

**LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 208**  
**Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius**

# **Debate on Birth Control**

**Margaret Sanger and  
Winter Russell**

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Mrs. Sanger and W. Russell  
and  
Shaw vs. Roosevelt  
on Birth Control

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# DEBATE ON BIRTH CONTROL

WINTER RUSSELL

FIRST SPEECH

· Mr. Russell: Ladies and gentlemen. I am very glad to have the opportunity of speaking to you this afternoon, and I may say at the outset that it is obvious that my adversary and I agree upon one thing, and that is that we are discussing what is absolutely the most vital question before the American people today. (Applause.) We are absolutely in accord on that, and we are just as far opposed in our method of approach as it is possible to be.

I want to say at the outset that we are going to deal—or I am, and I assume my adversary is, too—with ideals and principles and not with persons. I want you to realize that I consider myself speaking—and I trust reverently—on the most important subject that I have ever advocated.

I heard one of the greatest psychologists this country has ever produced, who said “When you conceive of the mere handful of people that inhabit all the globe, and you think of the vast river of humanity that is flowing on this planet, and you think of the billions of unborn, you wonder if man sometimes transcends the impossible and thinks and considers the unborn as God himself.” And I believe today I am speaking in behalf of the great unborn—those who are being murdered by the thousands, if not millions, in a manner that far transcends the method of warfare.

Now, I said that we are going to speak of

ideals and principles and not of persons. It is very difficult oftentimes not to attack a person or hurt his feelings when you characterize the principle of an act, and you sometimes have to be assailing a person. I hope and I try to love every human being on the face of the earth. There are principles and ideals I abominate and abhor with every drop of blood and feeling that I have. I never want that abhorrence of the principle or ideal of the person to adhere to that person.

I heard a minister the other day speaking of the French and Germans who were having some conferences, and he was asked "did they still hate one another?" and he said they did not hate one another because they broke bread together and you could not hate a person with whom you have broken bread, and he could not hate anybody that he knew.

I hate and abominate the principles that I am fighting, but I trust that you will take the sting, fumigate it, take the anti-toxin, if you will, because I don't want any allusions to personality to be taken from any of the statements that I make.

Another thing I want to say about my opponent, and I hope she will say the same about me, is that I want to bow in sincere respect and admiration for what I conceive to be her utter and absolute sincerity, and to her devotion to the cause which she advocates. I question that in no degree. I hope she will give me the same consideration.

We are going to deal with these principles. I am not going to concern myself much with

authorities. I suppose she can quote from Dr. Robinson and apparently Dr. Knopf (he says he isn't an authority,) and others as authorities. I could quote from Lamb and Roosevelt and the Bible—the great religions of the earth—scriptural authority that comes from the very depths of the spiritual, and what I believe to be the very mouth of God itself—of Nature—if you do not like to admit the existence of Providence.

I am not concerned with Scripture or authorities. I am going to deal with this question from what I believe are the cold, inevitable facts of life as we know them, and meet them every day.

Now I am going to admit in the first place that there are many families with too many children. It would be foolish to gainsay that. They are a burden to the mother. They are a hardship to the father who tries to provide for them. They make conditions unfair and unjust for the other children. The fact is, and I hope that she will admit it also, that there are thousands of homes in the United States of America that are too lacking in children—although I think she has once stated that the most immoral thing a person can do is to bring a large family into the world. Here we have the problem and the question is, how are we going to meet it?

I propose that we should meet this problem by the measure of self-control. I believe by this means we can solve it, and at the same time gain one of the greatest advantages you can possibly win on the face of the earth. **Sex**

control is the best path to self-control and to self-discipline. It is the key to wisdom. It is the key to power. It is the key to intellectual and mental development; indeed, she has once stated that only those people who are mentally developed are capable of self-control and I want to say that they got a large measure of their mental development by self-control. She is looking through the wrong end of the telescope.

And so we come to this method. I want to say, as another part of the platform upon which I am to stand, that I conceive and hold marriage to be more than physical. It is not a purely sensual relationship. It borders on the aesthetic, spiritual, mental, and modern aspects of life, and when you try to take the physical by itself you find a condition of naked sensuality which is disastrous in the extreme.

My contentions are these: In the first place, fundamentally, universally, infinitely from every point of view, it is vicious. It is false from every scientific construction that you can possibly conceive of; it is one of the most vitiating things from every point of philosophy, physiology and psychology.

I believe it is disastrous intellectually, mentally, and spiritually. It is disastrous and perpetrates a great wrong upon the unborn millions who are waiting for entrance upon this great amphitheatre of life. It is disastrous physically, mentally, and spiritually upon the future. It is disastrous to the same degree upon the people who practice it—husbands and wives who resort to these measures. I hold that

it perpetrates the greatest crime of all the ages, namely, race suicide.

Let me approach the first method, and that is this question of whether it is right from the point of view of the philosophy of man, if you will; and I want you to consider it simply from the practical living point of view. I want to lay down this proposition—it is that you can't have pleasure in this world without paying for it—that there are certain laws that sweep through the entire universe from the furthestest star to the tiniest atom and molecule that you can find in existence.

I am a member of the bar of the State of New York. I trust that I have due regard and respect for the statutes, the constitution and the laws of this great city, state and nation. But I hold them as the veriest trash when they come up against the laws of Nature. The laws of Nature cannot be revised. They cannot be repealed. There is no power in this whole universe that can change these laws with which you have to deal.

That means you can't get pleasure without paying for it. Nature is inexorable in bringing about her retribution. She does not need any balance book. You can never embezzle. You can't cheat. You can't get away from her.

Emerson has said that "the ingenuity of man has always been dedicated to the solution of one problem—how to detach the sensual sweet, the sensual strong, the sensual bright from the moral sweet, the moral deep, the moral fair—that is again to contrive to cut clean off this upper surface so thin as to leave it bottomless,



to get one end without another end. The soul says eat, the body would feast. The soul says, 'The man and woman shall be one flesh and one soul.' The body would join the flesh only."

"All things are double, one against another," continued Emerson. "Tit for tat. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, blood for blood, measure for measure, love for love. Give and it shall be given you. He that watereth shall be watered himself. What will you have, quoth God, pay for it and take it. Nothing ventured, nothing have. Thou shalt be paid exactly for what thou hast done, no more, no less. Who doth not work, doth not eat. Harm watch, harm catch. Curses always recoil on the head of him who imprecates them. If you chain a slave, one end chains you. Bad counsel confounds the adviser. The devil is an ass."

You must pay at last your own debt. Those are the laws. Now we recognize it in physics. Energy cannot be annihilated. Birth control says, "yes". You shall pay the price. You can annihilate that energy and drink from the cup of pleasure, but you don't take the responsibility—the duty and the care. You recognize it in physics. You recognize it in chemistry, in every law of life. When Ponzi in Boston said, "I will give you 50 percent"—the world laughed, because it can't be done. Birth control advocates, like the Ponzis, say they will give you 50 percent and 100 percent on your investment, but it can't be done. It is frenzied finance. It is along the lines of the people who are alchemists, who think they can turn the baser metals into gold. It is an age-long

dream. It is a belief that has been held from the beginning of time. That thing cannot be done. That is the law of life—of God—that you have to pay.

And so that is the thing you are confronted with. I don't say that you don't seem to gain, but for every gain you seem to grasp you have lost the life of it. He who does not work shall not eat. The trouble is that we are bound by the fetish of money, of gold, and lose sight. In other words we have eyes literally that see not, and ears that hear not.

And that is the thing that we must consider. So I want you to have in mind, that by the very law of life, the very theory of science of our being, we have to pay, and if we take that, if we try to grasp that, we are going to pay the penalty. In my next opportunity to address you I shall take up that to show you how we pay. (Applause.)

## MARGARET SANGER

### FIRST SPEECH

Mrs. Sanger: Mr. Chairman, and ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Russell and I seem to agree on some of the points of this argument, at least, but as usual with most opponents of birth control, they have absolutely no intelligent argument. (Laughter.) They always barricade themselves behind the Bible or the terrible vengeance of an offended Nature. That is exactly what Mr. Russell is doing now.

Now, friends, I want to say, let us get down to fundamental principles. Let us get together and look at life the way it is now, not as it might have been had Nature acted thus and

so, not as it might be had God done thus and so, but as we find ourselves today. We have a few principles of life by which we must live, and I claim that everyone of us has a right to health, to liberty and to the pursuit of happiness. I say furthermore that birth control is an absolutely essential factor in our living and having those three principles of happiness. (Applause.)

