

Belonging to the World

29



After cataclysm comes rebuilding. Whole cities and nations lay in ruins and along with them, the international movement to which Margaret Sanger was committed. To start all over took courage and this time something harder—courage restrained by everlasting patience. Feeding the hungry, sorting out displaced people, and putting up essential structures were the European priorities. Not since the First World War was Margaret so long diverted from her work.

Of course she had her own involvements in World War II, for her sons, both doctors and now both married, had served overseas. Stuart was wounded in the Battle of the Bulge while Grant in the navy, was out in the Pacific. Their mother had never again hoped to enjoy such a Christmas as that of 1945 with her dear ones safely home in Tucson. Writing of the great joy in her journal, she noted that “they were all here this morning for the tree.” “All” meant Grant with his wife and young sons, as well as Stuart’s family, now enriched with a second little girl.

Grant soon went east to settle his future, which eventually was as a surgeon attached to New York’s Presbyterian Hospital. Stuart built an excellent practice as an internist in Tucson, where his daughters became his mother’s abiding delight. The small namesake had at once crept into the bleak spot in her heart, which had never recovered from the loss of Peggy. Instead of talking to Margaret II as to a child, she had bridged the generations by making her a friend and confidante. Whatever her maternal failures, Margaret was an in-

spired grandmother This role, with unspecified functions, not including routine domesticity, suited a person belonging chiefly to the world

Grounded in Arizona at this period, she lived to some extent like other women, although the many facets of her nature began to amaze even her friends She, who had often been called single-minded, was now likened by an admirer to a lovely fountain that was never turned off

Two of the new facets had been activated by Dorothy Gordon, singer, painter and later founder of the radio and television Youth Forum Their friendship, as Margaret once wrote, ripened into "a sort of kinship different from anything else" They had met as travelers, not personages, and indeed had established some intimacy before the Gordons learned that their new acquaintance was the famous Margaret Sanger In July, 1923, they had unsuspectingly accompanied the Sleses on their deferred honeymoon, a cruise to Alaska Later Mr Gordon had become Noah's lawyer and their sons enjoyed Stuart and Grant The families often visited in each other's homes, at which times the younger woman was of course drawn into the birth control movement, more unusual, she, in turn, affected Margaret's life

Dorothy Gordon brought with her the world of music With her help, Margaret built a library of fine records and to further her education, even took piano lessons As an opera enthusiast, she brightened her days with music It was also Dorothy Gordon who encouraged her hobby On a visit to Tucson, Mrs Gordon had equipped herself with an easel and paints, which, after brief use, she left with her hostess Margaret's delight in her new venture helped her to endure Noah's long illness, more than that, it gave her resilience over the years Instead of desiccating as a frustrated reformer, she kept young with creative, widening concerns

During the forties Margaret Sanger was not only Tucson's most distinguished citizen, but the favorite to enliven dinner parties Furthermore, she was not above working for her cause at the local level, for she organized a mothers' clinic, which she supported with an annual fund-raising lecture

Since she did not approve of living in the past, she sold her

two homes Willow Lake had served its purpose and the midtown Tucson house had been convenient during Noah's illness, but not congenial Stuart easily persuaded her that the ideal spot on which to build was alongside his swimming pool. There the granddaughters might run in to say good morning after their early dip.

Her first hope was that Frank Lloyd Wright of Phoenix would draft her plans, but he would not do so for that site. Later the press quoted him as saying that the house was essentially her own design, which was true, although she had professional help. Her years with Bill Sanger had given her some know-how, and she had courage to build what she wanted, a home as modern and unusual as herself. Topped by a studio, most of the structure was on the ground floor, the rooms widening, fan-shaped, with a forty-foot glass frontage onto the Catalina foothills.

While the building rose, its owner took a correspondence course in interior decorating, although again she did not try to meet conventional standards. Essentially, her house was a showcase for her treasures. There were "the ancestors," two majestic portraits, given by the mayor of Shanghai. Nearby were French tapestries, Korean chests, Persian rugs, Japanese scrolls, and a smiling Buddha. A museum house, some thought it, but indubitably the setting of a planetary personage.

It was also the setting for international delicacies. Although she had seldom had time for domestic arts, she had always enjoyed them and on her travels had gathered foreign recipes and costumes. With a flair for cooking, she now earned a reputation for her chicken curries and exotic dishes. The Stuart Sangers, dining with her Thursday evenings, enjoyed a gourmet's tour of the world. Each menu of a foreign land was enhanced by appropriate ceremonies, as well as the costumes worn by both hostess and granddaughters. Sometimes she staged large, gala, international parties. Increasingly fastidious, she trained the White Russian couple who for many years had cared for the Slegs, to make what they served unique as well as delicious.

