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Planned Parenthood and the Mass Media

Poland

When Towarzystwo Planowania Rodziny (TPR)—the Polish Family Planning Society—was founded in 1957, the need for health education and sex education programmes for youth and adults was paramount. At that time the population as a whole considered sexual matters embarrassing; little was known and said about sex education, and there was a great need to break the silence on sex, contraception and abortion. The TPR set itself the task of discussing these questions and developing programmes for teaching modern contraception. TPR editorial and publishing activities (books, pamphlets etc.) in these areas were, in spite of large editions, a mere drop in the ocean. The publications scarcely reached the section of the population which the TPR was particularly anxious to involve, viz. youth and rural populations in remote districts, far from cultural centres. For this reason, the TPR contacted the mass media agencies—Polish radio and television—which reach the entire population, and in 1961 a permanent radio broadcast series “Family Consultation on the Air” was inaugurated. These five-minute regular weekly broadcasts were designed to discuss family problems, contraception, the question of sex education for children and youth, and also to provide family and premarital advice.

In recent years, “the demand” for information about infertility—its causes and treatment—and sex education has grown considerably. After sex education had become so widely discussed, questions began to be raised as to ways

in which sex education programmes should be implemented. Not only was the silence on family and sexual problems broken, but discussions among various population groups on the subject became increasingly comprehensive and eloquent. At school committee meetings, parents now no longer discuss the need for sex education, but rather the question of who the sex educator should be: the teacher, the family or the school physician? and the question—at what age should sex education begin?

The TPR expanded its cooperation with the Polish radio and television agencies, and the Polish radio established another permanent series of broadcasts—“The Family ABC” (now known as the “Family Obstacle Race”). A TPR presidium member, a doctor of sociology, discusses a series of questions concerning the family as a whole, family and marital conflicts, and gives advice on how to overcome or prevent such conflicts. Often the topics discussed originate in questions sent in by listeners.

Another series—“Talks on Education”—consists in talks and/or answering questions. The broadcasts are prepared by TPR Contemporary Family Research Centre staff members (two sociologists and a physician). The topics discussed come from the rich material provided by the TPR Family and Premarital Clinics which are attended not only by the inhabitants of Warsaw, but also by clients from all over the country. “Sex Education Here and Elsewhere”, has been broadcast in consultation with a member of the TPR Presidium, the TPR Chairman and the head of its Education Committee. The TPR approach is to discuss when, how and who should teach sex education to young people, and the experiences of other countries.

In agreement with the TV agency, the national weekly programme “Young People’s TV Screen”, includes talks with young people in the form of free discussions. The programme is organised by a sociologist, psychologist and sexologist. The same national TV programme includes also dialogues on “Tabu Questions” which take the form of discussion between young people, and parents, teachers, sociologists and sexologists, on sex, youth behaviour

and attitudes towards problems associated with marriage, the raising of a family, the proper education of the new generation, responsibilities etc. Sexual problems are discussed by an expert in a series called “No Prudery”. Another series is included in the TV School Programme (secondary). This takes the form of school class discussions on problems of sex education. Finally, special TV programmes are designed to discuss one selected topic of family problems, eg. a TV discussion, in which gynaecologists, lawyers, sociologists, demographers, health service organisers etc. comment on the harm of abortion, the need to develop health education, family planning, the use of contraceptives, and the last resort use of the abortion law provisions. In addition to this cooperation between the TPR head office and the mass media, ten TPR provincial branches cooperate with local TV and radio stations. In 1972, the TPR celebrated its fifteenth anniversary. On the occasion, local programmes discussed the achievements of local TPR branches, their activities and plans for the future. As part of its own anniversary programme, the TPR organised, together with Polish radio, a literary competition on memoirs of “My Own Married Life and Family”. 310 entries were received. The material was reviewed by a jury composed of TPR personnel and the Polish Radio editorial staff members. Prizes and recognitions were awarded. Selected material will be utilised in a book. Sex problems, sex life and sex education are also increasingly discussed in the daily press and youth magazines. These are explained and discussed in a popular and matter-of-fact way by experts, working along lines recommended by the TPR. Cooperation with the press consists in preparing information items on the TPR for the daily papers. The TPR’s own journal “Family Problems” is the only one in this country to deal exclusively with family questions. The journal is circulated to scientific, social, sociological associations etc. cooperating with the TPR.

Bolesław Górnicki
President
Towarzystwo Planowania Rodziny
Warsaw

Italy

The first information published in Italy on the subject of family planning appeared in 1952, in the form of two articles in *Corriere della Sera* and *Il Mondo*. The articles were written by a sociologist and jurist, now a director of the Unione Italiana Centri Educazione Matrimoniale Prematrimoniale (UICEMP) member centre in Milan. He was the first Italian writer to deal with the problem of birth control (as family planning then tended to be called) and he did so more from the point of view of the population problem than from that of sex education or parental responsibility towards their children. In one of the two articles, he called for the abrogation of art. 553 of the Italian Penal Code, which prescribed fines and imprisonment for any person found guilty even of publicising family planning.