By birth control, I mean a voluntary, conscious control of the birth rate by means that prevent conception—scientific means that prevent conception. I don't mean birth control by abstinence or L<sup>v</sup> continence or anything except the thing that agrees with most of us, and as we will develop later on, most of us are glad that there are means of science at the present time that are not injurious, not harmful, and all conception can be avoided.

Now let us look upon life as it really is, and we see society today is divided distinctly into two groups: those who use the means of birth control and those who do not.

On the one side we find those who do use means in controlling birth. What have they? They are the people who bring to birth few children. They are the people who have all the happiness, who have wealth and the leisure for culture and mental and spiritual development. They are people who rear their children to manhood and womanhood and who fill the universities and the colleges with their progeny. Nature has seemed to be very kind to that group of people. (Laughter.)

On the other hand we have the group who have large families and have for generations perpetuated large families, and I know from my work among them that the great percentage of these people that are brought into the world in poverty and misery have been unwanted. I know that most of these women are just as desirous to have means to control birth as the women of wealth. I know she tries desperately to obtain the information, not for selfish purposes, but for her own benefit and for that of her children. In this group, what do we have? We have poverty, misery, disease, overcrowding, congestion, child labor, infant mortality, maternal mortality, all the evils which today are grouped in the crowd where there are large families of unwanted and undesired children.

Take the first one and let us see how these mothers feel. I claim that a woman, whether she is rich or poor, has a right to be a mother or not when she feels herself fit to be so. She has just as much right not to be a mother as she has to be a mother. It is just as right and as moral for people to talk of small families and to demand them as to want large families. It is just as moral.

If we let, as we are supposed to do, Nature take her course, we know that any woman from the age of puberty until the age of the period of menopause could have anywhere from 15 to 20 children in her lifetime, and it will only take one relationship between man and woman to give her one a year, to give her that large family. Let us not forget that.

Are we today, as women who wish to develop, who wish to advance in life, are we willing to spend all of our time through those years of development in bringing forth children that the world does not appreciate? Certainly, anyone who looks into that will find that there is very little place in the world for children. And besides, if a woman does spend all her time in child-bearing, do you know that, even with healthy women, one out of ten who have children as often as Nature sends them, dies from child bearing? One out of every ten women who lets Nature take her course and has from 12 to 16 children dies from child bearing. Furthermore, there are many cases where it is absolutely indispensable for a woman's health, for her life, in fact, to have means to control birth. There are cases, as Dr. Knopf said, of syphilis, cases of tuberculosis; do you realize that out of every seven women who have tuberculosis today four of them die, not from tuberculosis, my friends, but from pregnancy. They die because they have not that knowledge of birth control, because physicians and all the others who should be disseminating information and safeguarding these women's lives are not giving them the fundamental things to cure their disease, but allowing them to become pregnant. They keep them in ignorance of this particular knowledge that should assist them in recovering their health. Not only with tuberculosis, but there are other diseases that are inimical to woman's health and happiness. Heart disease is another thing that pregnancy absolutely stimulates and it means a woman's

death. Not long ago a young girl came to me who had kidney disease. She was a telegraph operator. Her husband was a young working man, but he was not able to support a family. She had on two different occasions tried to have children, but she had kidney disease and they found her in convulsions; she had frothed at the mouth and was taken to a hospital in a serious and critical condition. The only thing they could do to her was to resort to abortion, and yet they send her back to her home, to her husband and family again in just the same way, with no information as to how to protect herself against another condition such as she had just gone through. That is what happens to our women today, even those who are suffering from disease where they should be protected with means and knowledge of birth control.

The only weapon that women have, and the most uncivilized weapon that they must use, if they will not submit to having children every year and a half, is abortion. We know how detrimental abortion is to the physical side as well as to the psychic side of woman's life. Yet there are in this nation, because of these generalities and opinions that are here before us, and that are stopping the tide of progress, more than one million women who have abortions performed on them each year.

What does this mean? It is a very bad sign when women indulge in it, and it means they are absolutely determined that they cannot continue bringing children into the world that they cannot clothe, feed and shelter. It is a woman's

instinct, and she knows herself when she should and should not give birth to children, and it is much more natural to trust this instinct and to let her be the judge than it is to let her judge herself by some unknown God. I claim it is a woman's duty and right to have for herself the power to say when she shall and shall not have children.

We know that the death rate, maternal death rate, has not been falling in the United States of America, although the death rate from diseases has been falling. That shows woman is given little consideration in scientific and medical lines. But then woman will never get her own freedom until she fights for it, and she has to fight hard to hold and keep it. We know too that when the children that come to these mothers against their will and against their desires, are born into the world, we have the appalling number of 300,000 babies who die in this country before they reach one year of age—300,000 if you please, and it is safe to say, as anyone knows who has gone among these mothers and these children—it is safe to say that the great percentage of these children that are born have been unwanted. The mother knows that the child should not come to birth, when the five or six or seven that she has have not enough to eat. That takes common sense and every working woman has that common sense.

We have these 300,000 babies, this procession of little coffins, and we shake our heads sadly and say something must be done to reduce the number; but nevertheless we go right on.

allowing 600,000 parents to remain in ignorance of how to prevent 300,000 more babies coming to birth the next year only to die from poverty and sickness.

We speak of the rights of the unborn. I say that it is time to speak of those who are already born. I also say and know that the infant death rate is affected tremendously by those who arrive last. The first child that comes—the first or second or third child which arrives in a family, has a far better chance than those that arrive later.

We know that out of a thousand children born 200 of them die when they are either the second or third child. When the seventh arrives there are 300 that die out of that thousand, and by the time that the twelfth child arrives, 600 of this thousand pass away, and so we can see that the man or woman who brings to birth two or three children has a far better chance of bringing them to maturity than if they continued to have nine or ten or twelve children.

Those are facts. They are not generalities or opinions. The United States Government stands behind these facts. Then, also, through our maternity centers and child welfare and other means, we finally rescue some of these children, and do not allow them to die under one year of age. Then when the mother is pregnant again—if maternity was not forced upon her—she would be able to bring that child through. Another one begins to come, and we find that this child that was rescued



from death during its first year now succumbs before its fifth year. We then have 150,000 children who die before they reach the fifth year of age and so we can enumerate all of these conditions which are so despicable and so difficult in this country because we will not get down to fundamentals. We will not deal with the cause of things though we are anxious to deal with the cure. When a mother does finally bring her children through the adolescent period, what is the next thing? We find in the South where children come according to Nature, every year and one-half, that as soon as they are able, they are shuffled and hustled off to take the place of, or compete with, their father in the factories. That is the place that society has for children of the poor. We find in other states, too, that children a few years older are pushed out of the home as soon as they are able to take their place in industry, not because the mothers of these children are not just as anxious to see them in universities and colleges, but because of the pitiful earnings that she must have to support those who are coming behind them.

Most of us know this. We know something about the actual conditions of life as it is among us. In some of the factories of Lowell and Fall River, Mass., it was found that of the children who work and toil there, under ten years of age, 85 per cent of them come from families of eight—their mothers have given birth to eight children. We find in the South very much the same thing, excepting a higher

percentage of 90 to 93 per cent of the children there.

That is not the only thing. We have conditions again that are more disastrous to the race than child labor or infant mortality, and that is the transmission of the venereal diseases to the race that is to come.

We know that the mothers and fathers of today produce the race of tomorrow, and we know that unless we have a clean child and a clean stream of blood flowing through that child that the race of tomorrow is a doomed and foregone conclusion. We know, too, that out of this terrible scourge of disease comes 90 per cent of the insanity in this country, due to syphilis. Anyone who is dealing with fundamentals would know that these people should use means to protect themselves against having children. They should absolutely, in due regard to themselves, to their children and to the race, not allow a child to be born while that disease is running riot in the system. The terrible consequence is insanity.

We have fifty per cent of the still births of this country—in other words, babies that are dead when they are born—due to this disease. You may think that these things are taken care of, but I tell you that they are not and that women today are allowed to bring forth progeny even in the face of all officialdom, and all the kind and humane things and other kind of things that are doled out to them, when they themselves are syphilitic.

Not long ago we took a syphilitic woman to

43 hospitals in the city and everyone of them said, "We will cure her disease. Leave her here. We will do the best we can for her, but don't ask us to give her the information to control birth. That is not our office. That is not for us," and so that little syphilitic woman went back again to her home and will become pregnant only to abort again.