While she marked time in this agreeable fashion, the first stirrings from the old European movement finally came in 1946 from un-

bombed, neutral Sweden Mrs Ottesen-Jensen, who would be a steady force for reconstruction, called a conference on sex education, with the broader hope of reactivating international concern This was the signal for which Margaret was waiting, she was ready to give the balance of her life to rebuilding her cause Well along in her sixties and in frail health, the comforts of her personal life were as nothing compared to her commitment

On her way to Stockholm, Margaret stopped off to see the ailing H G Wells When he had spoken in Phoenix at the start of the war, she had written sadly in her journal that he had become "a typical propagandist" In the First World War he and Shaw had courageously remained internationalists Perhaps during the Battle of Britain, she realized that it was easier to stay philosophically aloof in Arizona than in London In any case, after the Armistice, she had plied him with food packages, as she had all of her English friends Recently he had cabled cheerful messages, such as, "Come on over Won't last long" and "Last big chance Really dying" So she came to say good by to the final flicker of that lusty, exploring spirit who had completely understood her work A few weeks later, he was gone

In Stockholm, where she was the featured speaker, she cooperated on a plan for a British conference in 1948 Sanguinely, an English doctor took on the double duty of setting up an organization committee and of locating accommodations After six months with no report, she crossed the ocean again At her age, she could not afford postponement of the plans, that would have been the ultimate betrayal of her cause Beneath her fragile exterior was a steel-like resolve to do whatever had to be done, if need be by herself With no mandate, she simply took matters into her own hands, which luckily, were not empty Mrs Stanley McCormick, now her close friend, had given her a check "for her dreams"

Most of Margaret's former advisers in England, that brilliant group of friends and writers, were gone But Julian Huxley remained, and so did Clinton Chance The latter's discriminating hospitality brought together a new set of experts and officials No doubt one of them mentioned Cheltenham, for Margaret inspected

and then acclaimed this spa town in Gloucestershire, as a charming substitute for crowded, battered London

The chief roadblock to a conference was the morale of the trustees of the old movement, more badly wrecked than their bombed-out mothers' clinic. They protested that with a shortage of funds and manpower, they could not assume the burden of an international meeting. Mrs McCormick's check transformed the burden into an opportunity for re-establishing themselves.

The Cheltenham Conference on Population and World Resources in Relation to the Family—another mouth-filling name chosen by the heirs of the Neo-Malthusians—went off as scheduled. With a new look, featuring Sir John Boyd Orr of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, it ensured a permanent future. At the last session, the delegates voted that in 1952 they would launch an international association.

After more than a decade of death and stagnation, the movement was reviving. Aware that her own time was running out, Margaret Sanger planned boldly. Since the population crisis was centered in the Far East, that should be the launching pad. India was the ideal site. Not only was world attention on the new nation, but it was the first large country to give at least verbal endorsement to family planning.

In high excitement Margaret wrote of the opportunity to Lady Rama Rau, head of India's association. The latter's reaction was the same as the British had been and for the same reason. Their Himalayan domestic needs made it impractical to take on international responsibilities. The fact that the proposed host country shied away from the honor was not important to Margaret Sanger. Again she simply bought support by underwriting the expenses. At this point in history, lack of local funds and even whispers of "a one-woman movement" would not stop her. Somehow, she would find the money and after success, everyone would be reconciled.

Meanwhile, the one nation that was urgently begging for her help was denied it. Defeat had ended the hope of Japanese expansion and paved the way for birth control. A new political leader was campaigning on this issue, a familiar figure with another name,

Shidzue Kato, the former Baroness Ishimoto The extraordinary career of this "Japanese Margaret Sanger" had arisen from the tragedy of her marriage

As a young man, the Baron had embraced socialism with fanatic zeal Later, as he began to doubt that it was the wave of the future, he dropped it After fumbling a political career, he consoled himself with the geishas and then, reverting completely to his class interests, joined the empire-builders, deserted his family, and settled in Manchuria

When the government closed the birth control clinics and imprisoned Dr Majumi, Shidzue herself was suspect for her pacifism, as well as her connection with the clinics She was briefly imprisoned and then kept under house arrest Nevertheless, she managed during the war to divorce her husband He had taught his young bride to honor labor leaders and now she married an important one, Kanjo Kato, whom she described as "a man's man, not sweet like candy" At the age of forty-eight, in the midst of an air raid, this remarkable woman gave birth to a daughter When the Emperor announced peace, she wept with thanksgiving