The history of that law is well-known. It was added to the original Penal Code in 1930, in order to favour the Fascist population policy, and for decades acted as a brake on even journalistic activity in this regard. It was abrogated only in 1971 by a decree of the Constitutional Court, a state body with legislative jurisdiction in constitutional matters. Despite these difficulties, since 1952, a great deal has been written on the subject of family planning, as a result of major changes in Italian social customs, giving greater freedom and independence especially to young people and women. Since 1954, various family planning organizations have come into being and these have tried to use the means at their disposal to influence the national press. The journalistic output on the subject can be sub-divided into a number of categories:

Newspapers

At first, newspaper articles did not deal with the Italian situation, in particular, so much as with the world situation, especially the population problem (famine, difficulties of developing countries, the dire outlook and possible remedies). Some years later, when the Vatican pronounced on contraception, the newspapers—with the exception of those avowedly Catholic—more or less openly criticised the Vatican's position, citing the opinions of foreign religious leaders in favour of family planning, and pointing to the need for a careful examination of the whole question. The subject, however, even today, is not treated in an organic manner. Often a particular fact or aspect—repeal of the Penal Code article, parliamentary debates, the abortion rate, etc.—obtains press coverage. All newspapers have given ample space to the question of sex education, and controversy continues concerning which persons or organisations are best qualified to handle this—schools, parents, teachers, etc., the age at which such instruction should be given, and whether it should be compulsory or optional in the schools. These articles sometimes refer to experiences in other countries, and often appear on the women's pages.

Nearly all the newspapers of the various large towns announce the courses promoted by UICEMP member centres. Interviews with UICEMP directors have been published, and also informative articles describing the work of the centres.

Periodicals (weekly, fortnightly and monthly)

These follow more or less the same line as the newspapers, but place more emphasis on sensational aspects, e.g. child mothers, the sale of children (still common in Italy). Many of these periodicals, and nearly all the women's magazines, have featured numerous articles on family planning, in some cases giving more or less exact information on the use of contraceptives, prices, composition, etc.

Not all of these articles are inspired by UICEMP, and some of them are from incompetent sources. In cases where our Association is not specifically mentioned, we send copies of our booklets and a report on our activities. Correspondence with readers who want help concerning their personal problems, and who are often put in touch with our centres, is an important part of our activity.

Mention should be made of the weekly *La Famiglia Cristiana* (circulation 2,000,000) of religious inspiration and with an extensive family readership. This magazine regularly publishes UICEMP announcements, with the result that we receive letters and requests for help from all over Italy. Various educational magazines, secular and religious, also often publish reasonably accurate articles on family planning. The same can be said for the social, political and literary magazines, which deal with the problem more widely, especially where sex education is concerned; they mention UICEMP and other centres. The magazine *Venus*, well designed and containing many illustrations, treats freely of sexual problems; it will shortly publish in book form a series of lectures promoted by CEMP (Milan)—*Saying and Doing*, and it regularly publishes columns written by a Council member of UICEMP, and by the Vice-President of CEMP (Venice).

Journals (medical and scientific)

These journals are generally reliable and confine themselves to explaining the various theories concerning the use of contraceptives. At the same time they reflect the diffidence and conformism that characterises a large part of the Italian medical class. They are somewhat critical of the use of the Pill and IUD.

Finally, there are the semi-porno-graphic and scandal magazines which give a wide but superficial coverage to sexual matters. In general, we do not maintain contacts with these magazines, even though they would be prepared to provide us with publicity.

In general, it can be said that the mass media do not reveal any sign of an organic line or policy in regard to the question. The newspapers reflect the uncertain and ambiguous attitude of the government, and therefore lack a clear and coherent policy. Interviews and articles are very often published as the result of personal contacts. Journalists sometimes obtain their information from badly informed or biased sources. A section of the upper-middle class is covertly opposed to planning family, which it sees as a threat to the traditional large family. The result is that not even the press display a coherent attitude: the same issue of a newspaper or magazine may print a serious and authoritative article on family planning or sex education and, in the next column, alarmist news about the dangers of the Pill, or conventional and out-of-date portrayals of the family.

The same contradiction, to an even greater degree, is found in the Cinema. The films that are shown are very "emancipated" and verge on pornography, yet it is almost impossible to arrange for the screening of an informative film on family planning, or on the activities of UICEMP centres. In May–June 1971, a film was shown of a lesson on family planning promoted by AIEMP (Turin) and given at the University of Turin. The film, however, showed only the reaction of the public, not the lesson itself. There have been a few fairly good short films on animal reproduction. This state of affairs is caused by the fact that the film companies need the government subsidies, and thus are reluctant to take steps that may displease the censors.

Italian TV

This is closely controlled by the government, and access is therefore difficult. Recently, part of a lesson on sex education given to women employees of a Piedmont factory was shown; this venture was promoted by AIEMP. The Secretary of UICEMP took part in a debate with a representative of Gruppo UCIPEM, an organisation with a religious tendency.

The Radio

The radio has organised several debates on sex education in which an expert in child sexology has often taken part. Brief announcements have been made with regard to some of our activities—lessons, lectures etc.

Gramophone records

Two gramophone records, one on the Anatomical Bases of Sexuality and Birth Control, and one on How Babies are Born, have been produced.

A survey of Italian attitudes to family planning has been conducted by a research institute. This is the first survey of this type to be carried out in Italy, and serves to explain some of the difficulties UICEMP encounters in its

publicity work. The survey, commissioned by a group of pharmaceutical companies, revealed some points of interest concerning levels of knowledge, and the possibilities for dissemination of information. It also provided useful material for evaluating the possible influence of mass media on the population, and on the formation of serious public opinion. The sample consisted of 2,000 persons, representative of the Italian population, between the ages of 18 and 45 years. Its principal findings were:

- 1 that the majority of the interviewees were in favour of family planning, especially in the North and among members of the middle classes;
- 2 that those who consider family planning a social duty look to the government to promote it, by means of information centres (35%), free contraception clinics (43.7%), free distribution of contraceptives (17%);
- 3 that the ideal number of children was 2 (57%) or 3 (33%); the large family of the patriarchal type survives in some Southern parts of the country; the tendency to conceive children deliberately and according to a programme is recent but strong, even though undermined by various other tendencies;
- 4 that the prohibition of contraception by the Vatican was considered by the majority to constitute undue interference; practising Roman Catholics (3%) declared that they were tormented by this prohibition; the remainder create their own moral standards completely or partially different from those laid down by the Church;
- 5 that abortion is considered a difficult problem even by the 20% of interviewees in favour of legalised abortion (at present it is strictly prohibited in Italy);
- 6 that the use of the Pill still encounters serious moral and psychological resistance, either because of a fear that it will cause the moral degradation of women, or for practical reasons—high cost, the need to be examined by specialists and to have check-ups, the need to obtain further prescriptions etc.

