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ESSAY

A Right to Ourselves: Women's Suffrage and the Birth Control Movement

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Abstract

The suffrage and birth control movements are often treated separately in historical scholarship. This essay brings together new research to demonstrate their close connections. Many suffragists became active in the birth control movement just before and after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. The roots of suffrage arguments were deeply embedded in the same ideas that were foundational to the birth control movement: bodily freedom and notions of what constituted full and participatory citizenship. Beginning in the 1840s, women's rights reformers directly connected the vote to a broad range of economic and political issues, including the concept of self-ownership. Wide-ranging debates about individual autonomy remained present in women's rights rhetoric and were then repeated in the earliest arguments for legalizing birth control. The twentieth-century birth control movement, like the suffrage movement before it (which had largely focused only on achieving the vote for white women), would then grapple with competing goals of restrictive racist and eugenic arguments for contraception alongside the emphasis on achieving emancipation for all women.

Keywords: Birth control; reproduction; suffrage; women's rights

This article will explore the links between suffrage history and the history of the birth control movement in the United States, especially among white reformers and activists. These ties have received little attention from other scholars, as the suffrage movement and the birth control movement are usually studied separately. As Americans reflect on the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment and its unfinished legacy, this piece will expand and update the scholarship on both movements by illustrating the ties between rights ideology in the nineteenth century and the beginnings of birth control activism in the early twentieth century. Although the term "birth control" was not coined until the early twentieth century—and popularized by Margaret Sanger—the history of reproductive rights rhetoric is firmly rooted in nineteenth-century reformers' discussions of marriage, bodily autonomy, and self-ownership. These concepts both predated and evolved alongside women's demands for the vote beginning in the 1840s, and continuing after the Civil War as women struggled to define what citizenship meant for them

In the original online version of this article, the authors' affiliation headings were omitted. They have been added above and an erratum has been published.

in a world where their central duty was motherhood. These conflicts were reformatted again in the early decades of the twentieth century as the movement to legalize contraception coalesced around the same activist networks formed during the battle for the Nineteenth Amendment. Former suffragists argued over the meaning of contraception for women's citizenship and sought to reconcile older ideas about individual rights and freedoms with new social emphases on population control, eugenics, and public health.

The ideological connections in both movements cannot be reduced to merely schematic understandings or a simplistic relationship. There is no clearly defined, neatly chronological series of events leading from the achievement of women's suffrage to the legalization of abortion and birth control in the twentieth century. Rather, we find that reformers' demands comprised a series of overlapping and often competing arguments for bodily autonomy as part of a broad spectrum of rights. Over the decades leading up to 1920, reformers' attentions constantly shifted and altered as the fight for the vote grew increasingly heated. Certainly, for some suffragists, most notably Elizabeth Cady Stanton, freeing women from "marital slavery" was the "pivot" around which reforms—including the vote—should revolve. Yet others struggled with the inherent tensions between demanding citizenship rights for women while openly maintaining a commitment to uphold the traditional institutions of marriage and the family. Here, we track the ebb and flow of these articulations within the larger movement for women's political rights, illustrating deep connections—and the sometimes vast polarities—that characterized the complex demands for legalizing both suffrage and birth control. The call for bodily autonomy, although never formally a part of the political platform for suffrage, nevertheless formed the bedrock of American women's long-held demands for equity and inclusion in the republic as full citizens.

Free Love, Spiritualism, and Marriage Reform in Antebellum America

The rhetoric of modern birth control has early roots in eighteenth-century republicanism and political revolution. In a 1780 broadside titled "The Sentiments of an American Woman," Esther de Berdt Reed, founder of the Ladies Association of Philadelphia, observed that American women were "born for liberty, disdaining to bear the irons of a tyrannic Government." Like men, Reed argued, women had inherent natural rights that could not be subverted by either government or their husbands. Reed believed that control over reproduction was essential to expanding women's roles in the new republic.[1] Across the Atlantic, Mary Wollstonecraft also linked fertility control with enlightened womanhood. She recommended that women breastfeed both for their own health and to extend the interval between the birth of each child. Having fewer children, said Wollstonecraft, would allow women to develop their minds through education.[2]

Scottish-born social reformer Frances "Fanny" Wright emphasized the link between women's rights and fertility control even further. She and utopian socialist Robert Dale Owen edited the radical free-thought newspaper *Free Enquirer*, which promoted divorce reform, free secular education, labor rights, and other social causes. The newspaper also endorsed the British writer Richard Carlisle's *Every Woman's Book; or, What is Love?* (1828), which criticized the sexual double standard and provided specific advice on how to prevent conception. In 1828, Wright began delivering a series of lectures on sexual freedom and women's rights in New York City, Philadelphia, and other cities.[3] These lectures were published as a "Course of Popular Lectures" in 1829.[4] A year later, Owen published a collection of *Free Enquirer* articles on birth control called "*Moral Physiology; or, A Brief and Plain Treatise on the Population Question.*"[5]

Religious leaders and political conservatives denounced Wright's views, calling her the "Red Harlot of Infidelity." Other women's rights proponents had to dodge charges of engaging in "Fanny Wrightism," an epithet that associated any outspoken woman with sexual impropriety. The abolitionist Angelina Grimké complained bitterly that "if we dare to stand upright and do our duty according to the dictates of our own consciences, why then we are compared to Fanny Wright and so on." Antoinette Brown (Blackwell), a reformer and the first women to be ordained a Protestant minister, wrote to fellow abolitionist and suffragist Lucy Stone that, when she expressed her views on women's rights, she was warned "not to be a Fanny Wright man."[6]