In 1946, with 13 million women voting for the first time, both Katos ran for seats in the Diet Mark Gayn, author of *A Japanese Diary*, was on hand at a street rally for Shidzue's political debut Opponents were attacking her variously as an "unreformed patriot," a radical, and an unprincipled female supporting birth control He found her poised, charming, and bilingually witty Raising her Samurai voice to "metallic" audibility, she gathered an amazed crowd, remaining calm and courteous during the later question period

Both Katos, Social Democrats, were elected and she, being the best known of the women legislators, spoke for them all when they were received by General MacArthur "We Japanese women," she pledged, "will never vote for militarists" Peace was their foremost concern, second, the ending of the feudal family system When she was assigned to the committee which wrote the constitution, she was prepared to draft the sections outlawing discrimination on account of sex

Meanwhile, rice riots and unemployment kept the spotlight on Japan's excess population. After defeat, whole families from China, Manchuria, and other occupied lands had hurried back to their crowded islands. In spite of war losses, the census recorded 80 million and each year added another million. With army sanitation, the death rate had dropped, with peace and the returning soldiers, marriage and birth rates had soared. The one hopeful fact was that by now a consensus favored population curbs. Dr Majimi had not only reopened his clinics, but multiplied their numbers. More sensational and dubious was the effect of a eugenics law legalizing abortion.

To the uninformed man it seemed easier to have a fetus cut out of his wife's body than to practice birth control. In the first year there had been a million operations—more potential life lost than by the atomic bombs. That was why Shidzue, head of the Family Planning Association, wanted Margaret Sanger to dramatize the issue.

There was no place that Margaret desired more to be than Japan, but history was curiously repeating itself. Her attempt to go there in the twenties had been vetoed by native militarists. A quarter of a century later the commander of the occupation forces did the same. There was no mystery. As Tokyo's largest paper put it: "In view of the pressure of the Catholic Church groups, it was believed impossible for General MacArthur to allow her [Mrs Sanger] to lecture to Japanese audiences without appearing to subscribe to her views." There were 130,000 Catholics in a population of 80,000,000.

Arguing that mass protests would again overcome the ban, Shidzue collected thousands of petition signatures. The press on both sides of the Pacific also entered the controversy. Wrote Eleanor Roosevelt in her column: "There is a problem in Japan with its tremendous yearly increase in population and its limited resources. Mrs Sanger was the obvious person to consult, and why our occupying forces should interfere with the wishes of the Japanese people in this respect is a little difficult to understand."

For seven months cables and letters shuttled to and from General Headquarters and spokesmen for the Sanger tour. Finally Florence

Stephenson Mahoney, a long-time friend and a resident of Washington, took over the negotiations. General Sams, chief of public health and welfare for the occupation forces, told her that he had personally stopped the visa because they "did not need Margaret Sanger barnstorming in Japan." Furthermore, as he solemnly explained, "birth control has nothing to do with population problems." The latter depended on business enterprise. This rationale had been developed sometime earlier when a Scripps Foundation study had warned that only birth control could correct the imbalance caused by Japan's mounting population and dwindling resources. The report had caused such a storm among Catholics that it had been suppressed.

General MacArthur himself finally tried to close the incident with a lofty reminder that he was swayed by neither the advocates for nor opponents of birth control. His policy was based "purely on a matter of principle." More than a year later, when the visa was suddenly available, it was not because irresistible force had crashed through the immovable object, but because the object had been catapulted out of the way. General MacArthur had been relieved of his command on April 11, 1951.

Margaret could not leave at once because of a new obstacle, more maddening than the general's interference. While vacationing with the Stuart Sangers, she had suffered a coronary thrombosis, hospitalizing her for six weeks. She then agreed to postpone Japan until the fall of 1952, combining it with her trip to India.

From this time on she suffered recurrent and severe angina pains, making her dependent on various drugs. Seldom again was she free from physical ailments, sufficient to keep anyone else at home. Dorothy Brush, now Mrs. Alexander C. Dick, wrote in *Our Margaret Sanger*, "The human limitations which apply to most of us, just never apply to her at all. She treats her body like a Victorian child

it must be seen and not heard, if it aches, it must ache in silence." She offered an extraordinary example.

