

## WHO WAS MARGARET SANGER?

If you go into the average public library looking for information on Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger, you'll likely find a number of flowery biographies hailing her as a champion of women's rights, but you probably won't find anything on the eugenic and socialistic principles that drove almost everything she did. Margaret Sanger's life and legacy is not a happy one, but you'd never know it from the treatment she receives from most pro-abortion historians. Planned Parenthood hails their founder for "[establishing] the principles that a woman's right to control her body is the foundation of her human rights; that every person should be able to decide when or whether to have a child; that every child should be wanted and loved; and that women are entitled to sexual pleasure and fulfillment just as men are." Keep reading through Margaret's Planned Parenthood bio and you'll find this casual disclaimer in apparent reference to her vocal support of eugenics. "Sanger also entertained some popular ideas of her own time that are out of keeping with our thinking today." Despite this ambiguous qualification, there is no record of Planned Parenthood ever specifically denouncing anything Margaret ever said or did. And from a policy perspective, the abortion industry's disproportionate focus on minority communities certainly indicates that Planned Parenthood is just as devoted to limiting the number of "human weeds" (Margaret's term) as their founder was.

The efforts to conceal the truth about Margaret Sanger, are real and documented, and this makes it very hard to get to the truth. When an Ohio couple donated copies of George Grant's very disturbing Sanger biography, *Killer Angel*, to their Toledo library (after they discovered that none of the nearly two dozen books on Sanger held by the library mentioned her controversial views on race or her association with high-ranking Nazi eugenics officials), the books were initially accepted and then quickly banned. The library failed to respond to all requests asking for more information on their decision and WorldNetDaily picked up the story.

The decision to reject the books came from the central library's Anthony Schafer, manager of the library's history, travel and biography travel section, who said in a letter to the couple that "the author's political and social agenda, which is strongly espoused throughout the book, is not appropriate." George Grant, the author, responded by saying, "I find it odd that when it comes down to my research or other biographies that fawn over Sanger and neglect her racist ideology, I'm the one painted as driving a political agenda." Ironically, the American Library Association, co-sponsor of "Banned Books Week" (in defense of prohibited literature) actually supported the library's decision to ban the book saying that "librarians (should be) given wide discretion in determining what materials are included in the library's collection." In other words, librarians should be free to ban books they don't like.

What all this means for the average library-goer is that, if you want to hear both sides of the Margaret Sanger story, you'll have to find it somewhere else. For those willing to take the time to investigate, read *Killer Angel*. For those who aren't (or who can't get their hands on a copy), here is a summary of Mr. Grant's findings which begin with a sober journey back to the world's entrance into the twentieth century.

Josef Stalin at the time was a twenty-one-year-old seminary student in Tiflis, a pious and serene community located at the crossroads of Georgia and Ukraine. Benito Mussolini was a seventeen-year-old student teacher in the quiet suburbs of Milan. Adolf Hitler was an eleven-year-old aspiring art student in the quaint upper Austrian village of Brannan. And Margaret Sanger was a twenty-year-old, out-of-sorts, nursing school dropout in White Plains, New York.

Who could have ever guessed on that ebulliently auspicious New Year's Day that those four youngsters would, over the span of the next century, spill more innocent blood than all the murderers, warlords, and tyrants of past history combined? Who could have guessed that those four relative youths would together ensure that the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the twentieth century would be smothered under holocaust, genocide, and triage?

As the champion of the proletariat, Stalin would see to the slaughter of at least fifteen million Russian and Ukrainian *kulaks*. As the popularly acclaimed *Il Duce*, Mussolini would massacre as many as four million Serbs, Croats, and Albanians. As the wildly lionized *Führer*, Hitler would exterminate more than six million Jews, two million Slavs, and a million Poles. As the founder of Planned Parenthood and the impassioned heroine of various feminist *causes célèbres*, Sanger would be responsible for the brutal elimination of more than thirty million children in the United States and as many as two and a half billion worldwide.

