

## PRENATAL CARE PROPAGANDA.

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(With three illustrations.)

"Infant mortality is the most sensitive index we possess of social welfare. If babies were well born and well cared for, their mortality would be negligible."

NEWSHOLME.

FOR the propagating of most anything, whether it be prenatal care, a gold mine, or the latest mode in laxatives, several elementals are essential among which might be mentioned lucidity, conciseness, but, above everything else, terse truths painted in compelling, colorful words, which in the parlance of the professional publicity promoter can be summed up in the one word "punch." Endow each word with a wallop, each phrase with a punch, each sentence with force and simplicity and you have the creed of the successful propagator.

Different subjects, of course, require different means and methods. That which is legitimate needs no more than to have its merits pictured attractively and so impressively as to leave a lasting imprint on the mind to get it "across," which is an expressive bit of theatre argot meaning getting something over the footlights and into the favor of an audience. That which is spurious or bogus is very often put

across successfully save that lies, rather than truths, are used. But in this there is no permanent reward and the propagator of frauds must be ever brushing his wits to keep in the van of the public's credulity.



## DON'T LISTEN TO "OLD WIVES' TALES"

No shock can "mark" an unborn baby.  
No horrible sight can deform him.

BUT

WORRY, FEAR and ANGER  
may affect his mother's blood,  
which supplies his food.


THEREFORE

she should be CALM, HAPPY  
and SWEET-TEMPERED.

FIG. 1.—Poster distributed by National Child Welfare Association.

Propaganda with which we are here vitally interested concerns prenatal care, the competent medical and nursing supervision of the development of infants during the creation period through the scientific care of expectant mothers. This subject is worthy of the serious thought of the great public minds of the world and yet it has never been accorded its meed of public attention. Thorough

appreciation of its manifold benefits to humankind have been fully understood only by the obstetrical branch of the medical profession, because it had never been properly set before the people. Although the practice of prenatal care is by no means new, its beneficial effects



**HARD WORK**  
before the baby comes and  
afterward often  
**MEANS**  
**MISCARRIAGES    PREMATURE BIRTHS**  
**STILLBIRTHS    INVALID MOTHERS**  
**SICKLY BABIES    ARTIFICIAL FEEDING**

The mother who gives a child to the State must be protected by the State. The law should secure her a sufficient time of rest both before and after confinement.

FIG. 2.—Poster distributed by National Child Welfare Association.

upon the new-born having long ago been acknowledged by the experts in this science of medicine, it has never been sufficiently encouraged as a public health measure to arouse a concert of public interest in it.

Prenatal care is as near a panacea for human ills as ever will be

found and still that part of the populace, the proletariat, to whom we are striving to carry its benefits remains unenlightened, save to a very small degree, it being practically impossible to reach them because of the limited means at the disposal of those individuals and organizations engaged in pioneer work in a few of our larger cities. Until all these forces find strength in unity propaganda; until they coordinate their interests in standard methods of prenatal practice throughout, and use the same high degree of technic in telling of their work as in doing it they cannot hope to attain that measure of progress their cause is justly entitled to.

Prenatal care eventually will achieve its reward but not before its exponents are met in a common purpose; until they have grown so potential that they need not beg for recognition but demand it. Perhaps the greatest deterrent to the dissemination of the advantages of this work has been a seemingly indifferent press. Newspapers are essential to the success of any great propagation undertaking. It was they which made possible the remarkable successes achieved in the divers war campaigns—Liberty Loans, Red Cross, W. S. S., Y. M. C. A., K. of C., Salvation Army and all of the others. These organizations, of course, relied on other ways and means of bringing their purposes before the country in their endeavor not only to awaken the interest of the people but to arouse patriotism in them to such a point that they invested and gave freely and magnanimously. But it was the seemingly limitless power of the press which permitted no dimming of the flame of patriotism. It was the press, through its news, editorial and advertising channels that kept the spirit of the people high; that spurred them to greater effort; that praised them for their generosity if things went well and chided them and cajoled them and yea, even scolded them if they grew lax or allowed interest to wane.

In no other of the globe's countries is the power of the press so puissant as in these United States. Peoples everywhere marvelled at the ready response of Americans to their country's many calls in one form or another during the war; the quickness and dispatch with which full quotas were gathered; the boundless, unstinted support that met request after request for funds for this or that need and yet if they but knew the genius of the American newspaper editors; were aware of the close bond of intimacy that exists between the American newspaper and its public, they would not marvel. But while the press is ever ready to contribute its power to deserving causes it has never extended to the unborn infant, the world's greatest asset, the assistance that is his right. Prenatal care

propaganda is spread in the newspapers very meagerly, but blame for this seeming indifference and disregard can hardly, in justice