In 1949, Smith College had awarded Margaret the honorary degree of LL.D., which pleased her greatly, perhaps the more so since she had missed the chance of a college education. On leaving the campus, Mrs. Dick accidentally slammed the car door on Margar-

et's hand For a moment she slumped over with the pain Then, since no bones were broken, she refused to see a doctor and asked her friend to drive on, but just not talk for a while After a period she announced that she was all right Dismissing the blood blisters on her hand, Margaret insisted that she felt only "a great white light of burning joy" over the day To Mrs Dick this was something of a miracle, but it was not unique In the same book of memoirs, a doctor tells of listening for two hours as Margaret first spoke and then answered questions, while all the time he knew that she was suffering "piercing pains" from a sacroiliac strain Like a good trouper, Margaret Sanger ignored infirmities by concentrating on her main concern

The summer before her grand tour she kept four secretaries busy with her global mail At the age of seventy-three, although not even her sons guessed it, she faced two major undertakings The success of the Indian conference depended on her advance preparations She alone was responsible for the site, which most people thought recklessly remote from the source of potential delegates To assure a representative gathering, she ran a double-pronged campaign, wheedling Near Eastern doctors to come to Bombay and at the same time cajoling American donors to pay the travel cost For moral authority, as well as publicity, she lined up prestigious sponsors, with the American group headed by Eleanor Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, and other Nobel Prize winners

Whenever able, she shared her conference plans with one of these local groups, where she was always in demand Sitting among her friends—whether or not she had met them, they took a corporate pride in their celebrity—she confided her hopes A small figure, with bright, arresting eyes, she was always perfectly turned out these days with beguilingly tinted copper hair She played adeptly on their heart strings as she described India's sunken-eyed, spindle-legged children and their gaunt mothers doomed to an annual pregnancy Suddenly and quite spontaneously, one of the audience would announce that she was collecting money for Margaret's needs What neighbor could resist? The guest of honor, with head tilted in her listening way, would then relax as substantial contributions poured in

Not everyone helped, those closest opposed her. Stuart wanted her to abandon the whole trip, and four doctors agreed. If she went, warned one, he did not expect her return. She just laughed. Why did they think she was there? Most of her friends and relatives were dead, and she lingered only so that she might reactivate the movement. For more than a decade she had marked time and now was ready to pour out her life in this commitment.

The Sangers were reassured to know that Dr. Abraham Stone and Dorothy Dick would accompany her. For them it was a heavy and frustrating responsibility. At the start, after excessive hospitality on their Hawaiian stopover, Margaret suffered a slight attack. Rallying, she not only squelched plans to protect her from over-exertion, but suddenly improvised a large thank-you dinner for her hosts.

Perhaps Juliet Rublee was still her best interpreter. Trying to explain to Mrs. Dick how their friend functioned, she wrote that of course Margaret had "realized that she was in danger of possibly sudden death. Her only hope was to be left alone and untrammelled." Then she could follow truth and God's guidance. Naturally her guardians were hurt when she withdrew from them, but sometimes she "had to be alone, absolutely quiet," as when the car door slammed on her. Then she received help from "cosmic forces."

In Japan, Margaret needed all possible help, as well as her trouper's art of conveying youthful delight. Her welcome surpassed the sensational one of the twenties. When she walked down the gangplank, it was like stepping into *The Mikado*. Fifty young women in ceremonial kimonos were bowing and smiling in a receiving line. She was crowned with a golden wreath of chrysanthemums, while a hundred and forty news and camera men swarmed about her.

Soon she was rushed off for interviews, a broadcast, a reception, and then dinner. With her picture daily on the front page, everyone recognized her. Treating her like a movie star, people crowded close to touch or kiss her hand. By the end of the week she wrote that she was "tired enough to die." Yet, outwardly, she remained serene and smiling.

In her unscheduled hours, she visited Dr. Majimi's clinics, consulted on the extension of work through the Health Ministry, and

suggested setting up a teaching clinic, an educational program, and research into maternal health statistics

The great innovation was Shidzue's sound trucks. A fleet of them covered the working class districts, announcing, "Sanger is here Sanger says no abortions" Where there were crowds, "Sanger" mounted the platform to explain the superiority of birth control right to the people. Shaken by defeat, Japan was looking for new solutions and hailed her as a prophet. Her message would free people not only from excess children, but from future wars. With Shidzue's skill and the coverage by the powerful *Mainichi* press, which sponsored her tour, in ten days the issue of birth control permeated Japan as it never had in the United States.

India was different. Since most people lived in villages scattered over the vast continent, divided by every barrier, including caste, language, and illiteracy, mass media offered no short cuts. The new administration had endorsed birth control, but Margaret wanted to learn what they were doing.

The ceremonial welcome was exhilarating. For the first time a large nation sent a top official to greet them, Vice President Radhakrishnan, a leader of UNESCO. The mayor of Bombay also welcomed the group and entertained them at his palace. A year's efforts at rounding up delegates had paid off with representatives from sixteen countries, several of them from the Near East who had never before attended such meetings.

The government already had a record of deeds with two hundred functioning clinics and a promise of a hundred more on army posts. Furthermore, the new Five-Year Plan listed family planning as a major goal. Paltry of course was the \$13 million allotted to the work, but the partition of the continent, followed by riots and vast refugee problems, had drained its resources. Margaret saw that with the best of good will, the new administration could not rapidly change the habits of villagers who believed that children were God's gifts and that two sons were needed to care for a couple in their old age.

