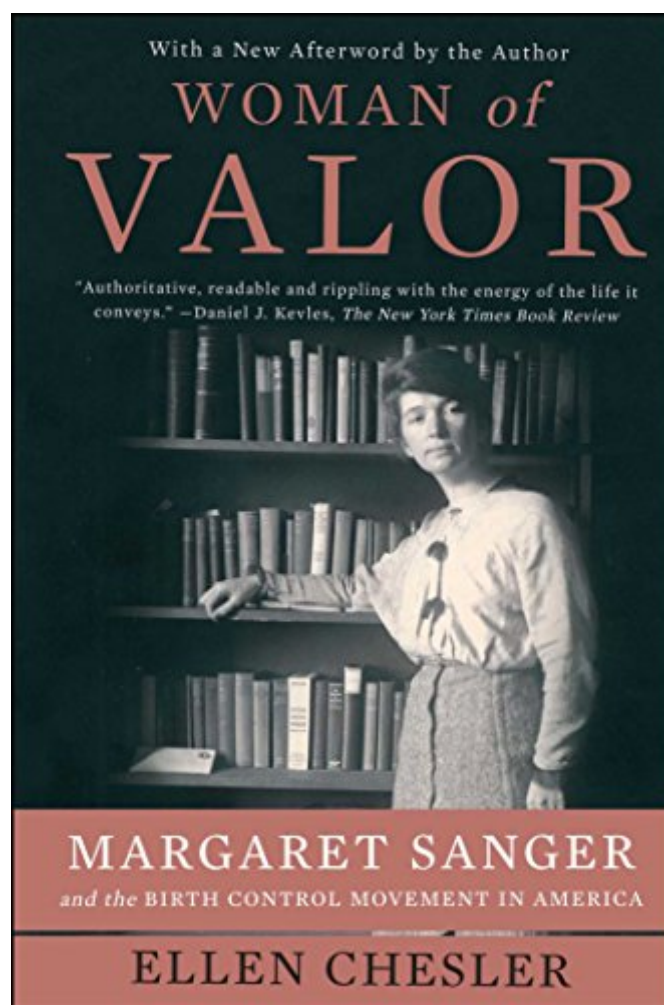


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Woman Of Valor: Margaret Sanger And The Birth Control Movement In America



Synopsis

Ellen Chesler's 1992 biography of Margaret Sanger is acclaimed as definitive and is widely used and cited by scholars and activists alike in the fields of women's health and reproductive rights. Chesler's substantive new Afterword considers how Sanger's life and work hold up in light of subsequent developments, such as U.S. Supreme Court cases challenging the constitutional doctrine of privacy and international definitions of reproductive health as an essential human right.

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Customer Reviews

This is an easy to read yet comprehensive history of Margaret Sanger and the birth control movement in the U.S. One of the many things I learned was that in the early part of the 20th century millions of American women died as the result of complications and infections from self-induced abortions. I learned Margaret Sanger was a courageous woman who fought ingrained ignorance her whole life and devoted it to helping woman have control over their own bodies. She is considered one of the great American women of the 20th Century and called by some "the great emancipator" for women.

Sanger has been maligned and vilified in the shadow of Catholicism, politics and male fear of women's abilities and contributions. Chesler seeks to right the scales of truth, documentation and justice. A worthy, scholarly read. Time lines are revisited to encompass world changes and complexities. Pay attention as dates change across the chapters that follow action and ideology.

Very thorough and well documented. At times it gets a bit bogged down with details, but it's a very good account of a most interesting woman who made a huge contribution to reproductive health.

item arrived in excellent condition

Meticulously researched and footnoted, this somewhat ponderous tome (about 670 pages including the notes and index) does not make for a quick beach read. It's fascinating to learn how very many of the rights modern women take for granted come from the work of this brave and dedicated woman, who began the movement and started the clinics that eventually morphed into Planned Parenthood, both in the USA and internationally. People - even doctors - didn't even TALK about the phrase (ssssh) BIRTH CONTROL a hundred years ago. Sanger changed that, brought an awareness of the need to offer women reproductive choices other than abstinence, too many babies, or illegal and risky abortions. Sanger's reputation has been much besmirched in the last few decades by those who hate that women are making their own choices as to when - or whether to become mothers. As Chesler presents her, Sanger was far from perfect; she made enemies as well as friends and supporters. She was loath to give up the glory/credit for work that others joined in as well. (Sanger may have been one of the earliest pioneers of name branding.) Redheaded, witty and attractive, she did not believe in monogamy (at least for herself) and engaged in countless affairs, including one with writer H.G. Wells, somehow managing it that none of her men became jealous of her other lovers or husbands; they were all happy, or at least content, having a tiny bit of her time and attention. Whether you believe this disgustingly immoral or not, it's still an amazing feat for anyone to pull off. She was not a good mother, neglecting her children for the cause of B.C. But she was not a supporter of Nazism, race eugenics, or racism - those are all LIES propagated by those with an axe to grind. She wasn't even really in favor of abortion, though she grudgingly agreed that in some cases there was a medical necessity. This book will inform you of all you ever wanted to learn about Margaret Sanger (and more), and if you have a question or wonder how or why the author interpreted something, it's all deeply footnoted. The ending feels a bit rushed; perhaps because the author was conscious of it already being a very long book, or perhaps because Sanger

made less news and had fewer letters and interviews in her declining years following several heart attacks. Worth the read, for anyone interested in women's history.

It's a long biography, thoroughly researched. For that I'm grateful. I know I can rely on the information here. But, it does get to be a bit tedious of a read. Fortunately, the drive, dedication and determination of Ms. Sanger comes through all the minutia. Sometimes good, sometimes bad, but seldom indifferent, we pretty much find out who this woman was. Certainly she was a product of her times, as are we all, but also a champion of a most basic human right, to be free to control our own reproductive lives. I'm so glad to know Margaret Sanger and to have developed a deeper understanding of how precious reproductive freedom is.

I've just finished reading this book for a women's history class. I found it hard to put down. It's a shame that it is out of print, as Margaret Sanger's life story, and her struggle for the reproductive rights of women and female autonomy, make for enlightening reading. Ellen Chesler put in an enormous amount of work, documenting every detail, and weaving the whole into a very readable book. I would definitely recommend this to any reader, not only those interested in the empowerment of women, but also those NOT interested in it, since it might change their minds! Definitely an important work, and an important woman, for gaining an understanding of how the 20th century has been shaped.

One thing that you have to realize is that Sanger was attempting something that required necessary evils. Sanger made many sacrifices in order to foster the female rights movements, one which included allying herself with people that she may have not agreed with, yet knew were morally corrupt. You can see a very blatant and obvious comparison with most politicians nowadays.....if you want to accomplish something revolutionary, and break the thick self-perpetuating mold of social construction, you have to go against your true beliefs sometimes. You have to look at her long time accomplishments in order to create an opinion of the woman. Yes, her eugenicist empathy was completely out of line, but she would have never gained support at the time if she hadn't appeased certain big dogs who required it. She was a victim of circumstance...in my opinion....but she was trying to help millions of women who were the true victims of circumstance, many of which had died from self-performed abortion....ultimately it's your call. Obviously the rights of women and African Americans are still far from where we'd like them to be...but because of Sanger women have gained the inspiration and motive that they lacked beforehand.

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