

More Executives Becoming Workers for Planned Parenthood

By VIRGINIA LEE WARREN

Family planning started out as a women's movement because, back in 1912, when Margaret Sanger coined the phrase "birth control," most men considered it indelicate. Furthermore, many saw family planning as a threat to the natural rights of their sex.

Mrs. Sanger and her followers conjured up pathetic pictures of poor young mothers with too many children dragging at their skirts, pulling them into an early grave and then facing misery and neglect—but masculine hearts were not touched, at least not enough to get men involved.

Now, that attitude has changed. Men, especially men in big business and the lawyers who represent them, have come to see that an excess of people can make life difficult for everyone, no matter what their private resources.

The result: Executives and corporation lawyers have been leaping into Planned Parenthood, especially into the money-raising phase of it.

Angus C. Littlejohn, president of the United States Trust Company International Corporation, recently summed up the attitude of a good many others when he told of what he found when he came back to the New York area to live after 25 years in foreign countries.

'The Basic Problem'

"I couldn't get over the changes," he said. "And pretty soon I began to see how problems in transportation, in housing, in education and juvenile delinquency, all go back to the basic problem of too much population."

Robert V. Roosa, partner of Brown Brothers Harriman & Co. (bankers), who has headed Planned Parenthood's fund-raising arm, the United Planned Parenthood Campaign, for the last two years, is convinced that worse conditions are in the offing and that the situation will keep on deteriorating unless the birth rate can be checked.

"Do you realize," he asked, "how many young unwed mothers there are in this city, simply because there was no one to teach them how to keep from getting pregnant? What's it going to be like five or six years from now when all those children are

ready for school? And if we don't stop bringing all these babies into the world there soon won't even be enough room for us to stand up in."

From this kind of thinking it's an easy step to want to get involved in Planned Parenthood. Indeed, so many men are now deep in the movement that on the national board of the organization they outnumber women 55 to 49. And it is not at all unusual for a man to persuade his wife to become active for the cause, instead of the other way around.

Several Children for Most

That is not the case with Mr. Littlejohn, however. When asked about his wife he laughed and said, "Most men in Planned Parenthood, you'll find, have five or six children; I have five and they keep my wife pretty busy. Besides, she has other interests."

But George N. Lindsay, a lawyer in the firm of Debevoise Plimpton Lyons & Gates, who is the older brother of the Mayor and who served as chairman of the national Planned Parenthood organization in 1966, '67 and '68, said that he got his wife, Mary, into the movement. "And now she is on the board of the Margaret Sanger clinic."

Alexis C. Coudert, a partner in the law firm of Coudert Brothers, is another who said he led his wife into Planned Parenthood. He himself was persuaded to go into it "seven or eight years ago by a friend on the board; he got me to be co-chairman of fund-raising."

Mrs. Coudert, who before her marriage 10 years ago was a fashion director in a New Jersey store, didn't require much persuasion. "When I first came here and saw what a threat the population explosion was, I became interested on the city level," she said.

She added: "Then when my husband went on the board, I also became interested in the national and international organizations—part of the money raised goes to all three—and we began going to meetings and dinners together. This year I was an associate chairman of the benefit art tour here."

Victor Kovner, also a lawyer (Lankenau Kovner & Bickford) is still another who

was in the movement before his wife was. He went into it in 1967 "because, since I'd been active in the political life of the city, I felt an obligation beyond the direct area of family planning."

"For instance," he said, "Planned Parenthood was looking for those who could help with getting legislation through on abortion, Medicaid reimbursements on the level of unwanted pregnancies in minors and setting up contraceptive centers—that sort of thing. The service to minors is one of our greatest concerns now."

Sarah Kovner, who, before her husband went into Planned Parenthood, used to think of it "as an old-fashioned agency that was slightly patronizing," became active in it about a year ago, and last month she organized a conference on the legal rights of minors in regard to abortion and contraception. She and her husband go to meetings and dinners together.

"What you soon learn," said Mr. Kovner, "is that people who are concerned with population are working with conservationists and environmentalists. We know now that it all fits together; it's all one big problem."

Frank E. Barnett, chairman of the board of the Union Pacific Railroad Company, and his wife, a volunteer at the Spence-Chapin Adoption Service, are another couple who are in Planned Parenthood together.

'Risky Thing' in 1959

"Seeing a surplus of homeless children led me to believe that there should just be fewer of them," said Mr. Barnett. "But while some progress is being made in that direction, there will have to be a massive effort before a movement like Planned Parenthood is really effective. A hopeful sign is that governments are beginning to realize that population explosions are going to become unmanageable."

One man who was preceded into Planned Parenthood by his wife is Cass Canfield, senior editor of Harper & Row and an honorary member of the board of that publishing house.

"That was in 1959," Jane Canfield recalled. "I had gone into it about 40 years

ago when we had a little clinic in Mount Kisco. For a long, long time it was considered a woman's problem. Then in 1959 I was a delegate to a conference in India and Cass went along as sort of an observer.

"Well you can't go to India without being appalled. He had always been sympathetic with Planned Parenthood and when he came home he joined it. It was a risky thing for a man to do in 1959. We were warned that Harper's books might be boycotted and my husband did get some crank letters. But soon after he went into the movement the tide started to turn and other men began taking an active interest."

Mr. Canfield, who went on to become head of International Planned Parenthood (he is now honorary chairman), is presently serving on the board of the national organization.

Long before he went into the movement there were such valiant pioneers as Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, who, in 1929, started working on be-

half of Planned Parenthood in Baltimore when he was a young obstetrician and gynecologist at Johns Hopkins.

When he moved to New York in 1952 he continued working for the cause and has been president of the national organization since 1962.

Aid From Corporations

Getting large contributions used to be extremely difficult because, according to Robert Roosa, banks and corporations "were afraid for a long time that if they gave they would be misunderstood. One of the first to go over this hurdle was Chase."

John D. Rockefeller 3d, who is a brother of the head of Chase Manhattan Bank, David Rockefeller, is also a major contributor. Among other businessmen who have been active recently in the Planned Parenthood movement are William H. Moore, chairman of the board of Bankers Trust; R. L. Ireland, who is

with Brown Brothers Harriman; John B. M. Place, vice chairman of the board of Chase Manhattan; and Peter L. Bernstein, president of Bernstein-Macaulay, Inc., an investment advisory service.

Of the 25,000 volunteers throughout the United States, about 5,000 are men. In New York the percentage is even higher—about one-third.

Times have indeed changed since Margaret Sanger's father, voicing the thoughts of most males, asked her if she couldn't "find some other subject to talk about besides the bedroom." (According to Mrs. Sanger he lowered his voice when he said "bedroom.")

Today, largely because of the men who have rallied to the cause, Planned Parenthood's budget for this year is \$20-million—20 times what it was when Cass Canfield led the way into the organization in 1959.