



The Selected Papers of Margaret Sanger, Volume 1: The Woman Rebel, 1900-1928

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The birth control crusader, feminist, and reformer Margaret Sanger was one of the most controversial and compelling figures in the twentieth century. This first volume of "The Selected Papers of Margaret Sanger" documents the critical phases and influences of an American feminist icon and offers rare glimpses into her working-class childhood, burgeoning feminism, spiritual and scientific interests, sexual explorations, and diverse roles as wife, mother, nurse, journalist, radical socialist, and activist. These letters and other writings, including diaries, journals, articles, and speeches, most of which have never before been published, have been selected and assembled with an eye to telling the story of a remarkable life, punctuated by arrests and imprisonments, exile, love affairs, and a momentous personal loss -- a life consumed with the quest for women's sexual liberation. Because its narrative line is so absorbing, volume 1 may be read as a powerful biography. Volume 1 covers a twenty-eight-year period from her nurse's training and early socialist involvement in pre-World War I bohemian Greenwich Village to her adoption of birth control (a term she helped coin in 1914) as a fundamental tenet of women's rights. It traces the intersection of her life and work with other reformers, activists and leaders of modernity on both sides of the Atlantic, including Havelock Ellis, H. G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Emma Goldman, Max Eastman, and Eugene Debs, as well as many leading radical artists and writers of the day. It highlights her legislative and organizational efforts, her support of the eugenics movement, and the alliances she secured with medical professionals in her crusade to make birth control legal, respectable, and accessible. This volume also includes letters from women desperately in need of fertility control who saw Sanger as their last hope. Supplemented by an introduction, brief essays providing narrative and chronological links, and substantial notes, the volume is an invaluable tool for understanding Sanger's actions and accomplishments. The documents assembled here, more than 80 percent of them letters, were culled from the Margaret Sanger Papers Microfilm Edition, edited by Esther Katz, Cathy Moran Hajo, and Peter C. Engelman. Two subsequent volumes will address later periods in her life, and an additional volume will cover her international work in the birth control struggle.

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