This brief outline of Italian attitudes to various aspects of family planning leads one to ask how the various opinions are formed. A higher level of knowledge and desire for information are found in the upper socio-economic classes. These classes also have the highest newspaper reading (in Italy very low) and radio listening (in Italy very high) levels. The circulation of daily newspapers is 5½ million, and of weeklies 18 million. There are at least 10½ million TV sets (20 per 100 inhabitants). The highest listening levels are 25 million, with average listening levels of between 6 and 10 million, whereas periodicals have 25 million readers of whom 13 million also read daily newspapers. The significance of these figures, how-

ever, must be seen in the context of the Italian situation. 4% of the population is illiterate and a further 15% has reverted to illiteracy; 90% of the farmers do not read; 75% of the manual workers do not read regularly. There are enormous differences between North and South caused by the country's unbalanced economic development.

This view of the situation, summary but indicative, confirms the fact that the impulse towards family planning must come from the top and that use must be made of every means of communication, in addition to the mass media, as well as of direct propaganda in the more backward and stagnant areas. It is therefore necessary to have an organic educational action programme, organised by competent persons who are unprejudiced, freed from the fear of possible legal dangers, and at the same time fully conscious of the delicacy of the matter. The action of the weeklies and even of daily newspapers, even if it be intense, cannot alone be sufficient: it is necessary for state agencies to issue precise directives and to encourage the press, and private enterprises (which are nevertheless subject to all kinds of pressures) to approach in a coherent manner a subject which in Italy is so delicate.

Italian TV and Radio, as state agencies, allow no possibility of debate and are therefore even more conditioned by the absence of a courageous social policy. Instead of being considered as a long term education programme and expressed in terms that the entire audience can understand, family planning has only been treated in programmes classifiable as general entertainment, which do not present a true picture of the situation of the Italian family, and in which family planning appears as merely an incidental feature.

The TV and radio debates and enquiries on problems connected with family planning and sex education are characterised by their evasiveness, and they take place late in the evenings when the audience level is low.

In these conditions, publicity for family planning through the mass media, which should be the most modern and accessible, becomes a source of strife between different groups and associations, bent on publicising themselves rather than on fighting for the common cause.

UICEMP is gradually acquiring a reliable reputation even among the less well-informed mass media audiences. In recent years, there has been a considerable increase in requests for information, following newspaper and magazine articles featuring the work of UICEMP.

Finally, UICEMP's quarterly bulletin (circulation 7,000) is considered an excellent source of reliable information.

Guilia Gentili Filippetti
Honorary Secretary
Unione Italiana Centri Educazione
Matrimoniale Prematrimoniale
Milan

German Federal Republic

Pro Familia has found it comparatively easy to interest *the press* in topics relating to family planning, sex education and counselling, provided there is some news value in what is offered. For example, new initiatives in working with lower socio-economic groups, with guest workers from other European countries, new types of training course, conferences etc. are of general interest, while the opening of a new family planning clinic is of interest to the local press. The press generally reacts favourably when we emphasise that Pro Familia needs their help and cooperation.

Approaches to Pro Familia by the press are made when a topical aspect of family planning is widely discussed, e.g. political, legal or medical. The slogan "Prevention is in any case better than abortion", which appeared in the press when there were endless discussions on possible reform of the very strict abortion law in the Federal Republic, led some newspapers to approach Pro Familia for its opinion on how people could be more widely informed on practical aspects of family planning.

For a period, male sterilisation was a widely discussed topic, particularly in popular magazines, some of which asked for Pro Familia views. This obviously bridged a gap in the field of information. The main office and some of the branch offices were overwhelmed with telephone calls for almost two weeks from people asking for advice on where to go to obtain sterilisation. This led to a closer cooperation with physicians, who undertake sterilisation under certain circumstances. In most cases it was agreed with the physician that those who wished to be sterilised should visit one of our clinics for a thorough discussion before going to a physician. Discussion on the side-effects and possible dangers of the Pill is also often an occasion for inviting Pro Familia to comment.

Doubts have been raised among staff and Executive Committee members of Pro Familia, as to whether or not interviews should be given to magazines with a rather sensational approach, publishing superficial articles on sex with which Pro Familia would certainly not agree. The advantage of these kind of articles is, of course, that they are widely read, particularly among young

people. Some staff members fall into the trap of providing information to the press on the telephone. This almost certainly leads to misinterpretations, and the resulting publication of misleading information.