Between conference sessions, in the hot hours meant for rest, Margaret visited Bombay's clinics or consulted with physicians and

nurses, many of whom had heard her lecture on her first visit. Some had walked miles to attend, with no money for their keep. As his only sustenance for the day, one doctor gratefully devoured a gift of fruit in her room.

At the final session, the conference fulfilled its purpose by organizing the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Whatever happened to her, Margaret Sanger knew that now there would be a force to carry on. Remote, impoverished nations would not have to pioneer in isolation. In the future a permanent organization would encourage the work, pool experience and to some extent, resources. She had said, "We can," when others had said, "Impossible!" She had said, "We must," when others had wanted to relax. If she had been arbitrary, nevertheless, it was her vision, her persistence, her financing that had achieved the organization.

Sailing for home, Margaret Sanger enjoyed a personal satisfaction. In spite of her erratic physical self, she had fulfilled her schedule. In the next eight years she would continue her global travels, but with mounting difficulties. Friends thought her foolish to take such risks, but their cautious advice may have been basically wrong. She lived longer and more strenuously than most women, including her three sisters, none of whom had started with the handicap of tuberculosis.

In the last fourth of her life she was hospitalized for gall bladder, appendicitis, coronary thrombosis, and twice for pneumonia, once with a double virus and pleurisy. She suffered from recurrent pleurisy, lumbago, bursitis, sacroiliac strain and insomnia. And yet during this period her achievements were monumental. Throughout her life she did much that was bad for her health, but by focusing on her work, she not only subdued her bodily pains, but continued to keep her commitment, which was the source of her vitality.

The paramount concern of Margaret Sanger's last years was the development of a physiological contraceptive. On her return from the Soviet Union in 1934 she had hoped for an American spermatoxin, similar to the suppressed Russian one. She had even secured a grant from a foundation for a few experiments on laboratory ani-

mals at the University of Pennsylvania, but soon afterward other approaches seemed superior

In 1936 Carl C Hartman, known for his classic study of the reproductive system of the opossum, published *The Time of Ovulation in Women*. This established the role of the hormones and endocrine system in human reproduction. In his last working years Dr Hartman tested oral contraception on animals. After the war, younger men began to study progesterone, a female hormone secretion triggered by ovulation.

As research inched along, Margaret Sanger nearly burst with impatience. The historian Toynbee rightly pointed out that man was "godlike in planned breeding of plants and animals, but rabbitlike in unplanned breeding of ourselves." The United States government not only poured out millions annually for farm research, but had recently spent two billion on a crash program to produce the atomic bomb for mass destruction. Not one cent would it give to research in human fertility control.

Not being a scientist, Margaret never presumed to say that an oral contraceptive was the answer to rabbitlike breeding. Actually, she thought in terms of a vaccine or hypodermic given under medical supervision with an immunization lasting months instead of hours. But in her major concern she recognized that her only part was to channel funds to those equipped to make the decisions.

During the twenties, Noah's fortune had underwritten many important innovations, but in her old age, when her interests had become global, as well as scientifically revolutionary, she had to depend on others for finances. She became the propulsive force that brought together funds and the needed skills. The wealthy women whom she had drawn into her movement sustained her venture some ideas. Two of her closest friends even carried some of her own heavy expenses for extended travel and secretarial aid. Dorothy Dick and Ellen Watumull of Hawaii both controlled the grants of small foundations, set up in the names of their respective and late husbands.

Most of the large funds for special projects originated in the Santa Barbara home of Mrs Stanley McCormick. Increasingly Mar-

garet spent her summers in her friend's guest house. The climate suited her, but more important, Mrs McCormick's drawing room was a meeting place of generous donors, including Amy Du Pont and Mrs John Rockefeller. However, the sum of their contributions was a pittance compared to that of their hostess.

Kate Dexter McCormick was no ordinary rich widow, nor was she interested in ordinary philanthropy. Daughter of a well-known Chicago lawyer, she had earned a BS degree in biology in 1904 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She was the second woman to graduate there. That same year she married the youngest son of Cyrus McCormick, founder of the International Harvester Company. Her dazzling prospects were shattered almost at once when her husband developed schizophrenia. For the rest of her long life Kate McCormick lived half recluse and eccentric, dressed in the old-fashioned styles of her youth, but dispensing funds with the utmost discrimination to a few "unpopular" projects, such as research into the causes of schizophrenia. That study revealed an imbalance of adrenal hormones in those afflicted. Mrs McCormick's one continuing concern was birth control, to the importance of which Margaret's imprisonment in 1917 had "awakened" her.

