

# MRS. BYRNE TOO WEAK TO EAT AFTER ORDEAL AT WORKHOUSE

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*New York Call* Saturday, February 3, 1917, page 1 [Above the fold.]

SHE LIES IN STATE OF COLLAPSE, WITH PHYSICIANS TRYING TO SAVE  
>HER LIFE – THINK HER RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

Mrs. Ethel Byrne, birth-control advocate, who has just been released from Blackwells Island on a pardon from the governor, was unable to take nourishment yesterday. Because of her weak and exhausted state, she could not take the milk that the doctors tried to feed her. All [illegible] of taste has left her and she did not distinguish milk from lime juice.

Drs. Murray H. Bass and A. S. Goldwater, who have been attending her since her release, say that there is every hope for her recovery, provided she receives the best of care and medical attention.

Mrs. Margaret Sanger, her sister, who was convicted yesterday in the court of special sessions, Brooklyn, on the charge of disseminating birth-control information, said yesterday, in an interview with a *Call* reporter, that she expected it would take her sister six months to regain her health, which has been shattered by her frightful ordeal at the workhouse.

## ***Just Saved Mrs. Byrne's Life***

"Mrs. Byrne is suffering most from malnutrition, which in effect is a great deal worse than it sounds," she said. "Lack of food, and lack of water, especially, affects the nervous system, the senses, the skin and all the organs of the body. My sister would have died last night, I believe, if Mrs. Amos Pinchot, who went to the island with me to bring her home, had not insisted that she be carried out on a stretcher. The warden at the island ordered that Mrs. Byrne be made to walk to the ferry when she was in a semi-conscious state. If she had not been carried out, her heart action, which was very weak, would have failed altogether."

Mrs. Byrne was forbidden by the doctors to see or speak to any one for several days. The nearest reporters could get to her was the doorsill of her room. One glance at the motionless, collapsed figure on the bed was enough to confirm the statements as to her condition made by her sister. Cold compresses on the head almost concealed the face. The cheeks and features that were visible were pinched and colorless. The whole appearance was that of a corpse.

## ***Convicted on Prejudice***

When asked as to her own case, Mrs. Sanger said:

“We were not convicted on facts, but on prejudice. The spirit of the inquisition governed the trial all the way through. Judge Freschl evidently didn’t have the courage of his convictions, or we would not have been convicted.

“The statement made by the Journal that I was intending to go on a hunger strike is all wrong. I made no such statement. I have not decided what course to take after I am sentenced. I am trying to meet the situations as I come to them. I fully expect to get the same sentence that my sister did, but I feel that it would be useless to hunger strike, as all the good that we expected to do has been done by the governor’s promise to appoint a commission of investigation.”

Mrs. Sanger broke down for the second time since her sister’s pardon yesterday afternoon after the conviction. She was overcome at the idea of being forced to leave her sister, she said.

### ***Miss Mindell is Better***

Fania Mindell, Mrs. Sanger’s aide in the clinic at 45 Amboy street, Brooklyn, is bitter at the thought of a prison sentence. “I escaped from Russia nine years ago in order to avoid going to jail, and here I find myself, in this land of freedom, being thrust in that barbarous place,” she said.

“Nine years ago my whole family took part in the Russian revolution, and my two brothers were sent to Siberia. They both served about five years. One of them escaped three times, but was captured each time. We’ve all got the revolutionary spirit, and I started to fight as soon as I got here.

“I belong to the Millinery Workers’ union and worked in a factory here in New York for a number of years. It was what I saw there that made me go into this fight with Mrs. Sanger. One woman who worked next to me had three babies in four years and several abortions.

“I noticed often that women left work for a few days and then came back again. ‘Oh, you’ve had a vacation,’ I’d say to them. ‘Oh, no,’ they’d answer. ‘I just had another baby.’

***She Knows Working Women*** “You’d have to work with the women or you’d have to work at the clinic before you’d understand the terrible fear that hangs over these women. They are never free from it. I’m not a nurse. It’s just as a representative of the workers that I started to help Mrs. Sanger in 1914. I know the conditions of working women better – because I have lived and worked with them – than the nurse does who takes them as they come in the hospital.

“In 1914 I went to Chicago and Milwaukee, where I started agitation for birth control. Carl Sandburg, the poet, helped me in my fight. I came back to New York in August to help Mrs. Sanger in her work at the clinic. There I interviewed all the women as they came, before they saw Mrs. Sanger or Mrs. Byrne. You should have heard the stories those women had to tell. One would not believe that in a civilized country a woman’s life could be such torture.”

When asked as to hunger-striking in the workhouse, Miss Mindel said:

“I have such a horrible aversion to prisons and prison food, and everything concerned with prisons, that I won’t be able to eat a thing. I know I’ll starve to death, but it won’t be because I am on strike, but because they don’t feed me enough. I have half a mind,” she went on, cheerfully, “to make a will distributing my belongings and effects before I leave for Blackwells Island. Which will you have, a Russian novel or my dresser set?”