In dealing with the press, Pro Familia is handicapped by the shortage of staff in its central and branch offices, and this makes it difficult to maintain and follow up contacts. Once, for example, following the circulation of the programme for a physicians' training course to principal newspapers with a request that an announcement be published, a brief article appeared in one of the larger circulation newspapers tending to show that Pro Familia insisted on promoting the dignity of the medical profession. This arose out of the fact that in the programme it was requested that participants bring with them a white coat, to be worn at diaphragm fitting demonstration sessions. As a result, Pro Familia wrote to the journalist saying that the purpose of the coat had been misunderstood, and that surely he would like to know something more about an organisation about which he was obviously ill-informed. Finally, as a result of a visit to the office and an extensive interview, a long and very favourable article on the work of Pro Familia appeared in the newspaper. Towns in which there are family planning clinics usually have some contact with the local radio station, but the approach is usually from the clinic to the station rather than vice versa. One of the main reasons for the recent coverage given on the radio to family planning has been the continuing discussion on the abortion law. This led to some panel meetings in which members of Pro Familia were asked to take part. Also, a focus on the need for family planning advice and practical contraceptive services for the lower socio-economic groups has been to the advantage of Pro Familia in radio coverage. Recently, a member of the Pro Familia Executive Committee, together with the head of the Institute for Research on Sexuality (Hamburg) participated in a programme with the theme "the Pill for 16 year olds?" As part of the programme, the public was invited to telephone questions to the panel members. This type of pro-

gramme has led to a large increase in the number of young people attending family planning clinics. Of its nature, it is difficult to determine what kind of impact coverage by the mass media of family planning has in terms of bringing people to the clinics, but Pro Familia has noticed on numerous occasions that broadcasts of panel discussions etc., and the publication of articles in the popular press, always result in an immediate increase in the number of people visiting clinics. Taken as a whole, the tendency is to make Pro Familia better known as an institution, while in-depth articles in the serious newspapers add to the reputation of Pro Familia. Apart from very rare appearances by one or two members of Pro Familia on panel meetings, discussions etc., and an occasional short glimpse of a family planning clinic or some conference, there has been little possibility for publicising the work of Pro Familia on television, until earlier this year when the Saarland station produced a 40 minute film entitled "Learn How to Love". The film, featuring the work of Pro Familia, although shown at 16.00 h., achieved a wide and mostly enthusiastic reaction, and many asked for the film to be shown at a time when working people could see it. Considering the small size of Pro Familia and the consequent shortage of staff, it must be said that particularly in the last two years, Pro Familia has come to mean something to a considerable number of people. Before that, when asked if they knew what Pro Familia was, most people had no idea. Whenever interviews are given, Pro Familia membership of the International Planned Parenthood Federation is stressed, and Pro Familia is projected as an organisation which is part of the international movement. The Pro Familia project in Tunisia has awakened an interest in the global aspects of the subject, and it is expected that this aspect of Pro Familia activities will become more widely discussed.

Anna Luise Prager
Chief Clerk
Pro Familia, Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Sexualberatung und
Familienplanung e.V., Frankfurt

Luxembourg

The Mouvement Luxembourgeois pour le Planning Familial et l'Education Sexuelle (MLPFES) has, since its foundation, benefited from the support of four out of five Luxembourg daily newspapers. These have not only published favourable comments on the Association, but have also supported its aims in every possible way, with interviews, reports on meetings, conferences etc. Their editors have also frequently consulted the director of the MLPFES Centre, and interviewed her on the policy of the Association in different areas. When, for instance, the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* was published, the MLPFES was immediately contacted by the four papers and asked to comment. Such comments have always been treated objectively, and statements have been published without changes. The Trade Union owned *Tageblatt* mostly read in the south of the country by Union members, steelworkers and employees, is strongly influenced by the Luxembourg Socialist party, and numbers almost all party members among its readers. Family planning is given prominence in political articles and in articles in the special womens' pages on Wednesdays. In these pages the MLPFES has the opportunity of publishing, practically every other week, an article on sex education, family planning and contraceptive methods. These articles have been reprinted and published at low cost as a booklet on contraception for distribution in the Association centre. *Zeitung vum Letzeburger Vollek*, the press organ of the Luxembourg Communist Party, is mainly read by party members and has also always kept its columns open for articles on family planning, comments on activities of the Centre, reports on conferences etc. A member of the editorial staff is also an MLPFES board member, and this enables the Association to maintain contact and a flow of information. The Liberal Party's *Journal*, also for party members and liberal sympathisers, has always supported the MLPFES, although it has published fewer articles on family planning than the two other papers. *Republicain Lorrain*, published in France, a border-newspaper, with a local Luxembourg edition in French and in German, consistently supports the Association's activities and favours family planning. One of its staff writers is a founder member of the MLPFES, as well as a committee member. This daily is, contrary to the other Luxembourg dailies, sold mainly on newspaper stands and is therefore con-

sidered a "second newspaper" for many of its readers. It is also valuable to the MLPFES as it reaches a number of readers who normally read only the *Luxemburger Wort* which is edited by the Episcopate, and strongly influenced by the conservative Christian-Social party.

The latter newspaper is our failure in the field of friendly press relations. It simply ignores family planning and the MLPFES. We have failed in getting it either for us or against us. Its motto as far as women are concerned is still "Church, Children and Cooking!" and words like "contraception" are only printed in connection with editorials on the encyclical "Humanae Vitae"; the phrase "birth control" is normally used instead of "family planning". The paper's attitude has remained immutable: no controversial articles, no direct attacks, but a constant praise of motherhood as the one and only desirable state in a woman's life; demands to increase the birthrate of the country and the image of the large family as the only happy one.