Nature sometimes brings the syphilitics to birth before their full time, or brings them dead. In other states of syphilis, this does not happen, and we have feeble minded as well as insane. We have 400,000 feeble-minded people in the United States of whom any authority on the subject would say to you "Not one of them should have been born." They never should have been born. Sometimes these parents are perfectly normal, and yet this taint has gone through the blood and has left the child apparently normal physically. He arrives at the adult age with all his physical functions, and yet has the mentality of a child eight years of age. The feeble-minded man or woman is of no use to himself or to society, and it would be better if we were living in a real civilization where they should not have been born. Only 40,000 of this 400,000 are entered in institutions. The others are living among us, producing and reproducing their progeny and providing abundant material and opportunity for the continuance of charities and other institutions for ages and generations to come.

We found in one institution, a so-called reformatory where they take the girls of the underworld—prostitutes—in Geneva, Ill., that

50 per cent of these girls belonged to the feeble-minded; and again we find that 89 per cent of these came from large families.

You can't get away from it, my friends. Large families and poverty and misery go hand in hand. Now what are we trying to do for all these conditions? How do we look out upon them? We are in a track. Motherhood has been tracked. We find that most of the social agencies of the country are trying to legislate these things out of existence. That is all. They run off to Albany and to Washington and they make eight-hour laws for women in industry, but they never think of the poor mother in the home who might have eight hours. Can you think of the mother in the home with eight hours? She has to go out of the home, out into industry to be protected by the law. Do you realize that mothers and women never have a night's rest from the time they are first pregnant, some of them, until the door of Nature closes their maternal functions? They never know what it is to have one whole night's rest. They are up nights with babies. Is this freedom or liberty? Hasn't she a right to herself—hasn't she a duty to herself to say when and under what conditions she shall be a mother?

We try to reduce our infant mortality rate by our milk stations and all of the other things going on today. Thousands and thousands of dollars are spent for this condition, and to a certain degree some of it is taken care of, but it does not get at the root. When we come to maternal mortality we find also huge funds

that are spent in nurses going into the homes of the poor, telling the mother of eight children how to have her ninth. (Laughter.) Most of us know that that mother wants to know how not to have her tenth. That is the welcome assistance that they can give that woman, but that will be the last stone to be turned.

Also our child labor—we make laws in Washington against child labor, hoping we will wipe it out of existence. For 50 years they have been trying to wipe child labor off the books in the United States, but they have not succeeded and they will never succeed until they establish birth control clinics in those districts where these women are, until they put in birth control clinics—like they have in Holland—in every industrial section in the United States where women can come to trained nurses and physicians and get from them scientific information whereby they may control birth.

Now we look upon all these things in just about the same way. We try to palliate most all of them. Take one instance—our immigration laws. The United States Government makes the most rigid laws. It scans the vessels carefully to see that no one should enter who is an idiot, who is insane, and who is a pauper. They see to it that anyone who enters is not an idiot, is not insane and is not a pauper. They make those rigid laws and rules for those who shall come in, but after you are once on the inside, you can produce and reproduce and repopulate the earth with syphilitic and diseased and insane people so far as the government is concerned. This is the short-sighted

side of our whole life. We are very generous and sympathetic but we are oversentimental, and the time has come to use our minds and to apply our intelligence to life and to the conditions of life as we find them today.

Now Mr. Russell has said some things that are very interesting to me. He tells us that we cannot have pleasure without pain. It is a man who is speaking. (Laughter and applause.) It is very peculiar that Nature only works on the one side of the human family when it comes to that law. She applies all the pain to the woman. It is absurd—a perfectly absurd argument in the face of rational intelligence (applause) to talk about marriage being for one purpose.

Now I claim—and I differ with Mr. Russell on that—I claim that the sex relationship has distinctly two functions. It has its love function and it has its maternal and paternal function. One is quite independent of the other, and one is just as moral as the other, and if it were not so, then the laws of this country ought to divorce the woman who is not able to have children. Absolutely! And we know it does not. We know that at the time the children are created there is not one per cent of humanity that is born or created with that thought in mind. Very few people think at the time of creation that they are going to create. Most of us are brought into the world by accident and that is exactly what birth control is going to change. It is going to make humanity a conscious and voluntary thing.

We talk of race suicide; it would take almost

a whole afternoon to tell you how futile that argument is. We know perfectly well, those of us who have studied the question, that in those countries where birth control knowledge has been at the disposal of the people, although the birth rate has gone down, the death rate has also gone down. Consequently the population has been accelerated and there has been a better population because it has been a better and healthier population. If Mr. Russell wants to talk about the race and does not want race suicide he had better come over quickly to the ranks of birth control.

### WINTER RUSSELL SECOND SPEECH

Mr. Russell: May I say at the outset that I did not say we could not have pleasure without pain, I said we could not have pleasure without paying for it and the man has to pay. (Laughter.) I, too, am concerned with the matter of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I have been trying to find out the truth about that from the very first time that I began to think, and that is what I want to find out, and I devoutly pray right now that if Mrs. Sanger has got the truth that it will prevail. But I want to know the truth and I still feel that the truth is not there.

I am going to concern myself entirely with refutation now. I am going to speak a little more about the positive side of this. I would say that Mrs. Sanger has done quite a little for me in pointing out that there are these two groups she sees all of the time—these families

with large numbers of children. I hope that I do not miss sight of them entirely. I may not know them directly or as intimately as Mrs. Sanger, but Mrs. Russell has been in 1,500 of the homes reported to be in dire straits and destitution. I have been living with her as her husband during the time that she visited these homes. And I feel that through her report I know something of those homes as well. I see the other homes of the small families, but I am frank to say that I do think in a far different line than Mrs. Sanger. She says that the large family is the family of poverty and of misery; very often, though not always nor in so large a measure as is generally expected, is it the family of poverty and of misery. I have seen misery beyond words in the small family. I know that my mother considered—and she had three children—that her life was a long tragedy. There was never a day that she waited for food or clothes or a fine home, but practically all of her talk was like the story of a great tragedy. My sister has a husband that has now an income of \$70,000 a year. She has never known what it was to want for food or clothes or a fine home, and I heard her say not very long ago that she had never known what happiness on this earth is. Mrs. Sanger sees poverty, she sees misery and she sees unwanted children. To be sure, there are many thousands of these homes where, sad to say, the children are unwanted, but they have made this devout prayer to God, I believe, for children, and they have gotten them. They have gotten what I believe to be the greatest wealth and treasure of the Kingdom



of Heaven that there is on the face of the earth, and when they get that, they have to pay for it. They have to pay and take the responsibility.

To my mind, these snickers and giggles are one of the most tragic things on the face of the earth. It shows you haven't got eyes that see. You have neither ears that hear, and you haven't got the heart that feels. (Chairman calls for more respectful attention on the part of the audience.)

Furthermore, there are not as many as she feels that are unwanted. Many in these homes are glad that they are numerous. And yet she says these small families that she sees are all wanted. I happen to know that in those small families, as she sees them, there is almost as large a percentage as those of one, two or three or sometimes four children that are not wanted. It has become an exception. She has not become as scientific as she ought to be.

She says she sees misery in large families. I do not see so much unhappiness. She says that she sees congestion and infant mortality. A large percentage of that is due to pure ignorance. My father was a physician, and in that town that I am going to talk about—she says I know nothing of race suicide and I will show you that I do—in this town of small families, there was infant mortality. My sister and I were at the door of death, for weeks, because we had a terrible disease. My father was a physician. We know that that disease has no terror whatever for people who know how properly to treat and feed children. There

is a difference in knowledge between that day and this. Much of our infant mortality is due to lack of education.

Then she says in these days there is not so much infant mortality in the small family. She finds in the large family more crime. I grant that there is a lot of crime. But I will have you remember that in those homes that are small I believe there is a vastly greater number of criminals, not only those who have enough knowledge to keep within the law but those who belong in the penitentiaries. But they are keen enough and they are shrewd enough to keep in the law.

The Lockwood Committee does not prosecute these profiteers, these robbers and pirates who belong in the penitentiary. The same greed that makes them criminals makes them think they can cheat nature by having a small family. I hold with Emerson that they pay. They may not pay in a penitentiary but they pay.