Soon after World War II, Stanley McCormick died and the key scientists involved in his wife's research program joined a new institution, the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology. There, Gregory Pincus, a world authority on mammalian reproduction, began studies on the role of the internal chemical messengers called steroid hormones. Margaret Sanger came to believe that no living scientist was better equipped than he to make the break for which she waited. In an interview, she found him eager to start the work, if assured sufficient funds. But the continuing cost, after a first outlay for a suitable laboratory and animal house, would be incalculable. Margaret sounded out some of the large foundations, but when she was rebuffed, she turned again to Mrs McCormick.

Besides her interest in the subject, there were two persuasive factors. Mrs McCormick already respected the scientists at Worcester and her early academic training gave her the unique vision to invest in biochemical research. Still, she was not impulsive. Since the proposal would take capital funds for an indefinite period, she asked

her lawyer, W H Bemis, to sit in with her during a week's conference at Santa Barbara in 1952, while Margaret Sanger presented the case for a crash program

In a letter of April 15, 1969, Hudson-Hoagland, the first director of the Worcester Foundation, states that in the early fifties Dr Pincus was not working on anything corresponding to the pill, but on basic research "The government would give us nothing for work on anti-fertility compounds nor would philanthropic foundations, both for the same political reason—fear of the Catholics" "Had not Mrs McCormick come to our rescue financially," he stated unequivocally, "'the pill' would not have been developed It was a direct growth of her financial aid"

The object of the proposed research was to develop an agent that would stop the production of mature egg cells, just as natural hormones block ovulation during pregnancy Dr Pincus directed the work, but two others are linked with him as "fathers" of the pill Dr M C Chang made the laboratory observations of the effects of various man-made steroids on animals Dr John Rock then tried out the more promising steroids on volunteers at the Free Hospital for Women in Brookline Dr Rock, a noted obstetrician and gynecologist, was also a devout Catholic, but believing that the pill was "an adjunct of nature," conformed to Catholic theology

A letter from Dr Rock gives a tantalizing glimpse of those who might be called the "mothers" of the pill Before he started his Brookline experiments, Dr Rock was one day expecting a call from Mrs McCormick, whom he understood might pay the costs for his work For a wealthy patroness, he thought her "dowdy" in her antique style Doubtless she was also intense, as Dr Hoagland described her, but she let her "livelier" companion do most of the talking It was some time before he realized that the second lady was Margaret Sanger

In the ensuing years, according to Dr Pincus, the pill was more widely tested than any drug in history After the Brookline tests, it was used on thousands of volunteers in Puerto Rico, Haiti and Los Angeles It would be some years before the pill was on the market

At a Stockholm meeting in 1953, Margaret was elected president

of the International Federation, entailing much travel, with three more trips to Japan. Shidzue, now Senator Kato at the top of what she called the "political seesaw," arranged for her mentor to be the first foreigner to address the Japanese Senate. Margaret urged that the government subsidize the 53,000 native midwives to teach birth control, a policy which was soon adopted. On this visit an admirer described her at a garden party as "pretty as a picture with a cartwheel hat on a head of soft curls and the most sincere and dear face one could imagine." At that time Margaret Sanger was seventy-five years old.

In the midst of her round of activities, she had time to consider the second generation of Katos, and invited Sumiko, Mr. Kato's daughter, to spend a season in her home, following her stepmother's precedent of learning spoken English in secretarial courses. Sumiko, a bright and charming girl, accepted, and she later used her new skills to translate her hostess's *Autobiography* for a Japanese edition. She also returned the American hospitality by taking the Sanger girls into her home when they once crossed the Pacific with their busy grandmother.

The tour of all tours came in 1959. Like Sarah Bernhardt, Margaret Sanger had returned repeatedly to Japan with undiminished luster and escalating honors. The real farewell was highlighted by news surpassing any contrived ceremonies. It was the record of the nation. In less than a decade, Japan had cut its birth rate by more than 50 per cent. The crowded islands had become the world's proof that family planning worked. Furthermore, the practice of contraception was gaining over that of abortion.

The goal of her last trip was New Delhi, which offered Margaret a supreme moment. As usual, she had been filled with apprehension. "I have been planning and hoping," she wrote to Margaret Sanger II, "to be well enough to come on the long air trip to attend the Sixth International Family Planning Conference in this city." Without the constant attention of her companion, she conceded that it might have been impossible. Instead, it was "an historical event in my life and joyous." Prime Minister Nehru made it so.

Often brusque with Anglo-Saxons, he had neither the saintliness nor the eccentricities of Gandhi. A man of the twentieth century,

his commonsense grasp of India's needs was the same as Margaret's. They also shared the bond of those who had set their lives in jeopardy for their commitments.