We have tried every possible approach, e.g. contacting clergy members, party members and journalists. The *Luxemburger Wort* is regularly invited to each MLPFES meeting. We managed to obtain the delegation of a reporter at the third anniversary celebration of our Centre, but no article appeared. Unfortunately this paper, in spite of having fostered the underdevelopment of knowledge and information on family planning for over a hundred years remains (with the exception of radio and TV) the sole source of information for precisely the people we want to reach. The significance of having four dailies on our side as opposed to the one against us is difficult to evaluate. Most of the readers of the four publications can be considered as active readers, interested in political, cultural and social questions. The Christian-Social paper however, touches a large number of passive readers who look in a paper for practical advice, cooking recipes, birth and death announcements etc. and skip the parts of the paper which cover political and cultural events.

We could have progressed faster, had we had this paper on our side, but having progressed steadily, and counting among the clients of the Centre a good number of convinced churchgoing Catholics, we now find we previously overrated its power.

The illustrated weekly *Revue* which reaches about 32,000 homes (total population of Luxembourg 380,000)

published a lengthy article on family planning shortly after the opening of the Centre. A year-calendar edited by this weekly gave us space for an essay on family planning and sex education. This we welcomed because the weekly and calendar are read in mainly conservative circles, people who probably lack information on our subject.

If we could and can do without the support of the strongest daily in Luxembourg, this is mainly due to the regular support given us by *Radio-Luxembourg*, broadcasting locally in the Luxembourg language. This station reaches, at peak hours, up to 87% of the population, and more importantly, it reaches at all times the so-called passive readers, who would rather have information poured out at them than seek it in a newspaper. This is especially true of the inhabitants in the northern part of the country.

The radio staff has up to now broadcast all our invitations to assemblies, conferences and meetings. It has also organised several half hour series in a women's programme on Saturdays, 13.00-14.00 hours, thus allowing us to discuss family planning, oral contraception, sex education and responsible parenthood at a time when the largest number of women listen. These programmes have given an opportunity to put into perspective sensationalist reports on oral contraceptives which recur in foreign weeklies, and to counter the sickly sweet mother-image given by the Christian-Social paper, with an image of responsible and wanted parenthood.

Such programmes usually result in an increase in clients visiting the Centre.

This cooperation between the radio station and MLPFES continues.

The *French television* station in Luxembourg (addressing mostly the French border population) has also in the past issued several invitations to MLPFES to participate in programmes. These, however, did not have the same impact as the radio series, probably because they were usually broadcast 18.00-19.00, a time when people either return from their work, or are busy preparing evening meals and taking care of the children. The lack of success may also have been due to an overcautious approach by the producer, who was always careful to avoid using direct language, and who tried to construct a programme that would suit children and offend nobody.

A 1½ hour TV programme in the Luxembourg language is broadcast on Sundays 13.00-14.30, and reaches a large audience. The programme, con-

sisting of sports events, local news and short sketches is aimed at the "passive readers", and brings home certain aspects of family planning that otherwise would not reach half the number. A film report on the Centre, accompanied by comments from the director on the different services if offered, was televised on the occasion of its fifth anniversary. This helped not only to spread the idea of family planning but also to show that a Centre like this could just as well be seen as talked about.

In October 1972, when the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies voted in favour of premarital examinations, the director of Luxembourg TV asked for comments from MLPFES. This provided an opportunity to speak about preventive medicine and its importance for responsible parenthood, to explain about the dangers of German measles and toxoplasmosis, the immunology tests made at the Centre, its efforts against venereal diseases etc. This particular programme presented the MLPFES as an official health service.

The mass media in Luxembourg also includes a flood of publications from other countries, mainly France and the German Federal Republic. Their importance is by no means to be underestimated, as at least two foreign magazines a week are usual in a Luxembourg home. The German magazines *Stern*, *Quick*, *Jasmin* etc. owe their popularity partly to erotic, semi-nude covers, partly to a type of sex information which sometimes verges on pornography. They have the merit of having eased certain "taboos" and introduced contraception to a wide public. *Eltern* is the only one which gives clear and helpful information on family planning methods, and campaigns for responsible parenthood. The French magazines, e.g. *Elle* and *Marie-Claire*, are read by the more "bourgeois" class of women in Luxembourg. Their articles have helped to popularise family planning, and they are reliable supportive media for planned parenthood and sex education.

Finally, with a choice of 6 channels, the Luxembourg viewer can, if he wishes, see excellent roundtable discussions on family planning, family politics, family legislation and education problems, either on one of the three German or two French channels, or on the Belgian channel.

Kina Fayot
Secretary
Mouvement Luxembourgeois pour le
Planning Familial et l'Education
Sexuelle, Luxembourg

Sweden

RFSU (The Swedish Association for Sex Education) started in 1933 as a "one woman show", with its founder, the dynamic Elise Ottesen-Jensen, travelling round the country addressing the people. She visited farms and workshops in cities and rural communities, got people together and spoke to them about the archaic laws which stood in the way of planned parenthood, about unwanted pregnancies and how to avoid them, about contraceptives and how to protect oneself against venereal diseases. The enormous response with which she met demonstrated the immeasurable need that existed for information on sexual matters.

Accordingly, she made RFSU into a militant organisation which, together with radical labour groups, used sex information as part of the popular struggle for social justice, improved living standards and an expansion of human rights.

From the very outset Elise Ottesen-Jensen made use of that part of the press which campaigned for social reform, and she provided these papers with a tremendous amount of provocative and controversial material. In this way her organisation acquired a reputation as a radical group of militants. During the forties and fifties the whole face of the Swedish society was changed to the so-called "welfare state", and new laws replaced the old. The mid-fifties saw the introduction of sex education in schools, the modernisation of legislation on abortion, the spread of contraceptives to a wide spectrum of the population, and a developing interest among the mass media in sexual matters. Consequently, there was also a change in the relationship between RFSU and society at large.

