

Berlin-Wilmersdorf
Holsteinsche Str. 36
bei Prippenow
Tuesday, Feb. 14th.

[1928]

Dearest Margaret:

I hope this letter will reach you soon. And before I start it, I wish to thank you for your last letter, enclosing M. 50 and the \$25 check to go to Frankfurt. As soon as I get some work off my hands that I have undertaken, I'll go to Frankfurt for three or four days.

Now for the immediate business:

Jo Bennett and I went out to Neukölln today to see Stadtrat (Commissioner) Dr. Schmlenke. He is, we find, the head of the Health Department of Neukölln. He called in another official - also a Communist, to discuss our proposal for a Birth Control Clinic in Neukölln. First we tried to do it officially. He first proposed that, but we faced a number of difficulties--after he had called in officials to ask about it. The City gives only a certain appropriation for health, and they have appointed physicians in this work--who, by the way, cannot be removed. Then there is the Marriage Advice Bureau--with Dr. Kollwitz, the son of Kaethe Kollwitz, in charge. We then learned that he is not a woman's doctor, and he does not examine women--and cannot--for the purposes of birth control. We discussed putting in a woman physician as his assistant; but that means paying a salary to the woman, and the money is already appropriated. Then we discussed raising money in America, through you, to pay the salary of this physician for twice a week. We decided on M. 100 or so a month for this. Then we ran into the fact that the city can help private institutions doing good work, but it dare not accept money from private individuals or institutions to further a certain work. We consulted a legal expert in the Town Hall and learned this. So we were up against that.

Then we discussed starting a private clinic, the Municipality to give the rooms free, and perhaps a nurse. Then we found out that ~~we~~ we would have to take rooms in one of the public institutions already in existence--rooms in either the headquarters for combatting venereal disease, ~~or~~ or for combatting tuberculosis. Jo and I both objected to this. We could get free rooms there, for they are city buildings. But the Municipality would not be able to rent a suite of private rooms. Dr. Schmlenke saw that ~~the~~ the viewpoint of Jo and myself was right--we don't want to get B.C. mixed up with syphilis or tuberculosis. The very idea is awful. But that would have given us the rent and a free nurse, and only the equipment of the rooms and the pay of the doctor. Dr. Schmlenke offered furniture which he has himself--a desk, some chairs, a table, etc., which he has for an office.

Well, we finally saw that if we dealt with the ~~City~~ City, we would have to accept those rooms. So we had only the Marriage Advice Bureau, which is a tiny institution open twice a week in the evening in one room only, with no arrangements for clinical work. That would be less expensive.

Next we consulted with him about a regular clinic--or a

He called in another man to consult with us. We discussed the following:

A City B. C. Clinic in Neukölln. They told us of the Marriage Advice Centre--the head of which is Dr. Kollwitz, the son of Kaethe Kollwitz. But he is not a woman's physician at all and does not examine women physically as would be necessary. So much money is appropriated for this work a year and to put in a woman physician--he first discussed that--would mean to wait for next year and get an additional appropriation. Furthermore, there is only one room there. He has no right to put Dr. Kollwitz out, and the man is not, as I said, a woman's physician. But general.

Then we discussed opening an extra clinic under the city. He said yes, but we would have to use one of the city buildings--that is, rooms in one of them. There is the building given over to venereal diseases and tuberculosis, etc. We objected, for we don't want B.C. to get mixed up with a disease. But he said there were no other rooms possible, and the city could not make an appropriation until the new year for extra rooms, and even then ~~xxx~~ he doubted if the city would rent rooms extra for a Clinic. If we took rooms in the department with venereal diseases and tuberculosis, he would furnish the office furniture, for one room, for he has furniture of his own. But Jo and I both objected to the place. ~~xxxxx~~

We discussed financing such a place, or placing a woman physician in with Dr. Kollwitz. He said most physicians who were at all conscious along B.C. lines are Socialists or Communists and they earn little money because they treat so many people free as it is. He said they should be paid --say M.100 a month--for attendance twice a week at the Clinic (Dr. Kollwitz is twice a week) although he would try to get them free. But he doubted.

After a long discussion, he called in a legal expert, and we learned that city institutions can not accept donations from private sources, although the city can, of course, give private institutions support.

Then after a time we came over to a private B.C. Clinic which, after a year we would try to get Neukölln to support, or partially support, officially. We discussed three large rooms on Hermann Platz in Neukölln, in the heart of the workers section. One reception room, one consultation room and one treatment room. He offered his office furniture for the reception room. Free, of course. He said he would use his own name and be personally responsible for the Clinic in so far as its official status goes. The men present warned him that he would get in trouble, because he is the Head Health Officer of Neukölln. He said he was willing to take a chance, and he had the right to use his name as he wishes when he is outside of his office. He decided to do it, openly and frankly. But he said the money was a problem. It would be private. I asked him then to tell us a proximately what it all would cost, and and and the men and Jo and I discussed the items. He said it would cost from

M.1,000 to M.1,500 to equip the place--furniture, linen, medicaments, etc.

I don't remember all the items I sent you, but then I worked out a list ~~xxxx~~ that came to about \$75 a month to maintain the Clinic. This paid for the physician four hours a week, the nurse or two, rent (M.120 a month) washing of linen, light and heat, and a cleaning woman. After a time we thought the Clinic could be self supporting, or partially so. And in my mind was the idea of having the municipality support it, although I know there will be one awful fight from the General Berlin Municipality when it is heard of, because the Catholics will fight it. Then I also have in mind support by the Communist Party, especially the woman's branch of the C.F.