Fanny Wright's outspoken attitudes regarding women's rights within the institution of marriage were repeated by other female reformers who emerged at the forefront of some of the most radical social movements of the day. White female abolitionists and women's rights reformers drew explicitly on the connections between slavery and marriage, arguing that both enslaved people and women had unfree bodies and were civilly dead, unable to participate in the public sphere. These arguments held somewhat less resonance for Black women, most of whom were either enslaved (and unable to marry legally) or worked outside the home. Black and white women abolitionists, such as the members of the interracial Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, did, however, connect the ideas of women's rights (including marital rights and the right to interracial marriage) and abolition under a broad umbrella of humanitarian concerns.[7]

Like abolitionism, the new practice of Spiritualism also became a hotbed of reform thinking on marriage. Spiritualists had begun advocating for marriage reform in the 1840s on the basis of a doctrine they termed "free love," which deplored the current state of marriage as economic and sexual subjugation, and emphasized free love as an antidote.[8] The Spiritualist conception of free love did not mean sexual permissiveness, but rather emphasized "voluntary motherhood"—that is, a woman's right to reject her husband's sexual advances in marriage and freely choose when and whether to have children. One of the best-known advocates of this view of marital relations was Dr. Mary Gove Nichols, a prominent Spiritualist, health reformer, and free love advocate. Nichols staunchly maintained that women's equality hinged on their ability to control their bodies. Indeed, Nichols argued that women's suffrage for married women was meaningless without first reforming the institution of marriage. "As long as women promise to 'serve' and 'obey' their husbands, they can never be independent electors," Nichols observed. Before married women received the vote, she argued, "there must be a new code of marriage, and new ideas of marital rights."[9]

In 1838, Nichols began giving health lectures to women's groups that formed the basis for her critique of the institution of marriage. In the published version of her talks, "Lectures to Ladies on Anatomy and Physiology" (1842), Nichols asked, if God intended "that the marriage relation, his own divine institution, should be the prelude to sufferings no pen can describe."[10] Nichols won support from women's rights activists because her ideas resembled Elizabeth Cady Stanton's assertion that "the whole question of women's rights turns on the pivot of the marriage relation." In a letter to Stanton, Nichols observed as much, saying that, "'every article you write hits the nail on the head.'"[11] During the 1850s, Nichols was invited to give lectures on her work at women's rights conventions. Nichols went further than Stanton by proposing the radical notion that women had the right to refuse sex, even from their own husbands. Her ideas were shaped by the work of health reformer Sylvester Graham on the relationship between diet and health. Graham argued that the path to good health lay in avoiding alcohol, meat, and "self-abuse," or masturbation. Nichols applied these ideas to

marital relations, claiming that excessive sex within marriage threatened women's health. Drawing on her own experience with her sexually and physically abusive first husband, Hiram Gove, she hoped to spare other women the same fate.[12]

Nichols was more explicit about the torments endured by married women in her fictionalized autobiography, *Mary Lyndon; or, Revelations of a Life* (1855), which aimed to do for women's rights what Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had done for the abolitionist movement. The book portrays in detail the sorrows she faced in a loveless, abusive marriage to a man who constantly demanded sex and could not support her financially. The book describes how Mary's divorce and agreement to marry her soulmate, Thomas, resulted in an unconventional marital arrangement that preserved Mary's identity and her ability to determine when and whether to have sex.[13]

Nichols's book was roundly condemned in the popular press. For example, in his review for the *New York Daily Times*, editor Henry J. Raymond called Mary a "child of hell" and "the slave of the coarsest lust."[14] The reaction to Nichols's writings created a problem for women's rights activists. Although some shared her ideas about marriage reform, they found her outspoken support of free love to be a liability. Paulina Wright Davis was one of the few women's rights activists who remained friends with Nichols.[15] Lucy Stone distanced herself from Nichols personally, but spoke out in favor of self-ownership, a position symbolized by her decision to keep her maiden name. Women who chose to follow Stone's example became known as "Lucy Stoners."[16] Other suffrage activists agreed with the concept of self-ownership. As Ernestine Rose argued in a speech at the National Woman's Rights Convention in 1853, a woman's inability to be a mistress to herself was the "cornerstone" out of which all other injustices emerged. "Let us first obtain ourselves," Rose declared. "Give us ourselves, and all that belongs to us will follow."[17] Thus, while her ideas about marriage were at the fringes of what was acceptable for the mainstream suffrage movement, Nichols did inspire other activists to keep alive the concept of self-ownership in discussions of women's rights.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the same tensions over free love that Nichols inspired in the movement were again raised in the rhetoric of Victoria Woodhull, one of the key leaders of the "New Departure" strategy for achieving women's suffrage. Defenders of this tactic, including Susan B. Anthony and Virginia Minor, argued that because the Fourteenth Amendment had declared that women were citizens by virtue of being born in the United States, they were therefore also entitled to the vote. On Jan. 11, 1871, Woodhull defended this argument at a hearing before the House Judiciary Committee, requesting that Congress enact laws that would ensure citizens' voting rights regardless of sex.[18] Her public speaking skills, compelling appearance, and natural charisma made her a captivating addition to the movement, and she attracted larger audiences than any other suffragist.