During the 1960s, RFSU changed from a "one-woman show" to an information centre concerned with training so-called creators of public opinion: physicians, teachers, social workers, nurses, midwives, and mass media people, all of whom could then work in their different sectors to diffuse information on planned parenthood, contraceptive techniques and sexual relations.

In 1968, RFSU held its first course for mass media specialists. About thirty journalists and broadcasting people, selected from over a hundred applicants, spent a week at a residential course centre, where they heard experts on sexual information and on its medical, social and psychological aspects. The course took the form of a series of open discussions in which questions could be put to experts, and various angles concerning the publicity given to the material could be discussed. The course was also attended by RFSU people with

long experience of mass media working methods.

The subject of one such discussion in the first course was: "Is everything concerning sex worth a six-column headline?"

The discussions were very lively and interesting and the ultimate, unanimous verdict on the course was that it had been extremely useful.

A second course was arranged in September 1969, and once again people from the mass media queued for admission. The course was arranged on much the same lines as in 1968, with one exception: we included an item on pornography and sexual stimuli. We showed films and articles and examined pornographic products, before going on to discuss the wave of pornography which had suddenly taken on the dimensions of a major industry. We also considered the connection between pornography and sexual crimes of violence and discussed Danish experiences, which suggested that access to pornography reduced the incidence of sexually motivated crimes of violence. The discussions were very profound and exciting, but opinions were often divided, and there were times when we felt the lack of legal and psychological expertise. We also came to feel that it would have been an advantage to mix representatives of the mass media with representatives of other groups so as to give added breadth and depth to our discussions. Instead, we were sometimes faced with a preponderance of journalistic viewpoints and press ethics, which perhaps did not altogether serve to clarify the complex relationships involved. We therefore decided that, in the future, we should invite mass media people to our ordinary sexology courses for other groups, so as to give them access to specialist knowledge and experience. We believe that this integration will allow participants to benefit from a mutual exchange of experiences and views.

As a result of these two special courses, RFSU established over a hundred press, radio and television links, all of which have been extremely valuable. The people involved were closely familiar with the working methods of RFSU, and themselves took the initiative in many interviews with our members. Our study secretaries, the head of our Association secretariat and the managing director of our sales company also maintain regular contact with key figures in the mass media. Practically every week somebody from RFSU appears to comment on events, or to reply to interview questions in the press or on radio and television.

In 1970, Swedish educational tele-

vision broadcast six programmes on human relations, a considerable proportion of these programmes being devoted to sex information. RFSU played an active part in the programme at the production stage, by supplying material on which to base scripts, and also by representatives appearing in discussions.

RFSU physicians are especially active in the mass media; this was particularly noticeable in the repeated references made by radio and television to the abortion question, in 1971 and 1972. Since in its report to the Minister of Justice, RFSU had adopted a radical and, in a way, authoritative attitude, demanding full liberty for the individual woman to decide for herself whether she wanted an abortion, and also demanding that society should place resources at her disposal. Many other political and ideological groups came to adopt the same viewpoint. There was a prolonged debate on basic principles in the mass media, with the result that the attitude of RFSU came to be of fundamental importance.

Similarly, in the fight against venereal diseases, RFSU was able to send people to the mass media and point to actual results achieved by RFSU-campaigns advertising condoms. 1972 figures confirm the downward trend in the incidence of gonorrhoea, and this indicates a definite relation between a mass media effort and the RFSU objective of reversing the trend of venereal diseases in this country.* For many years, RFSU has published a large number of books designed to supply information on sex and sexual relations. Together with a commercial publisher, the Association has issued a series of publications, all of them in very large editions, aimed at various target groups—teenagers at school, parents, middle-aged persons and old age pensioners. Some books have catered for a more specific reading public, e.g. a book for the handicapped on sexual problems. A book has been published on the need for painless delivery methods, while another supplies the answers to the commonest questions which have been put to RFSU by the general public over a period of almost 40 years.

In 1971, RFSU started a news bulletin which is now distributed to about 6,000 selected physicians, teachers, social workers, nurses, midwives and civil servants of various kinds. It is also sent to a large number of mass media people, who refer to it every month, writing articles on the topics it raises, or quoting it on different points.

In 1972, RFSU published a so-called poster newspaper, a pictorial exhibition

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dealing with the global situation concerning planned parenthood, world population, starvation and social inequalities. This exhibition, which was highly praised by the mass media, has been distributed to over a thousand different places throughout the country where young people are in the habit of meeting together: factories and offices, social institutions, libraries, youth clubs, sports clubs, exhibition premises etc. During the past six months it has been seen by over 100,000 people and many groups have discussed it.

RFSU plans include a public discussion on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of its founding, in April 1973, when a large number of experts and mass media representatives will be invited to a debate on "Sex in Sweden from 1933 to 1973".

In this way RFSU has engaged the mass media over the years in the sphere of our activities.

RFSU can be said to have operated at the following five levels for the diffusion of its information:

- 1 Via a *comprehensive range of courses* which have reached special groups in the community: these groups have then extended their opinions and information to broad sections of the population (youth, mothers, associations and organisations).
- 2 *Clinical and advisory activities* providing direct guidance and assistance, and running *certain research projects* in the field of sexual relations and contraception.
- 3 Publishing activities (bulletin, brochures, exhibition and books) disseminating the ideas of RFSU in various sectors of society.
- 4 *Contact with mass media* in the form of continuous information from the Association to mass media people, active participation in debates and interviews etc.
- 5 The sales company's large contraceptive advertising campaign in the form of advertisements, posters, direct advertising and activities in the chain of shops which RFSU has built up and which now covers the entire country.