Then she says that here is where we get our prostitution. Yes, again she is right; a large number of the poor and unfortunate girls who walk the streets do come from these homes. For every girl who walks the street in that condition I believe there are 100 who have a wedding certificate and who live in a home. They are worse than prostitutes (ap-  
**plause**)—they want somebody to be their meal ticket. They want somebody that will support them. They want respectability. They want all the joy that they haven't got. You men have to pay and you assume the responsibility. Before these poor girls upon the street I take

off my hat and before these I can't express my detestation. (Applause.)

Then, just think of the logic of her position. Oh, there are some beasts in the marriage tie and they can't be self-controlled. What is the logic of it all? Is she going to have the young people filled up with this knowledge and are people of her kind going to have full sway over their lives—over their life of sacrifice and consecration to the welfare of humanity—over those going through life single, and should they have compulsory marriage because they don't have the joys of marriage? If she says that they suffer the physicians will tell you it is because they don't have children, and if they do suffer, it is because they have to pay that penalty.

Of all of the sickly stuff I ever heard of is this matter of tuberculosis and heart disease and kidney trouble. If a man has got a wife that has tuberculosis and heart disease and kidney trouble, and he is such a beast that he can't control himself and can't consecrate himself to the sick wife, the law should step in. Should we say that we will surrender her to this beast? Half of them do not know that the law of health and development, and strength, and energy comes from that very law of self-control.

Then this matter of child labor. Why of course I would protect, and we are protecting them in other states, and we are looking after it. But it is better to have these children born, terrible as it is, than not to have any children at all.

Then they say that this matter of venereal disease—Good Lord—apparently she wants to give them a certificate of an endless playground for the rest of their lives. Feeble-minded, of course the law should step in there and devote a little intelligence to prevent this crime from going on.

Now as to this matter of health, in the first place, we know that the children are not being born. The statisticians of every life insurance company in the entire United States are pointing out that the American stock of today is dying out, that they are not being born. Then this matter of the children that are born. Let us begin with them. Why, a boy or girl that is born in a family of one or two, in the first place, loses about one-tenth of a natural life because it has not the association with children that it should have. I know a one-child family that had quite a number of friends and their selfish and natural attitude is "none of this one-child stuff for me." Those kids will grow up and become nothing—those one or two children in a small family are worthless. I will give you the facts.

They talk about going to colleges and universities. We are manacled today by the fetishes of paper respectability. I have seen a lot of these patriots. My grandfather's mother had 13 children in a log cabin, and I don't think any of them died young. They all lived to a good old age. That old patriot—he never saw the inside of a college—but he knew more than half the graduates of Yale and Harvard. He knew the facts of life.

This matter of the physical side of it. You cannot divorce them. I don't care. I don't discuss authorities. I don't care if Mrs. Sanger should bring every medical authority there is, for I can get as many as she can. Take a case that comes up in court. Some man says the defendant is very insane. Another gets up—an expert—and he says the defendant is not insane at all. For everyone she can get to say that it is not harmful—I can get someone to say that it is. They go into the laboratory and prove that the act is harmless, but they can't get into the mind and heart, and the mind and heart have more to do with the well being from the physical point of view than anything you can possibly conceive of. I was brought up in New England and in that section of the country every housewife is a nervous wreck and nearly everybody knows why.

Audience: Why?

Mr. Russell: Mrs. Sanger can tell why. From the mental point of view; I grant you here that it is difficult to measure the kind, but this mental development is an arrested development. Do you know every father and mother I believe is subjected to this arrested development? That is why we haven't more energy and vibrating health and strength in America today. Why do we have this apathy and sluggishness in American life? It is because of these thousands of arrested developments of these people that want one or two children.

These mothers think that they are entitled to the whole world. Talk about 2.75 percent

beer. These mothers are not even 10 percent mothers, then of all the misrepresentations and tears these mothers pour over this one child—it makes me sick. (Laughter.) The ghastly thing is that they have but that one child. The sad part of it is that we are not all gifted with an imagination. Think what they are devoutly praying for—that is the tragedy—just think when they get that one life or two, and then when they begin to plan and contrive, and sacrifice themselves—then if Fate or destiny cruelly takes that one child—what greater tragedy is there in this world?

I have seen broken fathers and mothers who have said that life is dead when that only child or that only daughter has been taken from them. One of the saddest cases I have ever seen in my life happened a few days ago when a mother recently buried her husband—and a few years later buried her only son; and then her daughter, who had risen to the very pinnacle of fame here in the city of New York was stricken down. A greater tragedy you could not picture than that. Consider this, that for everyone that is lost, how many are there that have not been brought forth into the world? They don't know what they have missed and what they have lost. That to my mind is the greatest tragedy of all, the spiritual side of it.

Now let me submit to you a little about the practical side of it. Mrs. Sanger says that I am theoretical, that I deal with the Bible. I do not care whether or not the Bible has said it. It wasn't that that makes me take this attitude. This is the situation.

We have birth-control in America today. Except for two or three groups that to my mind are the very heart and soul of America and upon which it relies, we have birth control, and Mrs. Sanger and the rest of her kind would talk to the fresh, wholesome people that are coming over, who are the hope of America—she would come to them and not wait as we make them wait in order to become citizens. We say “you cannot be citizens until you have lived here a few years.” She would say, “We will hand you this purely American doctrine of birth control and you can have it right off.”

I have an opportunity of seeing this through the years. I am going to give you a picture of the block in which I was born and brought up, that I have watched for 30 years. Thirty years ago I began to watch the block. There were 17 families, 34 people at the start; 34 people who were successful, they believed, in this little town of 3,500 people. It had a fine school, a State Normal School—one of the foremost in the State. It had a Boys' School known nationally, if not internationally. They were 34 people in 17 homes.

All were successful and owned their own homes with well-kept lawns and they were thoroughly American. They believed that they were well educated people.

Now, take them house by house. The first family was a merchant. They had one child, a girl, and “Oh, what a girl was Mary.” She was a singer. There, Mrs. Sanger says, Nature was kind. She was a singer and she yodeled and warbled over the country and then her par-

ents thought that Mary was going to be a great singer. No, she did not become c. c. She married the station agent. The station agent did not find that there was as much rhythm in the home as there was in Mary's voice and he went out, and finally he stayed out altogether. He walked in front of a locomotive and that was the finish of him. Mary lives today in a little boarding house. That family is extinct. Mary is still living on. That family is gone.

In the next house, there was a man who was a kind of good-for-nothing fellow. I suppose the town said he came from far away and that he was a boomer, but he had a wondrous wife. This wife wasn't educated, but she had the most phenomenal energy. She could wash 23 hours a day and she did. They had three children and she, as Mrs. Sanger has said, wanted them to be brought up decently. The boy was sent to Harvard, by this 23 hours-a-day wash woman. The boy went to Harvard became a good-for-nothing, and then went out West.

One daughter married a man in Vermont. They never had children and never will.

The other daughter married. She was a painter. She painted canvases. Her husband was respectable. He was a federal official, but after an alarming career of drunkenness, he died. And she will never have children.

There is one child from that family. In the next house was the superintendent of the State Normal College; two children, one a boy, who after a career, married. The other is an old maid.



A physician lived in the next house. His first wife went insane. He had a beastly temper. I don't know whether it was birth control that did it. There was one daughter. She had several marriages but no children. Then he married again. That second wife went to the insane asylum. One child died before it was of marriageable age.

In the next house was a man who had two children, and they never had grandchildren. In the next house was a veteran of the Civil War who spent most of his pension money on drink. He had two sons, one of whom was married and whose wife died in a familiar circumstance. I suppose she was not quite well informed. There was one child. The other boy from that family is looked upon as common and vulgar because he has four children. Then in the next house there was a man who had several farms. They had three children. One of them was an old maid. The second girl married after several years. She died. There is one child from the third. In the next house was one of my uncles. He died too, leaving two children, but they never lived and there were no grandchildren from them.

Crossing on the other side of the street, another physician. They had a son who went to college. He has become a druggist in Vermont, married 20 years and no children.

That family is extinct. In the next house was another physician. He died at the age of 45. His wife had no children. His wife was the champion bon-bon eater. In the next house there was a boy and a girl. She married a drunk-

ard. He was a dentist. No children. The brother is out West, and I believe there are two children there. In the next house, there was a son and daughter. The daughter married the cashier of the savings bank. No children; 25 years married. The son did not learn birth control quick enough. They had a child before they were married. (Laughter.) His mother took him and sent him out on a farm; she taught him, and they only have had one since.

