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Berlin-Wilmersdorf
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bei Prippenow

Jan. 30, 1928

Dearest Margaret: I enclose a list of the people you met while here, with names, addresses, and telephones. I do not know some of the others, like Frau Dr. Durant, or the many people who gave you cards. You can perhaps add them there. You asked me to make this list long ago, but I always had so much to do, and then I had also mislaid your pages.

Second: I saw Mrs. Ohaus yesterday--for two hours, and questioned her at length; first, not telling her that you had interest in it, but saying that you had given me her address and said I should come to know her. At the end I told her you also wished to know more of her ideas. But I did not tell her that you were interested first, for I wished her to talk with me without colouring her speech; I thought she might become very pro-birth control if I mentioned you, while what I wanted to know was her real mind and interests, and the place B.C. had in it. I learned this:

She is a lecturer, concert singer, and has invented that little apparatus for cooking. She wishes to start a "School of Life". She belongs to no political party, but is a member of a "Free religious Association", considers herself a Theosophist, and believes in spirits. She is violently anti-Jewish. She hates the women's associations here in Germany, and says she is persecuted by the "German Housewives Association". I do not know why. She says she is an excellent lecturer, and last year lectured everywhere for the Berlin Gas works, exhibiting some of their apparatus.

As for her "School of Life": This means, she says, that she wishes to do pioneer work in freeing German women from the domination of men. She considers women divided into five classes, 1) the pure sex, or prostitute type; 2) the pure intellectual woman to whom sex is nothing; 3) the pure housewife and mother type, --and what the others are I do not know. She would speak of these types in her "School of Life", and would advise many women never to become mothers, saying: "Look, you are a prostitute type and you have the right to live a pure sex life, for you have the right of an individual. But you should never have a child." etc. etc. Then, in this school she would teach women that men are very, very different creatures, belonging to another world. Men and women she says do not understand each other, for they cannot, belonging as they do to two different worlds. She would teach women how to handle men, and men who came to her she would teach how to deal with women. This she considers necessary for the preparatory work to birth control. Women she says must learn to be free individuals, to insist upon their rights, not to subject themselves to men, not to be the slaves of men. The German housewife is a slave, she says, and nothing else. The German woman is not ready to be told about birth control. That is the last stage. For the intellectual woman she would give birth control methods at once; for the great masses, the general woman, she would prepare them first in her school (by lectures) and then in the end

Give the methods of prevention.

As for sending her school and what she wishes:

She wishes, first of all, an apartment of three rooms, kitchen and bath, for herself. In the first room is to be a piano, some nice artistic things, your book on Motherhood, and her own preparatory book. The first two rooms are to be reception rooms, for afternoon tea, concerts, talks on your book and on the school of life. She would also keep pessarries and other means in the other room, to advocate if necessary, and she would also have her new cooking invention there as an attraction.

The first thing is the apartment; the second is the rest and leisure and money in which to write the preparatory book which leads up to your "New Motherhood". The third is the renting of halls in the city--once a week. The cost for all (excepting the halls) would be M. 2,500, all in advance. For the rent of halls she would need M. 100 a week, or M. 400 a month for a time until the work paid for itself. The M. 2,500 she would use first to rent an apartment and get furniture on the installment plan--she would buy only the simplest and most essential things. Then she would at once have a stenographer to take down her book and says she could finish the book in two nights--she walking and dictating, and the stenographer taking it down. She writes very quickly, she says, and wrote a book like this on cooking and her life's ideas. She says she has been ruined financially and she wishes some money to get a start and to have time in which to write and work along your lines.

In the end she asked me for my opinion of her ideas; I told her that I am perhaps too political in my whole manner of thinking, to understand her or appreciate all her ideas. But, very definitely, I told her I considered her anti-Jewish attitude a danger for the birth control movement, for birth control is also for Jewish women, and Jewish women work in the movement here and there. She said she never lets any such idea pass her lips and in dealing with individuals she never makes any distinction; that is only her impersonal attitude toward the Jews. But I told her I thought that anyone with such a viewpoint let it show itself even unconsciously, perhaps in disgust, or an attitude. She insisted not. She further told me that she was quite willing to follow your lead; she is open to suggestion, etc., and would be glad if your ideas are different.

