



The Autobiography of Margaret Sanger

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A pioneer in the battle to establish birth control as a basic human right and a founder of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Sanger, a nurse who witnessed first-hand the devastating effects of unwanted pregnancy, triumphed over arrest, indictment, and exile. Her autobiography is a classic of women's studies.

"An unabridged and unaltered republication of the work originally published by W.W. Norton & Company, New York, in 1938 under the title Margaret Sanger: an autobiography"--Verso t.p. Dover ed. originally published in 1971. Includes index.

The Autobiography of Margaret Sanger Details

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From Reader Review The Autobiography of Margaret Sanger for online ebook

Susie says

Wow ♥️?♥️?♥️?♥️?

Sharon says

Essential for anyone who even thinks that reproductive freedoms are negotiable. Margaret Sanger, while disapproving abortion, prefers to help women gain control of their lives with birth control. A pretty thorough explanation of all the research, speaking, writing, and stubbornness that went into securing a woman's right just to find out about birth control, and develop a professional medical procedure for distributing it.

Kirsten Rodning says

I hadn't realized just what an important impact Margaret Sanger had on our history and current lives until I decided to write a paper on her. For my paper, I read this book, and I am so glad I did -- from reading Sanger's own words about her life and her mission, I feel that I have connected with a very powerful, amazing woman.

HeavyReader says

I have mixed feelings about Margaret Sanger. On the one hand, she believed in the use of eugenics and she had a lot to do with the birth control pill, which I think is problematic at best, being invented. On the other hand she saw the intense problems having lots of children caused for women (and men too!) and wanted to help people control their fertility.

She definitely did a LOT to enable people to control their fertility and to not have kids if they didn't want kids. I feel like I owe her a lot of gratitude, even if I don't agree with everything she believed in.

Reading this book might help you make up your own mind about your feelings for Margaret Sanger.

Karen says

* Understanding Oppression: Women's Rights (Then and Now)

Margaret Sanger: An Autobiography by Kathryn Cullen-DuPont | A pioneer in the battle to establish birth control as a basic human right and a founder of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Sanger — a nurse who witnessed first-hand the devastating effects of unwanted pregnancy — triumphed over arrest, indictment, and exile. #historical #memoir #autobiography #womenstudies

Brie says

I personally believe that the best way to learn about history is to read autobiographies of people who lived during that time and/or personally experienced the event, rather than current, biased opinions of history from modern scholars. Taking this into consideration, I decided to tackle the controversial subject of Margaret Sanger and her birth control plight.

I have always found it amusing how people classify Margaret Sanger as a heroin, even with her stance on race and class. I decided to make a judgment call myself upon reading her autobiography. Needless to say, much of what is said about her is, in fact, fairly accurate. She was indeed staunchly classist, and although she spoke less of actual 'race', she did accept invitations to speak to secret gatherings of the KKK. 'Eugenics' and 'Neo-Malthusian' are thrown around in her writings more often than actual women's rights. One can't help but question whether people would actually continue their support of operations, such as Planned Parenthood, if they knew of its origins.

While many may wonder how Thomas Jefferson could be a slave owner himself while at the same time drafting the abolition of slavery into the Declaration of Independence (which was later removed, much to his dismay), Margaret Sanger's beliefs are less contradictory (as that of Jefferson), and more that of one who carries an ulterior motive. The adjectives she uses to describe the poor only paint the picture that she is absolutely repulsed by the sight of them, rather than moved to compassion. The ways in which she talks about ridding the world of the unfavorable, mentally unstable, deformed, etc. you'd think she was on a personal plight to eradicate anyone she considers "less than worthy" to live in her utopian world. I can't help but make the comparison of Ms. Sanger and another such character, Mr. Hitler.

That being said, there is much to commend Ms. Sanger for; free speech among other things. The fact that she went to jail simply by mentioning birth control in newsletters says a lot about the times. It was practically illegal to even -ask- about birth control. One other thing I'd like to commend her for is that she was very much against abortion.