Then came my father's house. I have one sister and one brother. My sister has three children and my brother four, and I have four. (Applause.) There are eleven grandchildren. Within the next house, there is a merchant living with his wife and they both tended store. They wanted to be so decent and accumulate a lot of property. They became the crankiest individuals and when he died, his wife said he was the handsomest looking corpse she had ever seen. The family is extinct. No children whatever.

There is another that lived in that house, and they had one child. Out of these 17 families, nine are extinct. Nine are dead and gone. They have passed away. Is that race suicide? Out of eight who remain, out of the 34 people, out of these eight families, there are 26 grandchildren. My father's family produced 12 of the 26. Out of those 17 families, there are 14 grandchildren if you except mine. I think I am an exception. There is race suicide. Don't tell me that that is one exceptional block. I can duplicate that block on every street in that town except one blessed community, Little Can-

ada. They were not Americans. They were vulgar. They were poor. They wanted big families, but from these poor families in Little Canada there have come the French Canadians. From them come doctors, lawyers, and teachers, and they are inheriting the town. There is race suicide.

I can duplicate that block in practically every American city in this country. I can duplicate that block in every apartment house on the west side.

America is dying today—the America that we know. I wish that it were not. I wish that it could get a cleaner and better ideal, but it hasn't got it. That is the tragedy of it all.

Now, that is what we have got to consider, whether we are going to do that or not. I have no worry whatever and life has no worry. It does not matter what you prove, the inexorable law goes on. "Those who do shall inherit the earth. They shall have life unto the end and the others shall be extinct."

I come from college—Harvard. I believe that the average production of college graduates in America is three-quarters of a life. That is statistically and literally true. (Applause.)

## MARGARET SANGER

### SECOND SPEECH

Mrs. Sanger: There is no doubt there are many ways of race suicide but Mr. Russell has not proven to me yet that birth control is causing it. He has shown us—given us the number of inhabitants in a block which, according to his ideas, are dying out. Those who

have had no children—there is no reason to claim or to know just what is the cause of those people not having children. Many barren women today might be desirous of having children, and they go through serious operations in order to have children, and sometimes because of an infection given to them by their husbands they are unable to bear children.

Furthermore, for every block that Mr. Russell can produce in New York City, where they are controlling their numbers and where they are not having the numbers sufficient to his satisfaction, I can show you an equal number who are overdoing themselves. (Applause.) I can give him one block in New York City where there are 10,000 people, and but one airshaft between them. They are living huddled together practically like animals and he will ask these people to produce children to a still greater extent than they have.

When we talk about race suicide it seems to me that there are other things that one must consider. Birth control will improve the quality of the race, and unless we do improve the quality of the race, it is better that we do have race suicide. (Applause.) Certainly all of us who have lived within the past five years and have seen what has gone on in the world—we have seen the destruction of life—we have seen it so mercilessly taken—certainly, there are ways by which race suicide is being put out upon the world other than birth control. War certainly has done something to wipe out the inhabitants of the earth. And if you go to Europe where I have been the last six months

or so and see the condition of misery and unhappiness that is going on there, particularly in Central Europe, you would say that death would be a blessing to these people, instead of the hand of peace that has come to them. When I saw more than 15,000 little children in Germany that were born since the war, friends, brought into being in the most terrible conditions that any country could be in—those children were brought to birth because they, too, did not believe in birth control. They believe in numbers, in expansion, in more and more children, and today, those hundreds and hundreds of children have no backbone. They are almost unable to hold up their heads. They will be absolutely useless for another generation. Are these the kind of children we want to bring into the world? Don't we want quality instead of quantity?

It seems to me it is time we used our intelligence and stopped the ranting phrases that we have been hearing so many of today. (Applause.)

Again I say, Mr. Russell tells us that he was quite sick when he heard me tell about women who had tuberculosis and heart disease and other ailments, and should have been prevented from becoming pregnant. He said the man who did not have self-control was not worth much. I wonder if Mr. Russell knows—he is a lawyer—I wonder if he knows what the laws of this state are so far as you men are concerned. The Bible states "Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands." It is one of the things put into our laws, and the woman who does not

submit to her husband—he does not have to support her. I wonder if Mr. Russell knows that. I have myself had cases where women have come to me and said: "What shall I do? I have left this man. I can't have more children." And when she comes to court the judge has said: "Are you willing to live with this man or not?" And she said: "I can't have more children. I don't want more children." And the judge said: "You must adjust this matter for yourselves." The man did not have to support her unless she submitted her body to him. That is the condition today.

We talk about self-control. I think those of us who look on the world know there is self-control. It is one of the finest human instincts there is. When you see hungry people going around with plenty of food in front of them, I know there is self-control in the world. (Applause.)

And don't forget that this self-control—and I would like to ask anyone to contradict it—that a man and woman may be ever so self-controlled and if they are married and live in marriage relationship—that it only means one embrace or one union to have a baby every year. The most self-controlled man and woman in the world can still have a family that that man can't take care of. That is something to remember.

On the other hand, if we mean, and if Mr. Russell would only talk so that we can understand him—plainly—I have to tell you what he means as a matter of fact. If Mr. Russell means that this relationship between man

and woman should only be for procreation, then that is another matter. I wish he would say so. If it means you are going to have two children, then only two times in your life you should have union—that's another question. But our marriage laws are not based on that law. And it would have to be a strict understanding before a woman married, before that union or that companionship or relationship could take place. I have no objection whatsoever to any individuals who wish to live that way.

But I am speaking for the millions of women who are crushed with over child-bearing, whose lives are broken and who have become drudges in the family today. I am speaking for mothers, and the individual here and there does not concern me in the least. There may be an exception, but I know there are millions and millions of women who are married, who are just as self-controlled as anyone Mr. Russell can show us, who are living in terror of pregnancy, but they have men who are just as good to them. Men are not all beasts. These people give you an idea that men are lustful, beastly creatures, looking to violate some woman's virtue. I wonder why a man does not stand up against that. They never do. It takes a woman to stand up for them. I know that most of the women that I have lived with—their husbands are men who are just as considerate and decent as anyone you can find. They are trapped in ignorance. That is what is the matter.

Our whole sexual education has been at

fault. We have been kept in blinders. We have been taught that this relationship is a vital, terrible thing—put it out of your hearts. However a marriage certificate is placed in your hands and presto! everything is supposed to be made beautiful. (Applause and laughter.)

Our married life and happiness depends upon an attitude and an ideal attitude towards our relationships, and we are not going to get it by blindness and by ignorance. We are going to get it by adjusting our own interests and our own intelligence to life as it is today, and I claim that any man living on the average workingman's wage today is not able to support some two or three children decently. There may be exceptions to that, but we have something like 40,000 or 50,000 people in this country who are living dependent upon public charity, and every time a man and woman does not have the conscious responsibility toward the children that they are going to bring into being, and have them according to Nature, as Mr. Russell would say, without regard to their protection, to preparing for their coming, that the man's wage is unable to keep up with his reproductive power. That has been the history of labor all the way down, and the man and woman who brings to birth children that they can't take care of, it means you are going to pass that burden and the responsibility upon someone else. We have today in China this terrible poverty that is going on there. Thirty millions of people in China are starving to death. The Chinese have always lived according to Mr. Russell's theory, and they are ap-



pealing now to low birth rate countries, to those who have as a nation used birth control; they are appealing to them now to save some millions of others in China and we have to do it.

The responsibility always comes back upon those who have protected themselves, those who have lived within their own means, and according to their own intelligence.

I am not going to take up all the time I have been allotted because I am quite through. I want to say in the first place birth control joins the fight against the transmission of venereal disease to the next generation. Birth control is the pivot around which every movement must swing making for race betterment. Birth control does not act as a substitute for any social scheme or other ideal system. But it must be the base and serve them as a foundation.

Birth control will free the mother from the trap of pregnancy. It will save the child from that procession of coffins, as well as from the toil of mill and factory.

Birth control will make parenthood a voluntary function instead of an accident as it is today. (When motherhood and childhood are free, we then can go hand in hand toward the emancipation of the human race. (Applause.)

## WINTER RUSSELL

## THIRD SPEECH

Mr. Russell: May I say that if Mrs. Sanger does not know what the cause of no children in Farmington was, I do. Everybody in that town knew. It was because they had made up their minds that they were not going to do that and they did not have them.