As for my own personal ~~views~~---perhaps it does not matter much. I am so very political, so very much dominated by the whole class idea, that I perhaps should never be put in charge of such a problem as judging a woman of this nature. I see in her the tragedy of women of the past generation and even today: a woman who is capable, but who could never turn all her energies into one channel, because women were not permitted to think and work consistently. So they become a bundle of everything on earth--a flash here, a flash there--a bit capable along every line. No concentration. No discipline in intellect. I agree with many of her ideas--for instance that the German woman is a slave and the German man a tyrant and ruler. German women do indeed need a new outlook. But I doubt if, in this day and age when millions of women are in professional life, if lectures of the sort of this woman would really be so very valuable. Furthermore--practically all German women are organized in their various political

parties. The nationalist parties are reactionary and opposed to birth control for any women except their own personal selves. They cannot be converted. The Catholic Party (Centrum) can never be converted. The Social-Democrats and the Communists both carry on public propaganda from the platform and in their press, even advertising pessaries. The information they should be scientific and given by physicians in clinics, but the foundation is there in so far as the women of these two parties are there. I mean to say that these consider your book "The New Motherhood" the best preparation that has been given. I have the idea that Frau Ohaus would merely write down her very violent feminist emotions on the subject, but that there would be no organization, no scientific approach to the question. And then, of course, if you write only opinions, every opponent has the right to advance a contrary opinion. But with scientific organization and approach, there can be no answer. Your book gives that approach.

I think Frau Ohaus would perhaps do good in some classes, with her lectures. But I doubt very much if they would have anything to do with birth control, and I could not exactly see how the birth control comes in. It is a sort of tail-end thing for her, after all. With you, birth control is everything, and if you are to furnish the money, you have the right to see that your money is spent for birth control alone.

Personally, I was opposed to mixing up birth control with cooking apparatus, important as the latter is. The woman is honest, and the sum of money she asks for is not really much. She needs money and all that. But I doubt if money so spent would serve your purpose as you wish it to be served. I can understand your helping Dr. Herta Riese's clinic in Frankfurt, and such things.

I have the unfortunate impression that this woman has had most bitter experience with her husband, and that now she is developing a "School of Life" that is a reaction of her own personal suffering. On the one hand is hatred of men (perhaps justified in her case), which comes from her own unhappy experience--out of this comes her unscientific division of women into five classes and her teaching ~~fixes~~ that men and women belong to two different worlds: on the other hand comes her Theosophy and her belief in spirits, which is proof that in her own unconscious, or spirit, she cannot face life and fight any longer, but finds comfort and belief and explanation in mystical interpretation--unable to understand or face scientific facts, she accepts mysticism. This is also perhaps due to economic and other suffering after the war--so many of the German bourgeois men and women who cannot adjust themselves to new conditions, are like this. Her Theosophy was not so very deeply developed.

I am perhaps prejudiced and met her with a prejudice. I certainly met her with caution and with a cold and practical eye. But I was prepared to be convinced. Instead, I heard: Feminism, plus cooking apparatus, plus Theosophy, plus spirits, plus birth control, plus anti-Semitism, plus the most deplorable confusion on social and economic questions. You yourself saw the woman when you were here, and you perhaps had a better opinion of her. I feel badly in writing a contrary opinion about her. You need not be guided by my ideas. Perhaps you can use her or force her to carry out your ideas exclusively. I suppose her need is so great that she would do that if you insisted. If I ever get the opportunity, I shall attend one of her lectures.

This week I am seeing two physicians--one that woman who spoke on birth control in Soviet Russia, and another a Professor who has made a similar study in Russia. I wish you would go to Russia something and study