No one in his right mind would want to rehabilitate the reputations of Stalin, Mussolini, or Hitler. Their barbarism, treachery, and debauchery will make their names forever live in infamy. Amazingly, though, Sanger has somehow escaped this wretched fate. In spite of the fact that her crimes against humanity were no less heinous than theirs, her place in history has effectively been sanitized and sanctified. In spite of the fact that she openly identified herself in one way or another with the intentions of the other three – Stalin's *Sobornostic Collectivism*, Hitler's *Eugenic Racism*, and Mussolini's *Agathistic Fascism* – Sanger's faithful minions have managed to manufacture an independent reputation for the perpetuation of her memory.

Margaret Sanger was born the 6th of 11 children. She grew up in poverty and despair with a sickly mother and an overbearing atheist father. When her Catholic mother died, Margaret forever rejected the church and set out on her own. Prior to her marriage to William Sanger, Margaret had dropped out of high school, quit teaching kindergarten after two terms, and dropped out of a nursing program almost before it began. William Sanger, a young and successful architect was Margaret's ticket out of poverty. But after ten years of marriage and three children, Margaret was still discontent. She convinced her husband to move into the city, a move that gave Margaret a bustling new Manhattan social life and reunited William with some of the Socialist connections of his youth. Though Margaret initially ridiculed the radical politics of William and his friends, something eventually clicked. She became consumed with the notion that social subversion offered the only hope for a happier existence. Her living room "became a gathering place where liberals, anarchists, Socialists, and IWW's could meet".<sup>1</sup> Though they lamented the evils of capitalism and postured themselves as advocates of the poor, they seemed to much enjoy their own personal wealth and isolation. It was in this environment that Margaret's devotion to cause quickly outdid that of her husband, to the demise of their family life. Meetings and rallies began to define her, and William was unable to pull her back. Her friendship with renowned anarchist Emma Goldman would be her marriage's undoing. After concluding that she must be unrestrained by the unnatural constraints of the marriage bed, Margaret demanded the freedom to pursue her sexual pleasure with whomever she wished. William's final attempt at pulling her away from such ideology came when he moved the family to Paris. There was peace for a time, but when Margaret demanded a return to New York, William refused. Margaret took the children and left him for good.

After leaving her husband and returning to New York, Margaret began publishing a new 8-page periodical, *The Woman Rebel*. On the masthead read "No Gods and No Masters", and the first issue "denounced marriage as 'a degenerate institution,' capitalism as 'indecent exploitation,' and sexual modesty as 'obscene prudery.'" Issue number two asserted that "Rebel women claim the following rights: the right to be lazy, the right to be an unmarried mother, the right to destroy . . . and the right to love." In

later issues she defended both the necessity of social revolution and political assassinations. It wasn't long before Margaret was served with a subpoena for her lewd articles which were in violation of existing Comstock Laws (which closed the mail to "obscene and lascivious" material, particularly erotic postcards and pornographic magazines from Europe which, during the debauched and confused postwar and Radical Reconstruction period, flooded the country<sup>2</sup>). Rather than face imprisonment, Margaret fled the country, leaving her sons in the care of others. Prior to her departure she printed and distributed 100,000 copies of *Family Limitation*.

*Family Limitation* (was) a contraband leaflet on contraception that [Margaret] had written. It was lurid and lascivious, designed to enrage the postal authorities and titillate the masses. But worse, it was dangerously inaccurate, recommending such things as "Lysol douches," "bichloride of mercury elixirs," "heavy doses of laxatives," and "herbal abortifacients."<sup>3</sup>

While in exile in England, Margaret fell under the spell of the Malthusians, who followed the theories of population growth and economic stability popularized by Thomas Malthus. Malthus saw every social problem as being subordinate to the over-arching "time-bomb" of population growth. Reducing population growth by whatever means necessary lies at the heart of Malthusian theory. Malthus argued, in fact, that all acts of charity or philanthropy or international relief were condemnable because they just enabled the weak and sickly to survive and prosper. Nature demands that these people must die for the good of society. Malthus thought it unconscionable to intervene, and argued in his *Essay on the Principle of Population*, first published in 1798 that, "above all, we should reprobate specific remedies for ravaging diseases; and restrain those benevolent, but much mistaken men, who have thought they were doing a service to mankind by projecting schemes for the total extirpation of particular disorders."

