

Why and How the Poor Should Not Have Many Children

Emma Goldman

Early 20th Century

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Every normal man and woman loves children and wants to have them. Children complete and beautify our lives. But it requires no argument to prove that society as it is constituted day is a wretched place for the children of the poor. And therefore poor people should have as few children as possible. Many children are not only a burden to the individual family, they not only exhaust the mother's health and take away the bread from each others mouth, but they glut the labor market, tend to lower wages, and are a menace to the welfare of the working class.

Under our present economic system there are not enough jobs for everyone. The present system is arranged so that there shall be unemployed, vagrants, criminals, insane and all sorts of unwelcome creatures. The children of the rich can have everything they want; therefore let the rich have many children (though they won't).

Until society is prepared to offer every child that is born proper food, shelter and care and to every adult desirable employment, liberty and an opportunity to express himself, poor people should have as few children as is possible.

Large families are not the will of God. Children do not need to be born by accident. Healthy, intelligent people can have children when they want to.

It is not wicked nor dangerous to use methods for the prevention of conception. Many people use preventives for years until they are able to support a child; and then they have one.

There are many ways of preventing undesirable pregnancies. Different methods for men and women. In this leaflet we give a few of the simplest and most easily applied methods:

FOR WOMAN.

THE COTTON BALL.

One of the simplest and cheapest methods is to introduce into the vagina a ball of cotton dipped in borated vaseline (vaseline can be bought cheaper under the name of petrolatum or petroleum jelly). You can either buy the borated petrolatum ready in a drug-store, or it will be still cheaper for you to buy an ounce of boracic acid and mix it well with half a pound of petrolatum in the jar in which it comes. Then make a ball of absorbent cotton, dip it into this borated vaseline or petrolatum, and it is ready for use. Women who have had no children need a smaller ball than women who have had children.

PESSARIES.

A pessary is a sort of rubber cap which fits over the neck of the womb. There are numerous pessaries on the market . A good pessary is an absolutely reliable preventive, but in order to be reliable it must be well-fitting, and is best fitted on by a physician. This makes it somewhat objectionable for general use, but those who can afford to have a good pessary fitted to them should prefer this method. It can be worn the entire month, only being taken off before the monthly sickness comes on and put on again when it is over. A soft rubber pessary with a hard rim around or with a spring in the rim, well fitting around the neck of the womb, is the best. They can be purchased in drugstores and in stores dealing in rubber goods. Ask for a pessary or womb veil. Pessaries which have a stem which fits into the neck of the womb are not good, as they often cause irritation, congestion and may perhaps lead to disease.

SUPPOSITORIES.

Many people prefer the use of suppositories as the least objectionable. There are thousands of families who use nothing else and are perfectly satisfied with the results. Here is a formula for an excellent suppository. An honest druggist will make it up for you very cheaply.

Boracic acid	15 grains
Salicylic acid	2 grains
Quinine bisulphate	3 grains
Cocoa butter	60 grains

This is for one suppository. The best shape is an oval one. You can order a dozen or twenty such suppositories. The suppository is introduced about five or ten minutes before intercourse and permitted to dissolve.

DOUCHES.

Douches are not over reliable, some people getting caught in spite of the douches, and still there are thousands of people who use nothing but douches for years without pregnancy resulting. Even after the use of cotton ball or the suppository, a douche may be used, both for the purpose of cleanliness and for double safety. One of the simplest douches is two tablespoonfuls of strong vinegar to a quart of water, or four tablespoonfuls to two quarts of water. Instead of vinegar two teaspoonfuls of acetic acid to a quart of water may be used. Another very good douche is peroxide of hydrogen, two to four tablespoonfuls to a quart of water. The more water you use, and the higher the pressure, the better it is.

FOR MEN.

CONDOMS.

A condom is a sheath of extremely thin rubber which is fitted over the male sexual organ. A good rubber condom is reliable. It is best to moisten the condom and not to draw it down too tightly — that is, to allow just a little looseness at the tip, to avoid any possibility of its bursting. Condoms can be bought in any drugstore, where they are sold as a protection against venereal infection, and their use needs no further explanation. It is only necessary to mention that the condom should be blown up before use, to make sure that there are no holes in it. Some holes are so small that they cannot be seen, but on blowing up the condom with air their presence becomes evident.

GENERAL ADVICE.

No reliance can be placed on the idea that conception will not take place if intercourse is performed only during the two weeks between the menses (monthly sickness). But it is true that as a whole this is the safer time, there are many women who do not conceive during these two weeks; they only become pregnant if they have sexual relations either immediately before or soon

after the menses. None of these methods can be guaranteed as positive but that is no reason why you should not try them if you are interested. This is a new science it is still in the experimental stage, and you can help discover new methods by discussing preventives in public and with your friends. If you are interested in the information contained in this pamphlet, pass it on to your friends. Copy the information given in this leaflet or have other ones printed. Don't be afraid of what any bigots or enemies of the working class may say. If you think that the teaching of the prevention of conception will help working men and women, spread the glad tidings.

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