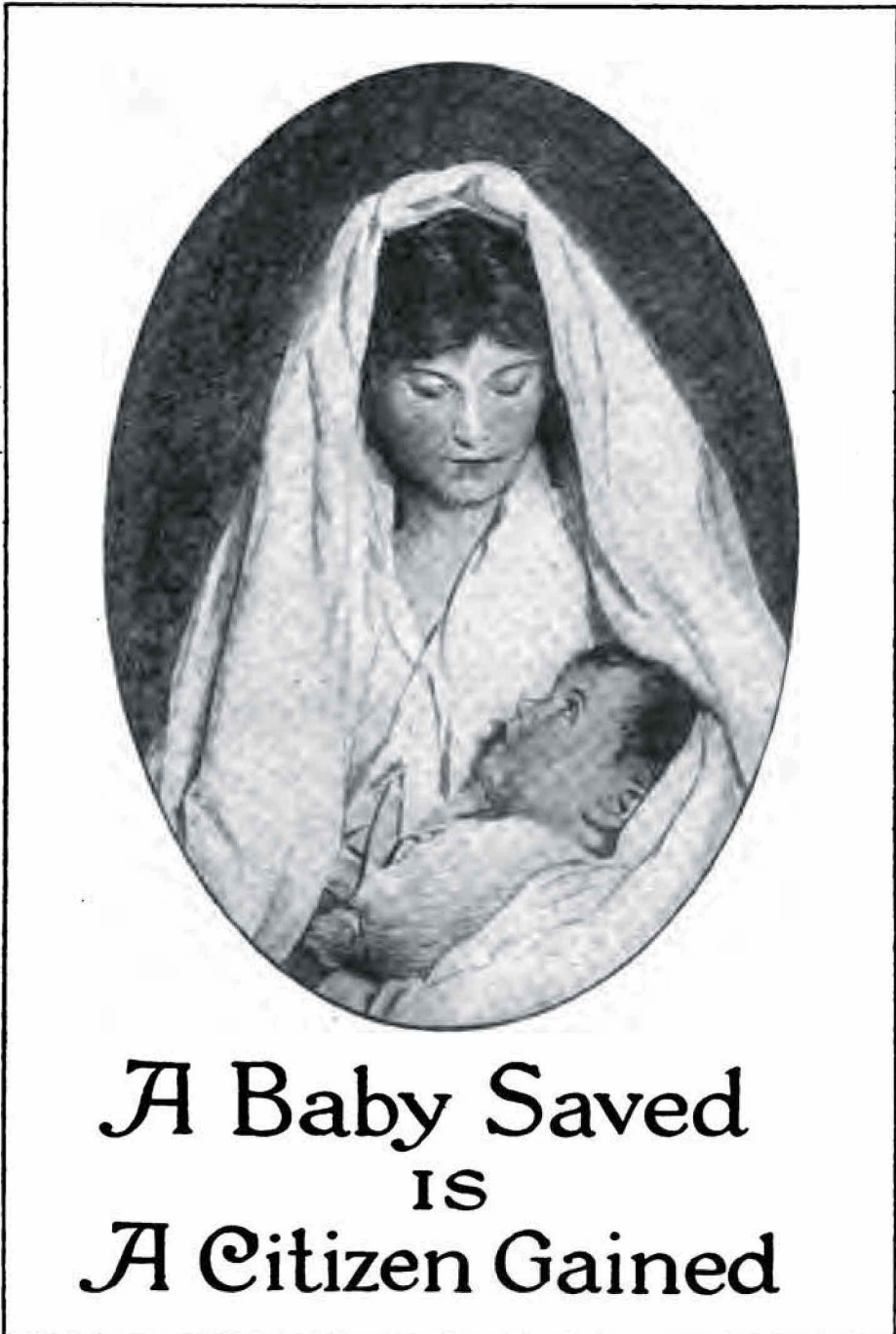


FIG. 3.—Poster originated by New York Milk Committee.

be placed upon the press in the face of that splendid treatment it has been according other public health and welfare campaigns.

Who then is at fault?

Perhaps it is the propagator himself! I am certain it is he. I have become convinced of this after a long period of close observation. No matter what our particular public health interest is, nor how keen our enthusiasm, unless we possess the power of personality to electrify this into a community interest we cannot expect the press to wax eloquent in our support. The statistical evidence reveals the fact that our most enlightened cities have the lowest general and infant mortality rates. By enlightened we mean a general community appreciation of the value of constructive public health effort making for an enlightened environment conducive to health rather than disease.

Maternity welfare publicity has always been handled too severely, too gravely, too technically, if the term may be applied, to get it seldom anywhere but an inglorious abiding place in the waste heap. It wants to be trimmed in something less somber than mourning bands. It needs to be colored and freshened a bit and associated with cheer now and then.

In the newspapers or in poster or panel display or on the lecturing platform propaganda with the punch pays. Civic effort with punchless propaganda is always pleading poverty.

The difference between the two is the difference between Dr. Jacob Sobel's "First Aid to the Infant" and my "Medical and Nursing Service for the Expectant Mothers" or Mr. Powilson's "Waste of Life, Health and Strength that must be prevented by proper care before and at birth."

