



THE AMA FALLS IN LINE

After the victorious One Package decision, the AMA was for a while strangely unmoved. Doctors couldn't believe that at last they were free to prescribe contraceptives. They were afraid that contraceptives were still contraband, the decision having to do only with importation, they also feared that it applied only in New York, Connecticut, and Vermont where the Second Circuit Court had specific jurisdiction.

Morris Ernst cleared up both points. First, he explained to the AMA that since it was a Federal Court, the Second Circuit Court's decision applied to all the states in the country, except those that had definite local laws against it. Only Connecticut and Massachusetts had such laws, the decision therefore applied everywhere else. Second, he corrected their belief that the victorious decision applied only to importing contraceptive articles and told them to prescribe birth control when and where they pleased.

After the AMA journal ran an editorial quoting Ernst, letters asking for birth-control information, particularly from rural doctors began to pour by the thousands into Margaret's Washington headquarters. She set her four hundred assistants to answering them all, a job that took months.

Once they were answered, however, she had to begin the sad job of disbanding the Washington headquarters: close the files, move out the desks, give severance pay to the paid workers, and small gifts to the

unpaid The money for doing this came from the estate of Viola Kaufman, the woman who had lived out her life in poverty and then left her lifesavings to the cause After the family wrangles were settled and the lawyers paid, Viola's estate amounted to twelve thousand dollars, which her will stipulated could be spent in any way Margaret saw fit She had also made the touching request that she be cremated and her ashes sent to Margaret Viola was given a simple ceremony, and her ashes were scattered over the rockgarden in Willowlake Margaret erected a plaque in her memory in the Research Bureau, now called the Margaret Sanger Center, where it hangs to this day

There were still a few problems, however Even after Margaret's federal legislative committee was dissolved, there were still two rival propaganda organizations in the field One was the Research Bureau, the other was the American Birth Control League The latter, because it was independent of Margaret, was in a position of fierce competition with the Research Bureau But the lawyers for the ABCL saw a way out They proposed the formation of a new organization that would combine both The chief executive of the ABCL was agreeable, but Margaret raised loud cries She again called in the John Price Jones Corporation to do an impartial survey They reported that "the medical profession today (still) suffers from the notoriety resulting from the work of other than the ABCL," cautiously declining to name Margaret as the "other" She wasn't fooled "It's another knife in the back," she retorted "The ABCL is run by those whose interest it is to take credit away from others and to snatch it for themselves" She rejected the Jones report offhand

After Margaret calmed down, the attorneys for the ABCL proposed another plan The two rival organizations should merge and appoint a male doctor as president As Margaret had always insisted that what she needed was the full cooperation of the medical profession, she couldn't keep protesting In 1938 a new organization called the Birth Control Federation of America would be formed under the presidency of Dr Richard N Pierson The name would later be changed to the Planned Parenthood Federation of America with Margaret as honorary president Nevertheless, a few doctors continued to dismiss her as a "mere laywoman" At the time, gallant as ever, Dickinson sent the AMA a telegram celebrating her selection as honorary president "Among the foremost health measures originating or developing out-

side medicine, like ether under Morton, microbe-hunting under Pasteur, nursing under Nightingale, Margaret Sanger's service holds high rank " It was a tribute to warm anyone's heart

But in 1937 Margaret was back at Willowlake reading proofs of her new autobiography, called simply *An Autobiography* But when the book came out, it wasn't much better than the first For, while Marie Stopes got credit for founding the first English clinic and J Noah got a name, it was ghostwritten in stiff, amateurish language More important, it again left out all the details of her personal life

She sent Hugh a copy and when he didn't answer, she wrote him a pleading letter "Dear dear Hugh, I miss hearing from you terrible! Why do you punish me like this? Do you hate my book?"