Also devoted to Spiritualism, Woodhull went further than most other suffragists in combining her demand with the vote with her support of free love. Like other free love advocates, Woodhull insisted on a single sexual standard for both men and women. In a famous lecture at New York City's Steinway Hall in November of 1871, Woodhull avowed, "Yes, I am a free lover. I have an inalienable, constitutional and natural right to love whom I may, to love as long or as short a period as I can; to change that love every day if I please" just as men did, without legal or social sanction. She described the "most damning misery" that resulted from the "legalized prostitution" that was marriage, including "thousands of poor, weak, unresisting wives" and "sickly, half made-up children." Woodhull argued that "the sexual relation, must be rescued from this insidious form of slavery" that "compels women to give control of their maternal functions

over to anybody. It should be theirs to determine when, and under what circumstances, the greatest of all constructive processes—the formation of an immortal soul—should be begun."[19]

From the beginning, Woodhull's views clashed with many mainstream suffragists. In 1872, when the Equal Rights Party officially nominated Woodhull for president, other suffragists refused to endorse her.[20] Woodhull's unsavory connections to the free love ideology caused many to question her respectability. Both the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) and the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) distanced themselves from her in the weeks leading up to the 1872 election. Susan B. Anthony went as far as to turn out the lights on Woodhull when she was on stage making a speech during an NWSA suffrage convention.[21]

The rejection of Woodhull's ideas in the postbellum suffrage movement represented shifting political winds. Free love as an ideology before the Civil War had been associated with utopian reform and Spiritualism, while the free love of the Gilded Age and the early twentieth century was more firmly based on "radical individualism, free thought, and the principles of free speech."[22] Transforming understandings of freedom in the mid-nineteenth century precipitated this change. Prior to the Civil War, "personal freedom" and economic autonomy were both considered the essence of liberty. In the aftermath of the war, emancipation and new emphases on citizenship reshaped understandings of freedom as based in political rights.[23] At a time when suffragists were targeting the question of citizenship for white women versus Black men, it seemed that the tenets of sex radicalism became less salient. Sex radicals considered legal and political advancement important, but they thought that the way to accomplish these goals was through the reformation of society to recognize woman as free actors, in charge of their own destiny, rather than directly through the reformation of laws. Thus, in a period of enormous legal change and constitutional transformation, radical demands to upend traditional marriage and family were at odds with the postbellum focus of the suffrage movement.[24]

Mainstream suffragists were determined to combat the idea that they were anti-marriage or sex radicals, but they retained Woodhull's ideas about a woman's right to sexual self-determination within marriage. Elizabeth Cady Stanton continued to support "self-sovereignty" for women, and in the 1870s began urging women to "learn and practice the true laws of generation" so as to reduce the number of children they had. Stanton declared, "we [women] are to be the sovereigns of the world but woman must first understand her true position. … Woman must at all times be the sovereign of her own person."[25]

Suffrage leader Matilda Joslyn Gage also connected the idea of reproduction and self-sovereignty in her work. One of the three main leaders of the NWSA, along with Stanton and Anthony, Gage served as both general secretary and president of the organization. Gage also edited the official NWSA newspaper, the *National Citizen and Ballot Box*, from 1878 to 1881, and was coauthor with Stanton and Anthony of the multivolume *History of Woman Suffrage*.

Gage's views on women's rights were influenced by observing the status of women in the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) confederacy, located near Gage's home in central New York state. In her monumental book, *Woman, Church and State* (1893), Gage described how "the family relation among the Iroquois demonstrated woman's superiority in power." Women had a key role in tribal government, and the line of descent in Iroquois society was determined through the maternal line. In the home, the wife's power over the family and her body was absolute. "If for any cause

the Iroquois husband and wife separated, the wife took with her all the property she had brought with her into the wigwam; the children also accompanied the mother, whose right to them was recognized as supreme." Gage agreed with eminent historian George Bancroft's observation that the Founding Fathers used the Six Nations as a model for the government of the United States, adding that it was the "Mother-rule" of the Iroquois that provided the modern world with "its first conception of inherent rights, natural equality of condition, and the establishment of a civilized government upon this basis."[26]

Unfortunately, said Gage, the laws of the United States neglected to include women in their vision of equality. In an article for the *National Citizen and Ballot Box* titled "On the Right of Habeas Corpus," Gage commented on how marriage laws stripped women of this most fundamental constitutional right. "The value and right of personal freedom were recognized when our government was framed," Gage observed, but "the laws of every State in the Union, in defiance of the writ of habeas corpus—that constitutional guarantee of personal freedom—place the personal liberty of the wife entirely in the control and power of her husband, who can imprison her, and this without requiring any legal process whatsoever." The result was that "the uncontrolled *will* of the husband is permitted to overpower the wife's constitutional right to freedom and the protection of the law."[27]

Gage addressed the issue of bodily autonomy directly in an article for the suffrage publication *The Revolution*, titled "Is Woman Her Own?" The article was in response to an earlier article titled "Child Murder," which Gage said "touched a subject which lies deeper down into woman's wrongs than any other. This is the denial of the right to herself." Gage observed that nowhere in history "has the marital union of the sexes been one in which woman has had control over her own body. Enforced motherhood is a crime against the body of the mother and the soul of the child." Gage acknowledged that "tens of thousands of husbands and fathers throughout this land are opposed to large families," yet the "sin of self-gratification" was so deeply implanted in men that they failed to consider the consequences for their wives "while selfish desire controls the heart." It is not entirely clear if Gage condemned abortion outright. What is certain is that she sympathized with women's position, arguing that most of the responsibility for "this crime of 'child murder,' 'abortion,' 'infanticide' lies at the door of the male sex."[28]