That is one of the great troubles with this volunteer parenthood—it is that there are so very few volunteers. Mrs. Sanger and I agree upon this matter of education. She would not say to those who are trying to find the ready path to health—those who are afflicted with tuberculosis and venereal disease—that they can reach this road to health by self-control. She says that we will educate you and the feeble-minded about the most delicate, intricate complications, and disseminate information and literature that we have on the human body. She thinks she can take the millions of people and, as a matter of cold fact, introduce this knowledge. A large percentage of these millions of abortions are due to the fact that they thought they knew all about it and they didn't. And Mrs. Sanger has pointed out that there still are a lot of laboratory experiments and research work that have got to be done before they will be absolutely, scientifically sure that they will know just exactly what they are doing.

I would have them educated, and I would have Mrs. Sanger and all the rest of them change their views in this connection because

of education. I agree with her absolutely in this. We are handing a marriage certificate to those who are not prepared to have it. A man who is going to run a steam engine or an automobile or prepare teeth must have a license. We ought to know about this matter of rearing children. We ought to have education, but it ought to be the education that will give us the key to self-control and teach us how to take care of the children after they have come.

And then this matter of the difficulty of self-control. If these people that have the one or two or three children would take them with joy and thanksgiving and devote themselves to the higher mental and spiritual development that ought to come with them, and would have come if they had been properly educated, self-control would be a very simple matter indeed.

Oh, this thing of quality. We are misled on this matter of quality—this matter of accomplishments. I don't know how I can possibly express myself any better than this. I believe that a woman who comes into Ellis Island and can neither read nor write, and has seven or eight children, is worth more to the United States of America than a graduate of Vassar University. I will go further. I say this, that if I had not been blessed with a wife and mother such as Mrs. Russell is, that I would choose for a wife today—I would rather have a girl that cooks and can't read nor write, who loves children, than some of these graduates with accomplishments.

We have four sons, and I hope and I pray that instead of getting as a wife an educated

rag and a bone and a hank of hair with accomplishments, that they will get some of these women that want and love a big family of children. I believe that their life will be richer, nobler, and fuller. I have a daughter. I hope and devoutly pray that instead of any person who is so utterly absorbed in this volunteer practice and who thinks that after some years that he will have one or two children—I would not say a common working man—I would say a divine working man—I would rather she have one of those and have a big family of children, than that she should have one of the other kind.

Little Canada with its families has given a better quality of children to that town and country than any other place. They call for statistics of volunteer countries. They don't realize that there are great segments of humanity that have it as a fundamental part of their life—this matter of sacred relations. When you stop to think of it, there is not one single phase in life, one single place in which you can be frivolous with this sacred function, that it does not rebound and make you repay and take its penalty—you pay the penalty. They have tried to take the sweet without the responsibility. They have thought that they could scheme with this sacred thing and strike a balance book with nature.

As a matter of fact, I was reading the other night that two or three of the great political economists say there is not a single case in the history of the world where there has been starving because of the number of people. The

future of the race belongs to those that have the numbers.

Then they say it is due to the war and the explosive populations. It is just ourselves, Germany, France and Italy, who have been practising this thing for years, the big material nations of the world, that are to blame. Those nations that are true to life are going to inherit the earth. It is inexorable in the way in which it works out.

As I look at America today, I see it in the grip of a foul monster. It was as though we had been gassed. I consider these teachings as mental and spiritual dope. Morphine and heroin don't compare with the way in which we are duped today. It speaks in all of our literature and customs. When you see a woman in a pregnant condition today, you see smirks and snubs as though it was a misfortune to that poor woman.

Take the intellectual life of America today. Greenwich Village thinks it is intellectual. It is the intellectual sewage disposal plant of America today, and it is not very scientific. It is a fact. Fifth Avenue and the west side where I live—it is the social garbage dumping grounds of the Nation. All these people want is freedom and liberty—freedom to be foul, freedom to be disgusting—they think they can obtain pleasure without paying for it. If there is anything that annoys me and my nerves is this puking pus that is called love poured forth over the poodle dog by some volunteer married person today.

As a matter of fact, a large family is the hope of the world. It is the greatest disciplin-

ary force that there is in life. There is nothing that so develops the mind and soul of man and woman as bringing up a great family of children. These disciplinary forces we are losing today and that is because we are following the easiest way. We are taking the course of the least resistance. You are trying to get the honey and escape the thorns, and it can't be done.

Oh, these people. If Mrs. Sanger were true in this matter—then why is it that the great mass of people—the down and outers, are single men, and a good many of them single women? It is because they haven't self-control to get the skill that is necessary, and there is always that condition. We find that by self-control one can lead a life of singleness. We find that self-control gives them influence and power. School teachers, priests and nuns—those people that have a tremendous influence, practice self-control.

Now, the individual is really unimportant. If you look at life itself and what you are trying to do, it is the race that is going to produce. It is the race of the past that has made it possible for us to be here today. And only as we measure up to this tremendous responsibility does the race of tomorrow depend. I cannot give you all that I would like to give you—a vision. But I believe that in these great unborn numbers is the real resource of America. Why, we have ample resources. We could all move into Texas and it would not be as crowded as Belgium was before the war began. We haven't begun to touch the resources.

About that little town in Maine, rotten to the core with its birth control, there are hundreds of depleted farms that used to support families of ten and twelve children, and do it well, too.

That is where the future lies—in the great unborn, in the heart, and in the soul. The psychologists say we use but 10 per cent of the brains we have and we are using a small percentage of the spiritual and moral resources we have. We can do it if we live up to this responsibility that we ought to incur.

I believe that in every mind and heart there is faith and love that would make life glorious and glad indeed, and I wish I could give you the vision of that. I have sought for ambition, fame, power, and I would like to write a great song, but I know I could never begin to express the music and joy of a great home, of a fine pure home.

I would like to paint a great picture, but I know I could never begin to depict the color and composition that there is in a little daughter's or son's face.

I would like to have a great piece of sculpture as my work, but I know that I could never begin to express the beauty and form of a little loving child in a home.

I would like to write a great novel, but I know I could not for one moment begin to give the comedy and the tragedy, the romance, and the thrill that there is in the home group of little children.

And I would like to write a great play, but I know that I could not begin to give the

drama, the comedy and the tragedy that there is in bringing up a little family.

I believe that the great mass of so-called Americans are today voluntarily but blindly shutting the unborn out from the Heaven to which I hope we will all ultimately reach. I thank you for your courtesy and consideration.  
(Applause.)



## SHAW VS. ROOSEVELT ON BIRTH CONTROL

"Reforms are excellent, but if there is nobody to reform their value becomes somewhat problematical. In order to make a man into a better citizen we must first have the man. In order that there shall be a 'fuller and better expressed life for the average woman,' that woman must be in actual existence. And the first necessity in 'bringing up the child right' is to produce the child.

"Stated in the abstract, these propositions are of bromidic triteness. But an astonishingly large number of persons, including a lamentably large number who call themselves social reformers, either are, or act as if they were, utterly blind to them when they try to deal with life in the concrete. This is true of every group of persons who treat Bernard Shaw seriously as a social reformer. It is true of every group of reformers who discuss the home and the school, but regard it as indelicate to lay stress on the fact that neither is worth discussing unless there are children in sufficient numbers to make the home and the school worth perpetuating. It is true of all blatant sham reformers who, in the name of a new morality, preach the old, old vice and self-indulgence which rotted out first the moral fiber and then even the external greatness of Greece and Rome. It is true of the possibly well-meaning but certainly silly persons who fail to see that we merely enunciate a perfectly

plain mathematical truth when we say that the race will die out unless the average family contains at least three children, and therefore that less than this number always means that, whether because of their fault or their misfortune, the parents are bearing less than their share of the common burdens and are rendering less than their due proportion of patriotic service to the nation."—Theodore Roosevelt.

Thus did Theodore Roosevelt preface an exhaustive expression of his views on birth control a few years before his death, in the Metropolitan Magazine, and in the course of his remarks he took occasion to pay his respects to Bernard Shaw. Roosevelt had heard the disciples of Shaw quote the learned Irish philosopher's statement that birth control was the greatest discovery of the nineteenth century, and he picked up his pen in protest. Roosevelt had little use for Shaw and was vehement in his opposition of Shaw's expressions and opinions of birth control. Consequently, when Roosevelt kept hearing this oft repeated conviction of Shaw's that birth control led the discoveries of the century, he couldn't keep still any longer and launched out in his well-remembered diatribe against Shaw and birth control.