"He bent over me," she wrote her granddaughters, "and said, 'It is wonderful that you come to us from so far away.' Then he offered me his arm and together we walked into the great auditorium, facing hundreds of camera shots and newsmen."

It was a picture, Nehru with patrician air and features escorting a frail figure with eager eyes and unrepentant copper-tinted hair. She was eighty, ten years his senior—but no one guessed it.

"I had to speak from the platform," her letter went on, "and I said that Mr. Nehru was the greatest living statesman in all the world. So it is a great victory for our cause and I am happy that I came." She enclosed three snapshots of the two "talking and talking." Be sure to hold these forever," she admonished.

Two years earlier she had tried to resign as international president, and now she insisted on doing so. She accepted the title of founder and president emeritus. At the last session the assembly passed a resolution that said in part, "Through her indomitable courage, her steadfast dedication and her great vision for nearly half a century, Margaret Sanger has seen her mission come to fruition in the development of national organizations united in the International Federation and the governmental acceptance of family planning in several countries. The 750 delegates and observers from twenty-seven countries assembled at this conference offer to Margaret Sanger their deep admiration, affection and gratitude."

They also presented *Our Margaret Sanger*, two volumes of reminiscences, impressive for the depth of feeling of most of the eighty contributors. She had "reoriented the lives" of men and women from New York to Texas, from Hawaii to Hong Kong, Singapore, India, Germany, and England. Some talked of love at first sight and of their astonishment to find a great leader so small, winsome, and unassuming. They stressed her delight in all that added "to the joy and laughter of life" and noted her "elasticity" of thought and open-mindedness toward any rational opinion. Others, including members of her family, told of her many-faceted kindnesses.

There was a young brother, for whom she had "opened up the

world," there was Ethel Byrnes's daughter, Olive Richard, who found in her aunt the empathy she sorely needed and there was "Old Faithful," whose happiness for nearly forty years rested on her relationship with Margaret Sanger and her sons

Above all, the volumes memorialized a great soul. Because she lived the truth as she saw it, she had continued to grow. Not only did she bring out the best in others, but she had the capacity to lift people above their "narrow, personal concerns to a universal, expanded view." To experience her friendship was life-enhancing, even exciting.

As a public figure, she was not quite through. Before the close of 1959, she challenged the nation's executive to a debate. President Eisenhower had requested a study of the military assistance program to be made by General William H. Draper, Jr. Because the latter found that the economic gains of many impoverished countries were canceled by their population growth, he recommended that the United States, on request, should help other nations to curb their growth. After first agreeing, the President was flooded by so many Catholic protests that he backed away, suppressing the report on the ground that such aid was "not our business."

Octogenarian Margaret Sanger announced that the President's views should be "straightened out" and she would be glad to straighten them. Nothing came of her challenge, except that experts corroborated her views. India's ambassador to the United States explained that although the United States had given his country \$3 billion since independence, it could not help much because of the rise in the birth rate. The world had recognized "the danger of atomic explosion, now let it recognize the other explosion."

In 1960 Margaret Sanger's alarm erupted a final time. Although a Protestant President had vetoed the Draper Report, a Catholic President might veto the progress of the last half century. She was suffused with bitter memories—the Town Hall raid, the raids on her two clinics, the ban on the St. Louis theater, and all of the other bans, including her story on the Mike Wallace show recently canceled on the pressure of two priests.

One day she announced that if the Democratic candidate won, she would leave the country. This time she backtracked. Soon after John

F Kennedy became President, he rescued the Draper Report from the trash can. If nations asked for help in curbing their growth, he said that his administration would give it.

Within three years a Sponsors Council for the Planned Parenthood-World Federation was headed by two former presidents, Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower. The latter had the grace to announce that "Once as President, I thought and said that birth control was not the business of our federal government. The facts changed my mind. I have come to believe that the population explosion is the world's most critical problem. In some areas it is smothering economic growth, it can threaten world peace. Millions of parents in our country—hundreds of millions abroad—are still denied the clear human right of choosing the number of children they will have. Governments must act and private citizens must cooperate urgently through voluntary means to secure this right for all peoples. Failure would limit the expectations of future generations to abject poverty and suffering and bring down upon us history's condemnation."