Gage's insistence on women's bodily freedom stood in contrast to other arguments for population control that proliferated in the late nineteenth century. In a book review in the *National Citizen and Ballot Box*, Gage critiqued British women's rights activist Annie Besant's book, *The Law of Population: Its Consequences and Its Bearing Upon Human Conduct and Morals*, which supported the Reverend Thomas Malthus's warning that unchecked population growth would soon exceed available resources.[29] Gage wrote that Besant had "the misfortune to look at this population question from the man stand-point" because she did nothing to change the church's "most diabolical doctrine that woman was made for man." According to Gage, "when each girl born into the world is taught from birth that she, and no other, has right to her own body; when each boy from birth is taught self-control, self-restraint, and that man has no right to enforce maternity, then 'science' will not be asked to step into the domain of justice and inherent right, to settle questions of this nature."[30]

Despite her instrumental role in the postwar suffrage movement, Gage was sidelined in suffrage history because of her critique of the church. The merger of the American Woman Suffrage Association and the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1890 into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) led to increasing

racism and conservativism within the suffrage movement and a narrow emphasis on winning the vote, primarily for white women.[31] Gage opposed the merger of the two organizations because they refused to defend the separation of church and state; she ultimately founded the Woman's National Liberal Union, composed of likeminded members who believed that NAWSA was not adequately addressing the full range of women's rights.[32] Gage was especially concerned about the growing influence of social conservatives on NAWSA, calling Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) leader Frances Willard the "most dangerous person upon the American continent today," and the temperance movement a serious threat to personal liberty.

Gage's and Willard's views on suffrage, rights, and social policy were very different, yet their mutual beliefs illustrated the widespread understanding that bodily autonomy within marriage was a central rights concern for women across the political spectrum. In an article for the *Woman's Journal*, Willard explained that while marriage remained "the greatest triumph of Christianity," the most important reform of all was a woman's right to have "undoubted custody of herself and … [for her to] determine the frequency of the investiture of life with form of Love." Willard also referenced the outlawing of birth control and abortion in all states in this period: "My library groans under accumulations of books written by men to teach women the immeasurable iniquity of arresting development in the genesis of a new life, but not one of the volumes contains the remotest suggestion that this responsibility should be at least equally divided between Himself and Herself." She concluded that the "untold horrors of this injustice dwarf all others out of sight," but told her readers also to be hopeful, as "the study by women of heredity and prenatal influences" promised to elevate the institution of marriage and promote "an equal standard of purity for men and women."[33] Her focus on social purity upheld marriage as a central institution, but her insistence on male responsibility and an equal standard for men's and women's behavior was not dissimilar from what the "sex radicals" had been advocating for the last three decades.

The emphasis on sexual rights within marriage remained a central concern for suffragists, spotlighted by the increasing social impact of scientific theories like evolution and eugenics that dominated public discussion beginning in the late 1870s. Both evolutionary and eugenic thought centered around the problem of improving the human race and birthing "better" babies. In the suffrage movement, evolution and eugenics helped to transform arguments about marriage because it allowed reformers to make the case that emancipating women made the best evolutionary sense.[34]

Harriot Stanton Blatch, the daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, connected these ideas in her 1891 lecture on voluntary motherhood. Like Gage, Blatch claimed that Malthusian arguments in favor of population control were too narrow as they neglected the rights of women. "Men talk of the sacredness of motherhood," Blatch observed, but men "in their laws and customs have degraded women in their maternity. Motherhood is sacred," Blatch declared, "that is, voluntary motherhood; but the woman who bears unwelcome children is outraging every duty she owes the race."[35]

Blatch's reference to "the race" reflected this new understanding of how evolutionary theory could advance women's bodily rights and freedoms. Like Woodhull, Blatch argued that traditional gender roles hindered the human race's evolutionary progress. According to Blatch, "the evolution of humanity and enforced maternity are antagonistic," since "the unwelcome child is mentally and physically below the average; and it is a direct drag upon the mother in the efficient performance of already assumed maternal duties." The first step toward making maternity voluntary, said Blatch, was "to secure for all women financial independence." This would allow women more freedom within

marriage, and the ability to leave abusive marriages, because they would not need to rely on economic support from men.[36]

Blatch was purposely vague about the methods by which women could achieve voluntary motherhood because of the federal Comstock Act of 1873. Named after the bill's author, anti-vice crusader Anthony Comstock, the Comstock Act prohibited the circulation of "obscene" materials through the U.S. mail. Although not the first anti-obscenity statute in the nation, the Comstock Act was more restrictive than previous laws because it included discussion of contraceptive methods and abortifacients in the list of banned material. According to historian Amy Werbel, Comstock insisted that these items be included because they "provoked lustful arousal" and allowed men "to cover up disgraceful extramarital sex." Comstock was also horrified by "conjugal" catalogues that "specifically marketed contraceptives to married women" and used "marriage announcements to identify likely customers."[37]

