour of war, she has applauded every victory and boasted of the conquests. From her body have come the sinews of war, the cannon-fodder that feeds enmity, greed and exploitation. When she ceases to produce the grist, the mills will stop grinding and war will cease!

I want to see Woman of the Future liberated, spiritually emancipated, conscious of her invincible creative powers,

autonomously and imperiously wielding them with vision and intelligence for the peace of the world. But before this, Woman as a creative entity must liberate *herself*; she must give voice to her *female* longings, her intuitions, her wishes and her desires.

Thousands, nay millions, of women have in the past sacrificed their lives in devotion to religious creeds. They have abandoned their beauty, interests, education, talents, ambitions, love and desire for motherhood, in order to dedicate themselves to a Faith. Is it not time that this same force, idealism and devotion were turned toward Science, to the building of a new civilisation? If only a few offered themselves to these purposes, applying their creative energies, their intuitive powers, in the laboratory of life, humanity would advance at an unprecedented pace in its material well-being and spiritual evolution. The solidarity of woman is as noble as the brotherhood of man.

Into the life of every woman come other women, less fortunate, less enlightened, many of them crushed under the burden of poverty and child-bearing. They are too inarticulate to cry out, too poor to have social or political influence, too weak to demand their liberties. The very fact that they have come into your life makes you morally responsible for their emancipation. Sympathy is not enough; palliative, emergency help is not enough; philanthropy is not enough; you can do nothing less than help to set them free. Free that they may help themselves; free that they may grow in wisdom and enlightenment.

Just as physical sight developed in the body, so shall our spiritual vision unfold as we move upward and onward into that current of life we call consciousness. When we become conscious of our acts, conscious of our responsibility, we shall

be conscious of the greatest of all responsibilities—that of handing on the precious, yet mysterious gift of life.

Let us, at least, pass it on in a body as fit and perfect as it can be made. Then will the soul that is summoned have at its command an instrument suitable for its highest development.

Only through birth control will women gain control of their bodies or develop their souls. Only through a new spiritual vision can they ever unlock the great gates to a Future in which joy and happiness will prevail. Only through a new consciousness of birth can humanity at large ever extricate itself from the man-made muddle in which it is grounded to-day. Instead of a world created by irresponsible hordes in hatred and antagonism, awakened woman shall guide us into a future created by all-embracing love through the consciousness of birth.