Being as I have yet to read her later writings, I'm not aware if she changed her stance on abortion, but assuming she did not, I'm sure she would be absolutely appalled at what Planned Parenthood has become today. Ms. Sanger clearly states that abortion during any stage of pregnancy is the murder of a life. If women were ever to ask for an abortion at one of her clinics, her staff was instructed to talk them out of doing so. Her theory was that the "barbaric" practice of abortion would be completely eradicated with the free availability of birth control. Considering Planned Parenthood performs approximately 3.5 million abortions a year (more than any other clinic in the USA), I wonder what she would say today?

What I consider to be Margaret Sanger's greatest downfalls is that of her manipulation of religion. She considered herself non-religious and strongly advocated that society look to science and evolution rather than faith; yet if she found someone of faith to support her beliefs in birth control, she wouldn't hesitate to use them. I would have far greater respect for someone who argued for their cause by sticking solidly to their beliefs rather than siding with anyone and everyone who agreed with her, even if their reasons for doing so were completely contradictory to their own.

Perhaps, given more time, another would have stood up in defense of birth control that was not so blighted by a mentality of race and class superiority. Europe was already on the rise in its usage of birth control, and other countries were quickly following. At the same time, how sadly common her mentality was during that period in history!

All in all, I am still not a supporter of Planned Parenthood knowing its history. I wish I had known much sooner. I wouldn't support an institution founded by Hitler just because it has some good in it. I can't help thinking that Margaret and Hitler would be kissing cousins if they lived in the same demographic (due to their strong correlated beliefs in eugenics). 'Women and the New Race' will be the next of her books to tackle.

space their pregnancies using birth control.

Sanger speaks of her experiences in New York and all around the world seeing the state of the poor and practicing nursing. I felt gratitude for her work in changing legislation in our country, paving the way for more information about birth control. I know of many who have benefited from her work. She spoke very little in her autobiography about eugenics so I cannot really commentate on her opinions in that department.

I wondered what she would think of Planned Parenthood today, as in one way it is the realization of her dreams to have birth control clinics in every city in America. However, she seemed opposed to abortion so I wonder what she would think of that today.

Here is the ad for the first birth control clinic which was set up in Brooklyn in the early 1900s: "Mothers! Can you afford to have a large family? Do you want any more children? If not, why do you have them? DO NOT KILL, DO NOT TAKE LIFE, BUT PREVENT. Safe, Harmless Information can be obtained of trained Nurses at 46 Amboy St...Brooklyn" Margaret Sanger, An Autobiography, 216

Cheryl says

Tedious but interesting

Laura Hodo says

I have a bit of hero worship for Margaret Sanger. I love that she spent her life desperately trying to educate women on their bodies despite the opposition of men who spent their lives desperately trying to control women by withholding vital medical knowledge from them. But most of all I love that she was successful in her efforts.

Dawn says

"Isms, in my opinion, are not good. A person should not believe in an Ism; he should believe in himself." - Ferris Bueller

Margaret Sanger believed in herself, and a LARGE number of Isms. She was a proponent of Malthusianism, Neo-Malthusianism, Socialism, Humanitarianism, Individualist Anarchism, and Agnosticism; was embraced by believers in Syndicalism and Theosophism; and disagreed with adherents of Feminism, Marxism, and Roman Catholicism.

Surprisingly, the Isms became the highlight of her autobiography for me. The late 19th/early 20th centuries were an amazing time for political intellectualISM, and as the backdrop for Sanger's life it was so interesting to see how exposure to all these ideas shaped her. (Though she doesn't discuss them so much as mention them in passing - you have to research them on your own.)

The autobiography itself was T-E-D-I-O-U-S reading. I suppose I was hoping for some take-no-prisoners tale, but instead much of the book is a travelogue, detailed down to the servant who tried to swindle Margaret out of a coat and the bad haircut she got in London. She was definitely a badass, but of the self-righteous,

judgemental do-gooder variety. I still admire her tremendously.

Favorite piece in the book: a reproduction of one of her earliest articles, entitled "What Every Girl Should Know". When published, it read: "What Every Girl Should Know. NOTHING! By Order of the Post-Office Department".

(The article violated the Comstock Laws, which prohibited material deemed lewd, lascivious, or obscene from passing through the post. She'd mentioned some STDs.)

In sum: I wish I'd researched a good biography of Sanger instead of slogging through her autobiography.