The climate created by the new law certainly reinforced the suffrage movement's reluctance to support sex reform, but on a practical level, the law was unevenly enforced. Woodhull and other free love advocates were a constant target of the censors, while other publications escaped notice. Historian Andrea Tone has found that despite the Comstock Law, contraceptive advice and methods continued to circulate on the black market, often by using euphemisms as camouflage.[38] Terms included "mother's friend" or "woman's remedy," while phrasings warned, "Do not take if you do not wish to induce a miscarriage." Illinois suffragist and physician Dr. Alice B. Stockham's advice manual *Tokology: A Book for Every Woman*, first published in 1883, is one example of a marriage manual that initially flew under the radar of Comstock's enforcement. Stockham drew on her experience with female patients who were worn out from excessive childbearing and used her position as a physician to promote voluntary motherhood. Stockham decried the fact that the woman "gives up all ownership of herself to her husband" such that there was little difference between her life and that of a prostitute. The book contained a section recommending periodic "chastity in the marriage relation" as a way for women to "safely prevent conception." Stockham also insisted that in order to protect the health of the mother and child, it was "natural and reasonable that a prospective mother should be exempt from the sexual relation during gestation."[39] The book was advertised widely in both suffrage periodicals and mainstream newspapers and quickly became a best seller. By the early 1900s, it had gone through forty-five printings and sold hundreds of thousands of copies.[40]

Despite its frank advice about how to prevent pregnancy, Stockham's work managed to evade the censors until an excerpt on sexual continence during pregnancy appeared on the front page of the anarchist free-love newspaper *Lucifer, the Light-Bearer* in 1904. Comstock had hounded *Lucifer*'s publisher Moses Harman for decades: postal authorities regularly seized copies of the paper, and Harman was arrested and imprisoned numerous times for violating the Comstock Act. Suffragists admired Harman's belief that voluntary motherhood was the key to racial progress while rejecting his radical views on free love. Upon his release from prison in 1894, Alice Stone Blackwell, the daughter of Lucy Stone, declared in the *Woman's Journal* that Harman's sentence "to a year in the penitentiary was a gross miscarriage of justice." Blackwell said that while she found some of the ideas published in Harman's paper "highly objectionable," she believed it was "a thousand times more objectionable that the right of free discussion should be denied to any doctrines, however erroneous."[41]

When *Lucifer, the Light-Bearer* was seized by postal authorities for publishing the excerpt from *Tokology* in 1904, Blackwell again came to his defense in an article titled

"The Post Office vs. Free Speech." Blackwell observed that *Tokology* had been "sold and circulated through the mails for years without objection," and that "many of our readers are familiar with it" because of advertisements in the *Woman's Journal*. "There is nothing from beginning to end" in *Tokology* "that could properly come under the law against circulating indecent literature," Blackwell claimed, reiterating her support for Harman's right to publish his ideas, especially his "cardinal doctrine" that "woman should always have control of her own person." Where they parted ways was on Harman's belief in the abolition of legal marriage.[42]

Blackwell defended Harman to the end of his life in 1910, a daring move that created problems for the suffrage movement. In his obituary in the *Woman's Journal*, Blackwell praised Harman as a brave "defender of the right of every woman to the control of her own person," while continuing to condemn his attempts to abolish legal marriage. "In spite of all his errors," Blackwell concluded, "all women have cause to be grateful to him."[43] This disavowal of Harman's radical marriage views did not stop anti-suffragists from continuing to associate woman's suffrage with free love. In an editorial for the *New York Times*, Carrie Chapman Catt attempted to refute these associations, emphatically declaring, "The suffrage movement … has no other plank in its platform other than Votes for Women. It has never been connected with 'free love.' … Free love is not and never has been a tenet of suffragists."[44]

Arguments about self-ownership, the right of sexual refusal, and maternal freedom, though, had been part of some suffragists' beliefs for decades. Eventually these concepts transformed into open calls for legal birth control both within and outside of the suffrage movement. Before she began her activism for birth control, Margaret Sanger attended suffrage meetings, but found the movement was too narrow because it often neglected the interests of working-class women. In an article titled "Dirt, Smell and Sweat," published in the *New York Call* in 1911, Sanger recounted her experience at a New York City woman's suffrage meeting. Meeting chair Anna Ross Weeks observed that many white, native-born, middle- and upper-class men objected to women voting because they "would be obliged to bump against the dirty, smelly and sweaty [working] men at the polls." Weeks's solution was to remove these "dirty, smelly and sweaty men" from the polls to make way for educated, middle-class women like herself. Sanger called out the elitism of this view, asking "what about the women who are liable to be just as dirty, smelly and sweaty as their working brothers? … [I]f the chairman and her class object to the smell of the workingman, so will they object to the smell of the working woman."[45]

For Sanger, control over reproduction was more important for women than the vote. Just before World War I, Sanger began openly issuing essays on birth control and announced plans to open a clinic in the Brownsville neighborhood of New York's Lower East Side in 1916. She also founded the newspaper the *Birth Control Review*, telling her readers in its inaugural issue that "If [women] must break the law to establish her right to voluntary motherhood, *then the law shall be broken.*"[46]

Despite Catt's insistence that the suffrage movement had "no other plank," some suffragists also began openly embracing arguments for legal birth control before the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Mary Ware Dennett, the most famous birth control advocate after Margaret Sanger, began her activist work as field secretary for the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association from 1908 to 1910.[47] National suffrage leaders were so impressed with Dennett's work for the association that they offered her the job of corresponding secretary for the NAWSA in New York in spring of 1910. Dennett resigned from the position in 1914 over disputes about the organization's

finances, telling its president, Anna Howard Shaw, that she found other suffragists "conservative and unconstructive" and the organization too beholden to large donors.[48]

Dennett continued to support the suffrage cause but devoted most of her activist work toward reforming birth control laws. Along with friends from the NAWSA, including Clara Gruening Stillman and lawyer Jessie Ashley, Dennett formed the first birth control organization in the United States, the National Birth Control League (NBCL), at Stillman's home on Mar. 31, 1915. This organization filled a critical void in birth control activism left when Margaret Sanger fled the country to avoid imprisonment for violating the Comstock Act. To prevent further persecution of birth control supporters, the NBCL called for a repeal of all obscenity laws as they related to contraception. Later, Dennett would change the name of the organization to the Voluntary Parenthood League (VPL) to reflect her philosophy that birth control was a question for "the individual family to decide."[49] This terminology echoed earlier activists' use of the term "voluntary motherhood," while also acknowledging the role men needed to play in the birth control movement.