In the many years that infant welfare work has occupied the attention of health authorities and divers independent organizations the development of forceful phrases or slogans, the short, snappy sentences that grip the mind and make a deep impress have been few, far too few. Of those that come to mind quickly are:

Paul E. Taylor's "Better Babies" and "A Baby Saved is a Citizen Gained."

Dr. Jacob Sobel's "First Aid to the Infant" and "The Nation that has the Babies has the Future."

Dr. S. Josephine Baker's "No Mother's Baby is Safe until every Mother's Baby is Safe."

Dr. MacMurchy's "A Mother should not Sublet Her Duty to a Cow."

Mrs. William Lowell Putnam's "Education, not philanthropy."

Charles F. Powlison's, "Save the Mother."

How many engaged in prenatal practice are letting folk know about it? Not many. How many of those that are speak of it in a language understandable and interestingly enough to hold the attention of their auditors? You are concerned with what your community should be taught to think about prenatal care. What

are you doing to promote the practicability and the praiseworthiness of this work? Are you interesting others in your program? Are you gaining converts? Do your thoughts properly express the value of your endeavors? Interrogate yourself along these lines and discover the extent of your usefulness as a propagator.

Do you preach prenatal care via lantern slides, motion pictures, posters or panels or from the rostrum of the orator? Have you tried the panel form of pleading your case and found that it would not do because you neglected to include the punch? Graphic portrayal of essential facts in the poster or panel form of educational propaganda is a highly developed art or science. Placed in the hands of experts this means of inculcating new ideas and endowing persons with new ambitions and purposes in life becomes very effective.

Poster work in the Liberty Loan campaigns was good, bad and indifferent, but there were so many ideas presented and the cause behind them was so powerful as to be practically irresistible, that it is difficult to judge just what effect they had in the drives. In the last government campaign New York City was a veritable art gallery. The picture pleads, however, did not all average 100 per cent. efficiency in governmental efforts.

Out of the great display no more than two were worthy of credit for effectively carrying the true message of victory to passing throngs. The loan was successful because the stupendous force back of it made a 20 per cent. efficiency in poster propaganda all that was necessary to attain the goal. But in your work and mine every stereoptician slide, every panel, every lecture must count 100 per cent. to get our message over because we lack the power and the magnitude of the United States Government.

In the creation of panels the "punch," more so than in any other form of propaganda, should be paramount. The caption should be such as to catch the eye and hold the attention of the mind. And it should be printed boldly and plainly. A 100 per cent. caption is utterly worthless if dressed in a language foreign to the every day, matter-of-fact American. I am speaking now of styles—types.

The difference in the style of type used in panel work is the difference between a panel that is readable and a panel that is not readable—between a message that is effective and one that is not effective. The purpose of the type on the exhibition panel is to form words which in turn convey ideas rather than contribute an artistic decoration to enhance the beauty of the landscape. Leave the Spencerian flourishes to the Spencerian and remain steadfast

to the plain, simple type that the plain, simple folk can read without effort. Better have a poor idea dressed in plain letters and simple words than a good idea smothered in curlicues of alleged art. Letters that stand up without support assist greatly in bringing out the obvious in word meaning. Letters that run together become lost among their own frills and fail to convey their meaning clearly.

Use a drawing that contains a positive idea rather than the darlingest doll baby picture you can find.

Make it distinct and elemental so that a child can understand and appreciate its purport.

Illustrate your words. The best formal drawing and picture is inferior to a cartoon. A cartoon is in itself an exaggeration—and an exaggerated illustration helps carry the message across.

When you are discoursing on your favorite theme—prenatal care—in the intimate circle of your professional friends, be academic to your heart's content. When you are educating the public on this or any other subject—be human. Remember you are telling it to the world—tell it so the world can understand.

Chicago has employed the dramatic in public health propaganda for a number of years. Dr. S. Josephine Baker has popularized conservative dignity in her educational public health propaganda for babies and children. Both have been successful to a marked degree. Take your choice.

Dr. Truby King of New Zealand, alone and unaided, introduced prenatal care to the entire country. He had but one idea. In the large cities of the United States it is the very wealthy and the very poor that receive the best obstetrical service. Those between these two extremes cannot afford nor have they been educated to demand this high type of service.

When Dr. King initiated his program in New Zealand only the wealthy were receiving proper obstetrical care. It was his task to extend it to all. He succeeded with one idea.

When we start public health or welfare work here, we locate the poorest and most miserable section we can find, move our staff and equipment there and proceed to give to the inhabitants something they have not asked for and did not know they needed.

When Truby King started his prenatal work in New Zealand, he enlisted the coöperation of Lady Plunkett and her friends. Then he opened a maternity clinic on New Zealand's Fifth Avenue. Lady Plunkett and her friends were his first patients. The rest of New Zealand's mothers naturally followed the prevailing fashion.

That was Truby King's idea.

105 EAST TWENTY-SECOND STREET.