In this way the external activities of RFSU have played an active part in the diffusion of our ideas, a task in which RFSU has been valuably assisted by the mass media.

Carl-Adam Nycop
President, Riksförbundet för
Sexuelle Upplysning, Stockholm

*See article in Vol No 1 September 1972.

Immediately before and after the second World War, the women's Trade Union movement, medical and other organisations recognised the concept of planned parenthood. This recognition was reflected in the mass information media, but it was not until the debate on the legal aspects of planned parenthood that the subject touched the general public. In 1954, the debate concentrated on opinions for or against the legalisation of abortion, and this had the effect of promoting interest in contraception. In turn, these debates and discussions formed part of the larger social trend towards improving the social status of women. Specialised women's journals dealing with this area began to pay considerable attention not only to the practice of planned parenthood, but to the organisation of services and the training of staff. Journals such as the Slovenian *Naša Žena* (circulation 100,000) were responsible for giving their readers useful and practical information on existing institutions giving advice on contraception and sex education.

In the context of this social development, backed up by information, planned parenthood became integral to an examination of the relationship between women's employment and their parental function, the question of child welfare, conditions for abortion etc. In this sense, therefore, discussion of planned parenthood was not restricted to information on practical aspects, but viewed in a wider context. This period of 20 or so years since the end of the war can be seen retrospectively as the *first period* of activities.

With the establishment of the coordinating board of family planning in Yugoslavia in 1963, which in 1967 became known as the Federal Council for Family Planning (FCFP) the *second period* in the promotion of planned parenthood was entered into. Again, the information media played a prime role in this development. During this period the emphasis was on education, and the integration of planned parenthood into education for children, young people and adults, with an emphasis on responsible planned parenthood and the need for information to enable this. In this second period of development, the daily press, e.g. *Borba*, *Večernje Novosti*, *Vjesnik*, periodically organised opinion polls in consultation with health, educational and social workers on e.g. views for or against abortion. Such polls played an important part in the discussions that took place in the Federal Assembly when the law on the conditions for the interruption of unwanted pregnancy were passed.

Weekly journals, e.g. *Svijet*, *Mladost*, organised polls on a wider scale, about the necessity for including sex education in the curricula for elementary and secondary schools. A variety of opinions were polled, and again the role of the media was considerable in arriving at measures that may be considered as progressive in this field. Another feature of this second period was an intensive activity towards the establishment of a social policy on planned parenthood. This culminated

in the Federal Assembly resolution on family planning, passed in 1969. The media played a preparatory role and also followed up by giving the resolution the widest publicity.

The introduction of the above resolution marked the beginning of the *third period* in the development of activities. Whereas hitherto the media had played a positive role in the spreading of information and scientific knowledge in the field of planned parenthood and sexual behaviour, as well as in combating reactionary views on this subject, there had not been sufficient objective criticism, either of positive or of negative aspects. The media themselves have on occasion been responsible for misunderstandings by quoting from foreign press sources alarmist and sensationalist reports on, e.g. oral contraceptives and possible dangers to the health of women. Occasionally, therefore, considerable setbacks have been suffered in information and education activities.

Radio and television are the most significant media in Yugoslavia. This is known from the support that was given in the early days of the development of the movement, and more especially latterly in the promotion of sex education. A number of television programmes have given much time to the integration of sex education in education programmes. TV in Belgrade, Ljubljana etc. has been active in making programmes on the preparation of young people for responsible parenthood. The radio, in particular, has been used for discussion on the social implications of planned parenthood, and has organised a number of panel programmes in which listeners have been able to telephone their questions. Such programmes have been extremely useful in promoting not only practical but also philosophical discussion on the meaning of planned parenthood and sex education.

Much of the participation of television and radio in public discussion, and their stimulation of that discussion, has come about as a result of the FCFP efforts to engage their interest. Nevertheless, viewed as a whole, there is still considerable room for improvement in coverage of this subject, e.g. films might be made on planned parenthood. To date, there have been only two short films, and these have not been very widely broadcast. Other than that, the FCFP has of course produced its own literature, pamphlets, posters etc. Today we are having to take a critical look at our own situation and to tackle and anticipate certain developments which obstruct our work. Many magazines carry correspondence from young readers asking questions which indicate the gaps left by the information media. This in itself is, of course, a form of sex information/education, but it is important to distinguish between this kind of information and the semi-pornographic magazines which have a negative tendency.

According to 1970 data, there were about 40 popular illustrated magazines in Yugoslavia with a total average circulation of nearly 4,000,000 copies.

The socialist self-management concept is often undermined by the exploitation of sex under the guise of liberation of leisure from ideological and political restraints. Most obviously, this commercialisation of sex tends to view women as sex objects (it is estimated that 15–20% of the total matter in these journals is given over to a predominantly pornographic content). Viewed in the context of social responsibility, such magazines reflect the rather primitive and low level of communication between people, mostly young, about a subject which touches them all. Whereas this type of press may not have attained the circulation and influence that it has in many Western countries, it still constitutes a threat. However, the recent introduction of high taxes on the sale of these magazines is hoped to reduce or eliminate this kind of material. We also note a more critical attitude of people towards this type of material.