Dennett's commitment to free speech on the issue of birth control was an extension of her support for suffrage. In a letter to Lucy Burns sent during the National Woman's Party's picket of the White House in 1917, Dennett declared her wish to join the NWP at once, despite having opposed the party's tactics in the past. The arrest and imprisonment of the NWP pickets, said Dennett, "have clearly shown me that all minor criticism of the policies of the Woman's Party must trail off into nothingness in comparison with the burning necessity for every liberty loving American to line up with you and the others who are demanding your basic right of free speech." Unlike NAWSA leadership, Dennett condoned the pickets' move to pressure President Wilson directly for a suffrage amendment since "the war program has absolutely proved that the President *can* drive things through Congress whether with or without the approval of the Congressmen." Dennett argued, "if any measures are to be autocratically shoved through Congress, the suffrage amendment should be one of them." Although Dennett said she disliked autocracy, even if used for good purposes, "the great consideration today is free speech. It is the foundation right without which all other rights are a mockery. … Your fight has now become every freeman's fight. I should despise myself if I stayed on the outside."[50]

Some African American suffragists also openly supported the birth control cause. In 1918, the Women's Political Association of Harlem began scheduling lectures on birth control, and others began to speak and write about the need to legalize it.[51] One of the most prominent supporters was the Harlem Renaissance writer Angelina Weld Grimké, grandniece of abolitionist Angelina Grimké (who had married Theodore Dwight Weld in 1838). Sanger published Grimké's short stories "The Closing Door" and "Goldie" in the *Birth Control Review*. Like white suffragists, Grimké decried women's lack of bodily autonomy within marriage, an institution that she likened to slavery. Grimké's stories depicted the added burdens of African American women facing marriage and motherhood in a racist society. "When women become equal with men," Grimke argued "the injustices will end." For Grimké, this would only occur when woman "gains the ballot, for to me the ballot is in a Republican democracy the signer of absolute equality."[52]

Most suffragists, though, remained too timid to support the birth control movement, at least openly. In an editorial for the *Birth Control Review*, NWP member Crystal Eastman chastised fellow suffragists for failing to recognize that birth control was a tenet fundamental to the feminist program. Eastman remarked that she was continually astonished at how "distinguished feminists who discussed for an hour what could be

done with the woman's vote … did not once mention birth control." She urged other suffragists that "we must all be followers of Margaret Sanger," arguing that "the whole structure of the feminist's dream of society rests upon the rapid extension of scientific knowledge about birth control."[53]

The organizations that continued working for women's rights after suffrage remained divided over the birth control issue. For example, the NWP's new "Equal Rights Agenda" in 1921 refused to include contraceptive law reform in its main program, even after allowing both Dennett and Sanger five minutes each to address the resolutions committee. Alice Paul defended this choice, arguing that the party's feminist platform needed to be more narrowly defined for maximum impact in aftermath of the suffrage victory.[54] Several years later, the NWP newspaper *Equal Rights* reasserted this position, explaining that the NWP's "Declaration of Principles" already included a firm stance on equal rights within the marriage relation. The editorial explained, "This connotes the right of the wife equally with the husband to determine the number of children they shall have. Until women have both in the law and in their own psychology an equal headship of the family with their husbands, women cannot exercise the right of birth control even when they believe in it and desire it."[55] The NWP's stance on birth control reflected what it defined as its "singleness of purpose."[56] Indeed, the NWP framed itself quite differently than past suffrage initiatives and single-mindedly focused on the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Alice Paul's radical roots belied how determinedly the organization sought to divorce itself from the long list of social and political issues that the suffrage movement had endeavored to keep present alongside the fight for the vote. Instead, Paul ensured that the NWP worked from the "top down" on the issue of the ERA, targeting powerful institutions and organizations rather than individuals, and eliminating discussion around agendas like birth control that could derail this focus.

In contrast to the NWP, the League of Women Voters (LWV)—founded by Carrie Chapman Catt at the 1920 NAWSA meeting to help women carry out their new duties as voters—initially considered the birth control question as part of its broader agenda. In April 1921, at the national convention held in Cleveland, Mary Ware Dennett delivered a lecture titled "Children by Chance or by Choice." During the convention, there was "loud applause" after the reading of a resolution proposed to support "voluntary parenthood," but ultimately, the League refused to adopt it, and did not allow it to be discussed or voted on during the convention proceedings. After the convention ended, Dennett wrote dozens of letters to various delegates criticizing this decision and asking for their individual support for the VPL's fight in Congress to remove the birth control clause from the federal Comstock Act. She wrote, "I understand the unwillingness of the leaders of the N.L.W.V. to encourage organization approval of this subject," since doing so "might antagonize the Catholic members," jeopardize passage of the proposed Sheppard-Towner Act to provide funding for maternal and child health care, and "might 'queer' the organization and make it misunderstood by the public." But she argued that League women instead needed to understand that birth control was "the very basis of child welfare," and that the "service" provided by Sheppard-Towner would be "incomplete" without teaching women how to "space births by regulating conception." She also urged League members to note the disservice that they, as the "more or less privileged, sophisticated, resourceful women of the country," would be doing to "the great mass of poor and ignorant women" by refusing to support the cause of legal contraception.[57]