No sooner had this appeared in the Metropolitan Magazine than Robert L. Wolf, a staunch admirer and disciple of Shaw's, as well as a speaking acquaintance, took up the cudgel in his defense.

Mr. Wolf had been teaching economics at Harvard where he had graduated in 1915 and

was just launching out on a literary career which has, in the succeeding years, been as successful as it has been noteworthy. He had been an interested student of Shaw, and though at the time he had not won for himself the prominent place he now holds in the field of letters, he did not hesitate to clash with the strenuous one and drive him into a neutral corner. He wrote Roosevelt as follows:

21 Hawthorne Road, Brookline, Mass.  
September 7, 1917.

Hon. Theodore Roosevelt,  
Oyster Bay, New York.  
My Dear Mr. Roosevelt:

Without in any way implying criticism of the main thesis of your admirable article on Birth Control in the October Metropolitan, may I venture to correct a rather ludicrous mistake which appears there?

As one of Mr. George Bernard Shaw's most enthusiastic disciples, and *therefore* a staunch believer in the doctrine your article sets forth, I am sure your knowledge of Mr. Shaw's views on child-bearing and race propagation must be founded either upon what other people have told you of Mr. Shaw, or else on a very incomplete and superficial acquaintance with his own writings. You are much too intelligent to have drawn any such absurd notion from Shaw's statements themselves.

Any real acquaintance with Shaw's works would at once disclose to you that he is a vigorous and hearty believer in the program of more, and many more,—as many as possi-

ble—good babies, as the most important and pressing of all social reforms. In distinction from the superficial eugenists, whom you rightly criticise, Shaw never forgets that quantity as well as quality is absolutely necessary for the life of the race. And the life of the race is the one aim, in his eyes, that possesses the slightest importance. You would find much to agree with in Shaw, if you would look for it.

May I suggest that you purchase Shaw's "Man and Superman," and that you devote a little careful attention to the Preface, the philosophical discussion in Act III, and most important of all, The Revolutionist's Handbook, at the end of the volume? Some of the editions of the play do not contain this last—the most important contribution of recent times to race propagation literature—but I think you can find it in the edition published by Brentano's.

I shall be disappointed in your candor and openness of mind if after you have read (or possibly—but I doubt it—reread) those portions of the book, you do not confess your error. You will undoubtedly disagree violently with a great many of Shaw's suggestions, but you certainly cannot accuse him of being less anxious to prevent race suicide than you yourself.

Very sincerely yours,

(signed) Robert L. Wolf.

Promptly came back this reply from Roosevelt:

Sagamore Hill,  
September 11, 1917.

My Dear Mr. Wolf:

The one sentiment on the subject which has been quoted to me by Shaw's admirers, and this has been quoted to me dozens of times, is the phrase that birth control is the great discovery of the 19th century. Never once have I had a Shaw disciple speak to me in advocacy of anything but the negative side of the matter; and my whole article was a protest against this.

Professor Conklin also quoted this sentence from Shaw: I shall write him to know where it comes from. The whole question is one of emphasis; in *theory* no birth control advocate demands the extinction of the race; it is the *effect* of their teachings, of their emphasis, of that part of what they say that is quoted and acted upon, with which I was dealing.

The analogy lies with what Shaw has done in, and prior to, this war, from the standpoint of his country's military interests and place of usefulness in the world. He has uttered occasional sentences of even extreme advocacy of the preparation and use of England's military strength. But taken as a whole his teachings, and the actions of his admirers (which, remember, was what I dealt with), have represented poison to England and insidious and effective aid to Germany from the standpoint of this war and of what went before and led up to this war. In this particular crisis, such an attitude has been profoundly immoral. The pro-Germans in this country have again and again quoted Shaw with Morley and the rest

as the Englishmen to follow and admire—for the excellent reason that they represented death to England and world-dominion for Germany. Now I hold no brief for either power, *per se*,—I have in my veins a little, and only a little, of the blood of each nationality; but in this crisis it is our national interest, and the interest of mankind, to support England and to oppose Germany because of the horror of the German threat; and Mr. Shaw has been one of the tools of Germany, from whatever motive.

I mention this last case merely by way of analogy.

Yours truly,

(signed) Theodore Roosevelt.

I shall get the edition of which you speak at once.

Mr. Wolf thought that Roosevelt had left some things unsaid. There was a patent inadequacy to the reply which left Mr. Wolf unsatisfied. He wanted to draw Roosevelt on further and make him commit himself more concretely in his opposition to Shaw, so he wrote:

21 Hawthorne Road, Brookline, Mass.

Dear Mr. Roosevelt: September 13, 1917.

Thank you for your letter, and for your frank confession that your criticism of Shaw was, as I supposed, based upon second-hand report of his works, rather than upon your own direct reading.

You need not write to Professor Conklin, however. The sentence which you quote at the beginning of your letter is in fact one of Mr.

Shaw's statements. You will find it, slightly modified, in the volume of "Man and Superman" to which I have already referred you, somewhere at the back of the book, in a section called "Maxims for Revolutionists." I have not my copy with me, and am unable to give you its precise wording.

But you cannot hope to understand that sentence if you divorce it from its context. Shaw hails birth control as an epoch-making discovery, not because it will help the race to commit suicide, but because it will prevent it. He is the great apostle, in our time, of deliberate forethought, instead of confused muddling. He realizes that un-wanted babies are not a source of strength to any nation. He hopes for a race deliberately fathered—a race born by those who care enough about children to have them; a race where children come as the crown of desire, and not as its accidental by-product. Conscious direction of all our forces is his ideal; for only in this way, he believes, can a fine and vigorous humanity be evolved—a humanity capable of over-riding the obstacles in the way of life.

As for the war, I am certain that Mr. Shaw does not want the German war-lords to be victorious. But neither does he want the British war-lords. He sees as little merit, I am afraid, in British or French imperialism as in German imperialism. Nevertheless, although he is an Irishman, and of a race that has had ample opportunity to observe British imperialism in action, he *does* desire an Allied victory as the best available practical solution. But he knows his own government; and now that we are in

the struggle with our hopes sent so high, he feels it necessary to warn us against winning the war, but losing the things for which we have come to fight it.

I am glad you take Mr. Shaw seriously, for good or evil, and realize his importance as philosopher and prophet. It is the fashion for most people who don't know anything about him to call him a wit, which is about as adequate as classifying the author of the parables as a charming and delightful story-teller.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) Robert L. Wolf.

And here is where Roosevelt sought shelter in brevity and vagueness:—

Sagamore Hill,

My dear Mr. Wolf:— September 16, 1917.

I am pressed beyond belief and have time but for a word. Truth should be evident as such to the eye of all beholders, rather than lurk somewhere in the background—it must appear as a poster, not an etching.

A leader who gives his followers the wrong impression can not be trusted, and Shaw, whether from accident or design, has often done this.

Yours truly,

(signed) Theodore Roosevelt.

I have ordered the volume, and shall read it with much interest.

There seemed to be no further reason in Mr. Wolf's mind for continuing the correspondence. It appealed to him that Roosevelt had no further defense for his position and nothing more to say. Mr. Wolf thought, however, that



he would like to get Mr. Shaw's reaction to it all, so he stuck the correspondence in an envelope and sent it to Mr. Shaw with the following note:

44 Anderson Avenue.  
Palisade, New York,

Dear Mr. Shaw:— November 12, 1917.

A cat may look at a king; and even I may look at an ex-President, as you will see from the correspondence enclosed. I hope it amuses you.

What do you think of a man who aspires to govern these United States of America without a knowledge of you? At any rate, I feel that I did pretty well to expound Shavianism in such a manner as to awaken the interest of the great Bull Moose.

Tell me how you like it; but tell me soon, for in a little while I shall probably be on your own side of the Atlantic, helping to carry American kultur to our mutual friends the Germans.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) Robert L. Wolf.

And then came one of those scintillating gems of wit and philosophy such as only a man of Bernard Shaw's keen mind and clear conception of things could write. It reveals the man and his methods of reasoning as few of his writings have done. In spots it is biting, but it brings a smile and is at all times convincing, and it will take its place among the great letters of great men:—

Address Telegrams

To "Socialist Westrand-London."