Thanks to "the pill," released for general use in 1960, the spread of birth control was greatly accelerated. From some thousands of volunteers, the numbers using it had quickly jumped to more than 6,500,000 American women—one out of every five in the childbearing years—and to 5,000,000 women in other parts of the world. Here at last seemed complete assurance against pregnancy and in a form easy to take and acceptable. Some medical and lay journals pronounced it the "perfect contraception," but from the start there were dissenters, including Dr. Pincus and Dr. Chang. Better than others, they knew that their product could be improved. It was burdensome to take daily and too expensive for the poor. Before the pill was on the market, they were starting tests to perfect it. Before reports came in of bad side effects on some women, they were working on a new approach, the "morning after" pill. Here the goal was to expel the fertilized egg before it became implanted in the uterus. Among its many assets was the fact that using fewer hormones and aiming at a single target, it would be less likely to upset any bodily functions.

In all the floods of publicity about the famous pills, one story was never told, that of the two old ladies, both well along in their seven-

ties, who conceived and financed the Worcester project. In turn, this launched what has been called a worldwide sociomedical revolution. Mrs McCormick had a passion for anonymity, but Dr Hoagland states that her gifts to the Worcester Foundation alone, were around two million dollars. There was another \$160,000 for Dr Rock's experiments.

A few weeks before Mrs McCormick died, at ninety-two in 1967, she reversed the usual procedures to thank Dr Hoagland for accepting her help. It had been a great privilege, she said, to use her money for a successful cause in which she deeply believed. Along with five million for Planned Parenthood, she left another million to the Worcester Foundation, although Dr Pincus's death had preceded hers by several months.

Early in the sixties, Margaret Sanger grew very old and feeble. Sometimes crowds still came to see her, as did a national convention. Informed that the archaeologists meeting in Tucson had received no official welcome, she, who had arranged so many conferences, invited the 150 delegates to cocktails. Enthroned on a small settee, regal in a hostess gown, crowned with her copper-colored curls, she enthralled her guests as she chatted with them in groups of twenty.

In 1961 Julian Huxley, now Sir Julian, headed a New York lunch, publicized as A World Tribute to Margaret Sanger. She was presented with a princely gift of \$100,000 for the expansion of her work. But there uniquely, her life-long terror of public speaking conquered the once invincible trouper. Grant had to make the response.

In 1966 a thousand gathered in her adopted Tucson to hail "The Woman of the Century." Having learned her lesson, she let Stuart represent her, while she stayed home. Home? Well, with her bad heart and arteriosclerosis, her son had moved her to a nursing establishment. She had resisted, as an aging queen would resist exile from the autonomy of her own palace for confinement in a dismal, alien cell. Her bereavement was partly assuaged by a second move to a better nursing home where she was surrounded by her own furniture and endowed with a kitchenette, in which Daiquiris or tea might be provided for her guests.

Visitors came from all parts of the country, for she had seldom

broken with a friend. Former staff members and volunteers in her cause kept the rare loyalty of comrades in arms. Together they had once faced danger and won through to victory. Often they found her alert, even gay and ready for a party. Sometimes while they reminisced, the familiar inner flame again illumined her crumpled face.

The incandescent news of her last years was the ruling of the United States Supreme Court on the Connecticut law which made the use of contraceptives a crime. Four decades earlier Margaret Sanger and Kate Hepburn had opened war on this police-under-the-bed statute, as it was known. It had not interfered with the rich, but it had stopped the spread of information to the poor. Twice the Connecticut Court of Errors had upheld the law in sensational cases, one involving the mother of three deformed children, the other a half-paralyzed invalid for whom further pregnancies would be fatal.

Second only in significance to the ruling was the source from which it came, a brief filed as *amicus curiae*. For the third time in mid-twentieth century, distinguished Catholics took the lead in advancing the birth control movement. Dr. Rock, collaborating with Dr. Pincus, had developed the first biochemical contraceptive, "the pill." John F. Kennedy had been the first American President to accept government responsibility in dealing with population problems. Now Catholic lawyers, cooperating with the Catholic Council on Civil Liberties, produced the winning argument. Their brief said that the Connecticut statute unjustifiably invaded the privacy of married couples, depriving them unreasonably of their liberty in violation of the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

In *Griswold v. Connecticut*, June, 1965, there was unanimous condemnation of the law, although two justices wrote a minority dissent. Seven joined in striking down the law on the grounds that it infringed upon the ancient "right to privacy." The right to privacy! That was what Margaret Sanger had been talking about all the time. The right of women to protect themselves without state interference. Birth control was a personal, not a legal matter. This victory assured a basic freedom by which mankind might rear a better race.

Margaret Sanger died on September 14, 1966, a few days before her birthday. The obituaries said that she was eighty-three years old, but as usual they were wrong about her age. She was nearly eighty-seven.

Paraphrasing what she had written thirty years earlier for Havelock Ellis, gives a fitting epitaph: "A great woman, a beautiful spirit, a world's work done. What more can one ask of life? FINIS."