Some League members shared Dennett and Sanger's views, at least to an extent. For example, the League's Committee on Uniform Laws Concerning Women draft report

on "Marriage and Divorce" argued that there should be "a measure or law that would allow the establishment of public clinics for the dissemination of information to married people, concerning contraceptives, and the repeal of such laws which make the giving of such information a felony." The committee commented, "We realize that there is much opposition to this work and that the efforts of Mrs. Margaret Sanger seem to have been fruitless and followed by prison sentences; but at least she has called the attention of the public to the need of such work." They added that Sanger's methods were perhaps "the best way to prevent compulsory motherhood but one has only to stop and think of the poor mothers, who are worn out before their time with the bearing and caring of too many children, to realize there must be something done." They concluded, "surely the nation and the race would be better off with fewer, better, and healthier babies, and women happier and of more service to the community if not so often, compulsory mothers."[58]

Other League members—most notably Catt (who had survived two husbands and had no children)—remained ambivalent about supporting birth control. When Sanger founded the American Birth Control League (ABCL) in 1921, Catt refused to have her name listed as a sponsor. In a letter to Sanger, Catt explained that "I am no enemy of you and yours," but that she found Sanger's reform was "too narrow to appeal to me and too sordid." Catt observed, "a million years of male control over the sustenance of women has made them sex slaves." The result was "an oversexualization of women and an oversexualization of men." Providing women with birth control without addressing the issue of women's sexual and economic subjection to men would simply compound the problem. "When the advocacy of contraception is combined with as strong a propaganda for continence . . . it will find me a more willing sponsor," Catt wrote.[59]

She had a point. Since the beginning of the women's movement, their activism encompassed not only the quest for the vote but the right to bodily control as well. This vision did not necessarily openly encompass the use of contraceptive methods, but instead rested on the broader notion that women had a fundamental right to themselves. Early birth control activists had seized on this old idea and used it as part of a series of strategies to popularize the idea of making contraception legal. Dennett, by focusing on changing obscenity laws, framed access to birth control as a civil liberty, just as earlier women's rights activists had declared self-ownership as a civil right critical to women's equality.

Sanger also started from the position of women's equality, but eventually abandoned it to overcome the "taint of radicalism" that had haunted the movement for decades. She eventually won supporters by softening the implications of birth control for women's independence, and instead identified birth control as a public health service administered by medical professionals. She deliberately invoked racist and eugenic arguments in her writings and speeches in order to convince as wide an audience as possible of the utility of birth control, linking contraception directly to the idea that less fit populations of immigrants and people of color should have fewer children. These ideas appealed to the widespread nativist, anti-Black, anti-immigrant, and anti-Communist attitudes that characterized the aftermath of World War I. Yet her advancement of birth control as a tool of eugenic programming also shifted constantly and depended on her audience. In her book, *Pivot of Civilization* (1922), Sanger also defined "racial betterment" in broad terms, which included immigrants and a "mixture of stocks" that would result in "an intermingling of ideas and aspirations [and] a race greater than any which has contributed to the population of the U.S."[60]

This diffused and targeted strategy worked. By the late 1920s, in addition to working-class and radical support for birth control, "middle-class matrons"—the same women who were members of organizations like the LWV and other women's clubs—were also joining the ABCL by the thousands. ABCL leadership was conscious of this success, with one Connecticut volunteer noting that they had reached "the best type of woman—those active in the Mother's Club and the League of Women Voters. They are the women who are deeply interested in the subject of birth control and who will be extremely active and influential in the substantial conservative circles … of course, the more advanced 'radical' set has always advocated birth control."[61] For white women activists, the linking of birth control to eugenic ideas of "racial fitness" and public health necessity transformed it into a cause they were more openly willing to support.[62] It would take a revived women's health movement and the establishment of Black women's health organizations in the late twentieth century to bring sustained attention to the harsh legacies of eugenics, sterilization, and reproductive medicalization in the name of public health and population control.

The history of birth control within the broader movement for women's rights is a story of compromises and contradictions over ideas of who deserved reproductive autonomy and why. Like the suffrage movement, birth control reformers frequently employed white supremacist and eugenic arguments to achieve their goals, but they also simultaneously drew upon a long record of expansive ideals of female emancipation that had deep roots in republican thought. Today's reproductive justice movement has inherited both histories, but the nuances are often flattened. White reproductive rights reformers today have all too often uncritically celebrated the past, treating women's rights as a straight and untroubled path toward equality. On the other hand, anti-abortion and conservative activists have focused on the legacies of eugenics and racism as another plank in their arguments to restrict reproductive rights for all women. Both arguments ignore the complexities and the continuities in the history of reproductive politics and American feminist reform more broadly. By tracing the intersecting histories of suffrage and birth control with critical attention to their ever-shifting rights arguments, we can be far more precise about the parameters of women's citizenship in both the past and the present.

Notes

1 Quoted in Susan E. Klepp, *Revolutionary Conceptions: Women, Fertility, and Family Limitation in America, 1760–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 91.

2 Klepp, *Revolutionary Conceptions*, 91, 97.

3 Celia Morris, *Fanny Wright: Rebel in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); Lori D. Ginzberg, "'The Hearts of Your Readers Will Shudder': Fanny Wright, Infidelity, and American Freethought," *American Quarterly* 46 (June 1994): 195–226.

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5 Robert Dale Owen, *Moral Physiology; or, A Brief and Plain Treatise on the Population Question* (New York, 1830).