10 Adelphi Terrace,  
London, W. C. 2,  
4th January, 1918.

Dear Mr. Wolf:—

I am much obliged to you for letting me see your correspondence with Colonel Roosevelt, and for your friendly attempt to make a good Shavian of him. But such a conversion is not possible, and not even desirable in my interest. I take a sort of professional interest in Theodore as a perfect modern American type of Moliere's L'Etourdi: he means well, but wrecks every projects in which he meddles. His idea of getting hold of the right end of the stick is to snatch it from the hands of somebody who is using it effectively, and to hit him over the head with it. The remark of his son, who said that when his father went to a wedding he wanted to be the bridegroom, and when he went to a funeral he wanted to be the corpse, has something in it. Roosevelt has the quality—a good quality under certain conditions—of believing that if a thing is to be done he must do it. Unfortunately he sets about it so inconsiderately, and is so hampered by his lack of analytic faculty, that he is in the thick of the fray before he has found out exactly what it is he wants to do and when he has to fight. The first thing a public reformer has to do is to disentangle the thing he should go for from the mass of mere associations which are sure to have gathered round it; and Roosevelt is so incapable of doing this that when he should pull out the lynchpin he

lashes the horse, and, as likely as not, is run over for his pains.

Take this business of the birth control movement, for example. It is a mixed movement, because different people want to control birth for different ends. Many people want simply to sterilize their pleasures. Others want to regulate the output; and of these some want to adapt the output to their incomes and the size of their homes, whilst others aim at regulation in the interest of the states. Thus one woman wants to have no children; others want to stop at two or three; others want to have twelve, if they can, under ideal conditions as to interval and recovery. But they all want control; the better the woman is the more she is determined not, if she can avoid it, to be the helpless prey of an uncontrollable instinct. These distinctions are quite beyond Roosevelt. Even in the act of claiming that the birth rate of the undesirables should be controlled in one direction and of the desirables in another, he charges blindly, bull moose fashion, at all advocates of birth control on the assumption that they are all sterilizing voluptuaries. That will end in his setting everyone against him, and damaging the cause he has really at heart.

Like a child, he wants to have birth control both ways: He wants the power to do good without the power to do harm. I daresay he often goes into a shop and asks for a knife that will carve a rib of beef but will not cut ~~the~~ children's fingers; and he has as likely as

not asked Edison to invent a shell that will kill German soldiers in Bruges but will not kill Belgian women and children. When he is told that he cannot have weapons earmarked in this way, he no doubt denounces the cutler and Edison as bloody minded child murderers. That is pretty Teddy's way.

Still, I like a man who does really want something, and wants on the whole, the right thing, though he doesn't know how to get it and cannot even distinguish between his friends and his foes. I shall put him in a play some day: am I not le Moliere de nos jours?

He has landed you on one point. It is characteristic of him that he should base his onslaught upon me on one supremely silly sentence which he never read until he saw it in his own handwriting. In 1903 I published the following propositions.

The essential function of marriage is the continuance of the race, as stated in the Book of Common Prayer.

The accidental function of marriage is the gratification of the amoristic sentiment of mankind.

The artificial sterilization of marriage makes it possible to fulfil its accidental function whilst neglecting its essential one.

The most revolutionary invention of the XIX century was the artificial sterilization of marriage.

This finds its way in due time to the mind

of Theodore; and he reproduces it as "Birth control is the great discovery of the XIX century." He then goes on to say that I have not only said this idiotic thing (the contraceptive was not only not a great discovery; it was not really a discovery at all; it was known in the XVII century), but he explains that I said it in such a context and with such an emphasis as to prevent my readers from seeing any side of it except the sterile voluptuary side. You will see that as a matter of fact its context and its wording make any such mistake impossible, even if the reader had not already been taken through the scene in which hell is described as the paradise of voluptuous sterility, the devil as its sentimental advocate, and the statue (who is rather like Theodore, by the way) says that "People who get rid of the fear of poverty and children, and devote themselves to having a good time of it, only leave their minds free for the fear of old age and ugliness and impotence and death. The childless laborer is more tormented by his wife's idleness and her constant demands for amusement and distraction than he could be by twenty children; and his wife is more wretched than he."

In short, everything that Theodore wants to have said I have said with patient care, with practised skill, and with dramatic effect. And the result is that he snatches the pen out of my hand, and, with a shout of "See me do it," proceeds to do the work over again in his own confused, hasty, unskilled way, interlarding it with assurances that I am a blackguard and

that nobody who believes in me is to be trusted. What are you to do with such a man? Clearly, put him on the stage and give the world a good laugh at him.

At the same time, I confess I cannot defend all my admirers. Every ruffian and bully in the United States makes a hero of Teddy the Rough Rider, and every blatant demagogue regards himself as a possible successor to the Bull Moose. I do not blame Colonel Roosevelt for that: let him not blame me if there are pseudo-Shavians as well as pseudo-Rooseveltians. At least I have, in *The Doctor's Dilemma*, rebuked and exposed the anarchist and libertine who pleads that he is "a disciple of Bernard Shaw." Can I do more? And when is Theodore going to rebuke his disciples?

I and my friends in the Fabian Society were the first to call public attention to the danger of race suicide in a series of articles by Sidney Webb in the *London Times*, based on a census of the Society which revealed the startling fact that the married couples in this typical body of intellectuals had produced exactly a child and a half per marriage. We insisted on the economic side of the question, and urged, not merely that parents should be exempted from taxation (you cannot feed children on "abatements") but that motherhood should be positively endowed. Some years later Theodore made his first unhappy contribution to the subject by declaring that America was committing race suicide by allowing

divorces. He was fascinated, I suppose, by South Carolina, with its indissoluble marriage, its concubinage, and its illegitimacy. And now that he has at last got his ideas on the subject combed out fairly straight, he is not content to stand on our shoulders, he must wipe his boots on us.

The other day a lady reproached me for helping to corrupt public morals because a girl had just told her that if she could not get married before she was thirty, she would have a child anyhow: she did not care what anybody said. The lady was wiser than Theodore: she knew that I had had my share in the blessed reaction towards the cult of motherhood that has succeeded the revolt against it. But it was people of Theodore's political complexion that protested against Zola's much needed novel-tract called *Fecundity*, and in fact prevented it from reaching the English speaking peoples effectively.

And now, if the gallant Colonel wants an authentic instance of my advising women not to have children, tell him that I have said that if I were a woman I should refuse to bear a child for less than \$10,000, and that a nation that will not guarantee the proper nurture of its children does not deserve to have them. I have also said (and this will make Theodore's hair stand on end) that we should not sterilize the excellent old Betsy Trotwoods who would have children and bring them up very well if they had not to pay the price of having a man thrust upon them as well. This point is dealt

with in my play "Getting Married," in the scenes between General Bridgenorth and Lesbia Grantham. I do not forget that a house without a man in it is not an ideal home for a growing boy or girl; but as the average house is a house without a man in it (he being at work all day), the school and other social agencies could do almost as much as the father now has any chance of doing. Still, this is a matter which effects only what is called the superfluous woman; the woman for whom there is no husband, or the woman who voluntarily makes room for her by refusing marriage. The main point to be driven home is that the burden of bringing up the children of the community should fall on the community and not on the individual. The woman risks her life and gets torn to pieces almost in the birth process; and that is quite as much as she can be reasonably expected to undertake even with a full guarantee that the subsistence of her child and of herself as its guardian shall be guaranteed, and that she shall not have it crying to her in vain for food whilst Pekinese dogs are eating cutlets in the next street. Remissions of taxation are all right as far as they go, but they are nothing like enough.

I need say nothing about the Colonel's comments on the war. He is by temperament an Imperialist, the nearest thing to a Hohenzollern the American constitution allows him to be. As such he is the eager dupe of European Imperialism, as we found when he visited us before the war and worshipped our Foreign



Office, God help him! I cannot without positive inhumanity invite him to discuss so difficult a question with me; it would be like Carpentier or Jack Johnson challenging an infant. He put his money on the wrong horse at the Presidential election through not taking my advice.

I am afraid I have inflicted a very long letter on you; and I can make only the hackneyed excuse of Pascal: that I had not time to write a short one. I have scribbled along recklessly so as to give Theodore every chance with you. I should like to have a friendly talk with him, just as I should like to have one with Kaiser Bill.

Yours faithfully,

G. Bernard Shaw.

Robert L. Wolf, Esq.,  
44 Anderson Avenue, Palisade,  
New Jersey, U. S. America.

(By permission of Bernarr Macfadden.)