Hugh had kept quiet because he disliked her new book as much as the old one And, he was much taken up with his lover, Eva Schumann, who was trying to console him for the failure he finally knew himself to be In desperation, he told Margaret, he had volunteered for the war effort "They read my ration-books if not my novels," he commented bitterly

But there was also cheering news The AMA reminded the New York Academy of Medicine that thirteen women doctors had been added to Margaret's Bureau staff, physicians from all over the world were coming to the Bureau for personal instruction, and free nursery care was being provided for the children many mothers brought along This made Margaret as happy as she had ever been

Rested, she again felt she needed a new world to conquer She decided on China

In 1935 the Chinese Medical Association had passed a resolution in favor of birth control, but the resolution had not been followed by action Margaret was eager, she told the press in 1937, to see what she could do there in person Some papers reacted to her news wryly

In California, the *Sacramento Union* ran an editorial on July 31 "If Margaret Sanger can make China contraceptive-conscious, she can sell fur coats to the Fiji Islanders or sheer lingerie to Laplanders " And in Pennsylvania, the *Oil City Derrick* editorialized on August 4 "Mrs Margaret Sanger has sailed for China to teach the Chinese how not to have children We are afraid Mrs S will not be able to do much about that old Chinese custom "

Nevertheless, she went, but when she landed in China, it had just

been bombed by Japan so that she was able to beat a dignified retreat, announcing "The war in China has caused cancelation of my trip to spread the birth control movement of which I am the world leader "

Back in Tucson, she was restless in no time and sailed off to the Orient, this time to Japan, where she started a clinic in Tokyo in cooperation with Baroness Ishimoto, a woman who had made her own news by becoming a member of the all-male Japanese Diet There at least, she felt, the cause was moving along

Next she flirted with the idea of going to Egypt but gave it up, and went to Bermuda to accept an invitation from the governor to lecture At the last minute, though, the governor was advised by the Catholic Bishop to "keep out of it" and turned her over to the Bermuda Department of Health She wrote Havelock she had conducted five meetings in a Health Department hall, and at one, "the Bishop came and sat in the audience, sat with his head bowed and groaned at every good point made Later he arose and stalked out, announcing he had spent a most miserable hour listening to this damnable doctrine "

Her wanderlust satisfied for the time being, Margaret was at last ready to enter a hospital for her gall bladder operation The operation was performed in New York on November 1, and she insisted she "wanted to hurry up and get better so I can go back to China as soon as the war conditions are settled for peace "

But at fifty-eight, a person doesn't heal in a hurry, she had to give up her plans and join J Noah in Tucson While she was convalescing, Dickinson had another of his fine ideas Would she sit still long enough for a portrait bust to be done of her? He wanted nobody less than the leading woman sculptor of the day, Malvina Hoffman, to do it, and he wrote Miss Hoffman on November 13, 1937

We recall that there is no adequate head of Florence Nightingale, to inspire nurses and women in general We want Margaret Sanger for others as we have known her—a great leader, humble in success

Evidently Miss Hoffman was too busy, because later Dickinson was writing her again He was afraid, he said, that some day after Margaret was dead some sculptor might make a bust of her from various photographs and not do justice to her "alertness & shining spirit "

Margaret noted on her copy of his letter "Isn't he a dear to suggest

such a thing?" Eventually a bust was done by Joy Buba and found its way to the Sophia Smith Research Room at Smith College. The gold plate identifying it gives a wrong birthdate, as she would have wished

Margaret ended the year 1938 as she ended many years, dreaming of her early days with Havelock. "I've been re-reading my old diary to make sure of the dates. But my head was in the clouds those days and my mind in the British museum, so my notes are scrappy."

Yet when he wrote to tell her of a new foam contraceptive which he thought ought to be tested, she didn't order the testing.

"My mind has been rather doped with amitol or luminal or some of the sleeping drugs I had to take," she explained to Havelock. "It was rather a nice condition for nothing made sufficient impression to worry me or to annoy me."

The enjoyment of Amitol and Luminal two months after a gall bladder operation was an ominous shadow of things to come.