

Berlin. Dec. 27.

[1924-1928]

1927

Dearest Margaret Smedley

I have just received your photograph, and thank you very, very much for it. It is really very fine.

Then I am in receipt of the draft for M. 100. Please thank Mr. Slee very much for me. He is very kind. Indeed I intend to go to a concert or two during the week.

Enclosed is the translation of the card you sent me. Your office in N. Y. C. has also answered it, but I have sent him Dr. Riese's address.

I have decided not to have an operation for appendicitis until later. I went to Dr.

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Naef - my analyst. I have indeed
chronic appendicitis, but I
shall try to get over it, at least
in part. I am told that so
long as I am in a large city
it is not so bad, for with any
dangerous attack I could immediately
have it taken out. But that I
may have a sudden attack if I
travel or go walking through the
country. But the effects of the
narcosa horrify me so much
that I prefer to postpone the
operation at least until the
Spring. Meantime I am taking
atropin, etc.

I am reading the book of
Dr. Riese and will let you
know the contents soon. It is
called "The Sexual Distress of our

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Time." The first 3 chapters that
I have read deal with

"Sexual Distress of the Proletariat"
and deals with the terrible crowding
in the poor quarters of Berlin, and
of the ~~existence~~ overcrowding in the
individual homes - often 8 to 12
people living in one room; with
all that develops out of that, -
including marriage catastrophies.
- She deals with the sex relations
between young working men and
women before they are married,
and of how they wait for years
for an apartment of their own, of
pregnancy forcing them to marry &
living with relatives.

The next chapt. deals with
"The Family with many children," with
ignorance, immorality, the serious
disturbance to children who watch their
parents in sex union and watch the

mother give birth, of how so many
 sleep in one bed; of the early &
 forced sex relationship of children,
 with perversions. Of 'houses destroyed',
 etc. Of the results to the woman
 of constant child birth - of the man
 who finally picks up with prostitutes
 and brings home syphilis to his family;
 of unemployment; of talent that is
 destroyed in these conditions.

The next is "Pregnancy, Birth
 and Nursing of the Proletarian Mother."
 She gives much space to physical
 exercise here. Also of high death rate.
 She deals with the housewife woman's
 ability, through B.C. to regulate the size
 of her family, with good care, food, etc.
 and of the working mother who leaves
 a brood of 6 or more at home & goes
 to work carrying another in her womb.
 Of modern medicine restricting infant mortality.
 Medical viewpoints developed here. Effects of
 pregnancy on many women - kidney trouble, etc.
 of too many children & pregnancies leading
 to immorality, the destruction of the marriage,
 polygamy, alcoholism & gambling. Of the
 miserable motherhood of proletarian women.
 The "chains of slavery" of the working woman

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She deals with the living, hygienic & medical conditions under which a working woman gives birth to her children & lies in confinement. Of the absence of linen or anything to prepare for birth. Of working women who have to arise from the confinement ~~within~~ 3 or 4 hours after birth, to cook and care for her other children.

She tells how the very men who preach a high birth rate are the very ones who refuse to rent apartments in the houses they own, to families with children. She then takes up the State help to pregnant mothers, but shows how miserably inadequate it is — and is often withdrawn.

Other chapters which I have not yet read are —

"The Drunkard & his Family"
then Part II

See

"The Sexual Distress in Bourgeois Society"
a) Distinct and Marriages of "Reason"
b) Master position of the Husband.

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c) Faithlessness, and its consequence.
Divorce.

d) Mistakes in love.

Last Chapt:

Responsibility in love.

It is a book telling of modern sex problems - advocating birth control throughout; but she often seems to me to miss many points. She has so much material, and seems to me to have often failed to make the best use of it. She advocates B.C. to be sure. But she seems to me to lay too great importance on love and less on hard, beastly necessity. Of course, I may be a bit hardened, but I don't think love plays such a part with workers. They hardly know what it is. She

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advocates reforms here and there
better home for workers, better
arrangements for confinement of
mothers. I myself would
advocate the use of B.C.
methods — a complete birth
strike and a change in the
form of society by revolution.

But that is my own opinion.

The book itself contains much
valuable material and it gives
a very good, very excellent
picture of distress in the
sex field today. It is good
as far as it goes. She
does not even stress B.C. as
she should. Love is her
theme — and the killing of love
by modern conditions of life.

Are you thinking of having

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the book translated? I think it
would be good to do so if you
wish to throw a light on
sex conditions in Germany.

I'll drop you a line about
the contents of the last chapters
as soon as I read them.

I am sorry to hear that you
are not so well there. Perhaps you could
go to a lower altitude and feel
better. I wonder what you did at
Xmas time. I hope you had
a very happy time. I stayed at
home on Xmas Eve, and Mirza, one
of my Indian friends, came in and
we had dinner here. I keep a hot
water bag to my side much of the
time and do not often go out.

During this week I shall get
to work on the article about your
trip here.

Love, Margaret Lov + thanks.
Ame