The most significant offspring of Malthusian theory was the "science" of eugenics. On the positive side, it encouraged reproduction among the most "fit", on the negative side it sought to eliminate reproduction among the least "fit". The notion of "fitness" quickly fell upon racial lines, but this pseudo-science still gained the enthusiastic support of large portions of society. Eugenic departments, in fact, were endowed at Harvard, Princeton, Columbia and Stanford, among others. It was the broad appeal of eugenics (for the "good of mankind") which allowed Margaret to put an altruistic spin on her sexualized socialist agenda. One of Margaret's many European affairs was with Havelock Ellis, "the grandfather of the Bohemian sexual revolution", who schemed with Margaret on how best to implement her return to New York. The "philanthropic-sounding themes of Malthus and Eugenics would have to replace the politically charged themes of old-line labor Anarchism and Socialism"<sup>4</sup>.

Her first endeavor upon returning to the U.S. was to open an illegal, back-alley birth control clinic to "service" New York's immigrants. The clinic was shut down and Margaret was jailed for a month. Upon release, she began publishing *The Birth Control Review*, content to wait on opening another clinic. In 1920 *The Birth Control Review* publicly endorsed Lothrop Stoddard's book *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy*. Twelve years later, Margaret's "Plan for Peace" pushed for coercive sterilization, mandatory segregation and concentrated rehabilitative camps for all "dysgenic stock". In 1922 her book *The Pivot of Civilization* became a best-seller, one of the first such popular works to openly support Malthusian Eugenics. In the book, she urged the elimination of "human weeds", the "cessation of charity", the segregation of "morons, misfits, and the maladjusted," and the sterilization of "genetically inferior races." She goes on to say:

Even if we accept organized charity at its own valuation, and grant it does the best it can, it is exposed to a more profound criticism. It reveals a fundamental and irremediable defect. Its very success, its very efficiency, its very necessity to the social order are the most unanswerable

indictment. Organized charity is the symptom of a malignant social disease. Those vast, complex, interrelated organizations aiming to control and to diminish the spread of misery and destitution and all the menacing evils that spring out of this sinisterly fertile soil, are the surest sign that our civilization has bred, is breeding, and is perpetuating constantly increasing numbers of defectives, delinquents, and dependents.

. . .

The most serious charge that can be brought against modern benevolence is that it encourages the perpetuation of defectives, delinquents, and dependents. These are the most dangerous elements in the world community, the most devastating curse on human progress.

In the same year, 1922, and despite years of publicly disparaging marriage, Margaret again married into money, this time to the fabulously wealthy J. Noah Slee. Her prenuptial gave her the freedom to have her own apartment and servants as well as the freedom to continue sleeping with other men, no questions asked. Margaret's newfound wealth was instrumental to the expansion of her vision and eventually helped restore a reputation that had been sullied for her open endorsement Nazi "purification" programs before the war. In 1942, in another effort to erase memories of the past, *The Birth Control Review* became Planned Parenthood Federation of America. From the earliest planning stages, it was required that all affiliates make legal access to unrestricted abortion a high priority, and civil disobedience was encouraged as an integral part of overturning oppressive laws. Despite the success of Planned Parenthood, Margaret's personal life continued to unravel into occultism and addiction. Her financial indiscretions often put her organization in jeopardy, even leading to her quiet removal from the Planned Parenthood board. Publicly, however, Margaret was a master fundraiser and networker, and Planned Parenthood could not survive without her. She was eventually reinstated, and continued to craft the policies which drive Planned Parenthood to this day.

"By the time [Margaret] died on September 6, 1966, a week shy of her eighty-seventh birthday, Margaret Sanger had nearly fulfilled her early boast that she would spend every last penny of Slee's fortune. In the process, though, she had lost everything else: love, happiness, satisfaction, fulfillment, family, and friends. In the end her struggle was for naught."<sup>5</sup>

1. Herman Schwartz, *Margaret Sanger: A Biography*. New York: Bell Tower, 1968, p. 44..

2. George Grant, *Killer Angel: A Short Biography of Planned Parenthood Founder Margaret Sanger*. Nashville: Cumberland House, 2001, p. 63.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 110.