The wide interest of the population in such magazines demonstrates that there is an objectively existing need for magazines with sexual themes—a need that apparently has not been fulfilled. Thus a dilemma is posed to the FCFP: whether or not it should cooperate with the so-called leisure press by contributing articles, in the hope of reaching the wide readership. A policy has yet to be decided on this matter, but from next year one of the FCFP commissions will analyse the commercial press which publishes pornographic material, as part of a promotion of sex education and the education of the information media. Knowledge of sex and normative behaviour should free the individual from the middle class hypocrisy which has resulted in the so-called “sexual revolution”, so that sex education based on the necessary knowledge and information can contribute to the humanisation of relations, to peoples mutual respect, and to the promotion of health. This analysis will also provide an opportunity for the media to state their own views on the subject, and to critically evaluate their own performance in this field. This area is expected to be of major importance in FCPF activities in 1973.

The FCFP, in its bilateral cooperation with sister organisations in some European countries will also be closely studying the problem of migrant labour in Europe, and will be printing some information material for Yugoslav workers on planned parenthood. This information will be given in the context of the health and welfare institutions in the countries in which Yugoslavs are working. Of the current number of people working abroad temporarily, 31.4% are women, 83.2% are under 39 years of age, and 50% are under 29 years of age. This data leads us to believe that cooperation in this area is of vital importance. The editorial staff of Yugoslav newspapers which publish special editions for workers abroad have at their disposal an advisory panel of writers (consisting of a psychologist, sexologist, public welfare worker, gynaecologist, educator and psychiatrist) which enables readers to have up-to-date information on planned parenthood at their disposal.

The FCFP and its corresponding Republic and Regional organisations have encouraged certain information media to participate actively in planned parenthood. The results achieved so far

have been considerable, but not sufficient. The FCFP Work Programme for the period 1972–5 gives a significant place to the need for educating and cooperating with information media, whose participation will depend on activities at all levels in the field of planned parenthood. In the view of the FCFP, planned parenthood is rightly a matter for the attention of the information media, but it would like to see a more thorough discussion of planned parenthood within the context of general social themes relating to the social and economic development of Yugoslavia in all Republican Regions, no matter what their levels of development may be.

Nevenka Petrić
Vice-President, Federal Council
for Family Planning, Belgrade

IPPF 21st Anniversary Year and World Population Year

In January 1972, the IPPF Anniversary Conference Programme Advisory Committee recommended that the Central Information and Education Committee (CIEC) should establish a group to prepare plans for pre- and post-Conference activities. At its first meeting in March, the CIEC accepted a proposal that a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) be established to consider and implement public relations aspects of the 21st Anniversary Year, and Conference (October 1973) and also make proposals for activities in support of World Population Year 1974. The TAG consists of IPPF Central and Regional Information and Education staff, and a representative of the CIEC. At the first TAG meeting in July, Mr. Jørgen Hornemann, the Regional Information and Education Committee (RIEC) Chairman, representing the CIEC, and the Regional I & E Officer, reported on the RIEC meeting held on 1 June, and presented the broad outline of activities planned for 1972/3. It was stated that, from the Regional point of view, 1973 would be a year like any other, in which it was intended to pursue agreed activities based on Regional policy. These activities would be essentially aimed at continuing to promote planned parenthood information and education within the Region, rather than in promoting specific activities in support of the Anniversary. On the IPPF Conference itself, Mr. Hornemann referred to Regional Council discussion and its agreement to propose the theme of “Planned Parenthood Reconsidered” for the Conference. It was within this context that the I & E activities for 1973 could be broadly viewed.

It was envisaged that some of these activities, in addition to forming part of regular Regional activities, might also contribute to the Conference itself, e.g. the sub-regional youth journalists, seminars planned for 1973 might

stimulate interest in the debates and discussions which would take place at the IPPF Conference, and it was hoped that some of the participants might themselves attend the Conference; the proposed Regional Information Bulletin would no doubt provide a forum for Regional discussion on different aspects of planned parenthood. It was emphasised that member associations in the Region were free to focus on the IPPF as part of any meetings, exhibitions, competitions, and other general I & E activities that they might organise during 1973, if they so wished.

In the context of World Population Year, Mr. Hornemann noted that, judging by information then available from the UN, the main emphasis appeared to be on fertility limitation. However, he pointed out that in Europe, the majority of those countries whose governments have a population policy aim to promote fertility increase. In any activities relating to World Population Year, it was anticipated that the Region would stress the individual and family health and welfare aspect of planned parenthood, in line with the overall Regional policy of aiming to persuade countries in the Region to integrate all aspects of planned parenthood with their social policy.

The World Population Conference, the first to take place at inter-governmental level, will have on its agenda reports on recent population trends and future prospects; relations between population change and economic and social development; relations between population resources and environment; population, family and human wellbeing. Regional interest in the socio-demographic aspects of planned parenthood is longstanding; it is hoped that the World Population Conference will not only critically evaluate demographic data and trends, but also attempt to relate these to social welfare aspects of planned parenthood. It is anticipated that several member associations in the Region will be advising their governments along these lines.

Regionally, as has been said, activities will develop along already agreed lines. At global level, the Region will continue to discuss and report on discussions, either in Committee or in the form of Regional publications, the different approaches that exist towards planned parenthood in different parts of the world. The Region believes that it has a useful contribution to make to the general debate, and will continue to seek to influence policy making bodies, not only at national and international, governmental and non-governmental level, but also within the IPPF itself. The Region looks forward to contributing to making the IPPF Anniversary Conference a radical contribution to the development of planned parenthood information, education and services throughout the world.

The Central Information and Education Committee, Technical Advisory Group and Anniversary Conference Programme Advisory Committee will meet in January 1973.

Regional Information and
Education Executive Committee

International Planned Parenthood
Federation
Europe Region
64 Sloane Street
London SW1X 9SJ