6 Quoted in Ginzberg, "'The Hearts of Your Readers Will Shudder,'" 196, 208.

7 For more on the connections between abolitionism and women's rights, and the leadership of Black women abolitionists, see Carol Faulkner, *Lucretia Mott's Heresy: Abolition and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Nancy Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement*

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8 Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 121. See also Joanne E. Passet, *Sex Radicals and the Quest for Women's Equality* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

9 Quoted in Jean L. Silver-Isenstadt, *Shameless: The Visionary Life of Mary Gove Nichols* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 7.

10 Mary S. Gove, *Lectures to Ladies on Anatomy and Physiology* (Boston: Saxton & Peirce, 1842), 271.

11 Quoted in William Leach, *True Love and Perfect Union: The Feminist Reform of Sex and Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 83.

12 Silver-Isenstadt, *Shameless*, 11–44.

13 Mary Gove Nichols, *Mary Lyndon; or, Revelations of a Life* (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1855), 382.

14 Quoted in Silver-Isenstadt, *Shameless*, 185–86.

15 Quoted in Patricia Cline Cohen, "The 'Anti-Marriage Theory' of Thomas and Mary Gove Nichols: A Radical Critique of Monogamy in the 1850s," *Journal of the Early Republic* 34 (Spring 2014), 2.

16 William Leach, *True Love and Perfect Union: The Feminist Reform of Sex and Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 82.

17 *Proceedings of the National Women's Rights Convention, held at Cleveland, Ohio, on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, October 5th, 6th, and 7th, 1853* (Cleveland, OH: Gray, Beardsley, Spear & Co., 1854), 41, https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbnawsa.n8288/?sp=40 (accessed June 25, 2020).

18 Amanda Frisken, *Victoria Woodhull's Sexual Revolution: Political Theater and the Popular Press in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 28–29.

19 Victoria C. Woodhull, "And the Truth Shall Make You Free, speech, Steinway Hall, November 20, 1871" in *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, ed. Sally Roesch Wagner (New York: Penguin Books, 2019), 269–71.

20 Frisken, *Victoria Woodhull's Sexual Revolution*, 20.

21 Frisken, *Victoria Woodhull's Sexual Revolution*, 47–49, 66.

22 Susan Marie Rensing, "Feminist Eugenics in America: From Free Love to Birth Control, 1880—1930" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2006), 44. See also John C. Spurlock, *Free Love: Marriage and Middle Class Radicalism in America, 1825–1860* (New York: New York University Press, 1990).

23 For more on how African American activists reshaped understandings of rights and citizenship in the nineteenth century, see Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998); Liette Gidlow, "The Sequel: The Fifteenth Amendment, the Nineteenth Amendment, and Southern Black Women's Struggle to Vote, 1890s–1920s," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 17 (July 2018); and Hannah Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Postemancipation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

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reformers were focused on emphasizing sexual difference and the value of the female sex in marriage and society in order to gain more rights.

25 Quoted in DuBois, *Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights*, 103.

26 Mathilda Joslyn Gage, "Woman, Church and State" in Wagner, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 17–18.

27 Matilda Joslyn Gage, "On the Right Of Habeas Corpus," *National Citizen and Ballot Box*, vol. 1, no. 8, Nov. 1876, 1–4 (emphasis in original).

28 Matilda Joslyn Gage, "Is Woman Her Own?" *The Revolution*, Apr. 9, 1868, 215–16.

29 Annie Besant, *The Law of Population: Its Consequences and Its Bearing Upon Human Conduct and Morals* (New York: Asa K. Butts, 1878).

30 Mathilda Joslyn Gage, "Our Book Table," *National Citizen and Ballot Box*, vol. 3, no. 8, Nov. 1878, pp. 1–4.

31 Both past and forthcoming scholarly work on the suffrage movement has emphasized the ways in which white suffragists shaped their demand for the vote based on racist and exclusionary arguments, and how Black suffragists and other suffragists of color responded to those challenges. See Cathleen D. Cahill, *Recasting the Vote: How Women of Color Transformed the Suffrage Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Crystal N. Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Martha Jones, *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture, 1830–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Martha S. Jones, *Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All* (New York: Basic Books, 2020); Kathi Kern, *Mrs. Stanton's Bible* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Allison K. Lange, *Picturing Political Power: Images in the Women's Suffrage Movement* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2020); Louise Michele Newman, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850–1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); and Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

32 Leila R. Brammer, *Excluded from Suffrage History: Matilda Joslyn Gage, Nineteenth-Century American Feminist* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 16.

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35 Harriot Stanton Blatch, "Lecture on Voluntary Motherhood" in *Transactions of the National Council of Women of the United States, Assembled in Washington, D.C., February 22 to 25, 1891*, ed. Rachel Foster Avery (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1891), 280.

36 Blatch, "Lecture on Voluntary Motherhood," 282–84. For more on the link between women's marital and financial independence, see Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848–1869* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978); Hamlin, *From Eve to Evolution*; Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America*; Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract*; and Sandra F. VanBurkleo, *Belonging to the World: Women's Rights and American Constitutional Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

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39 Alice Bunker Stockham, *Tokology: A Book for Every Woman* (Chicago, IL: Alice B. Stockham & Co., 1888), 154.
40 Marsha Silberman, "The Perfect Storm: Late Nineteenth-Century Chicago Sex Radicals: Moses Harman, Ida Craddock, Alice Stockham and the Comstock Obscenity Laws," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 102 (Fall–Winter 2009), 324–67.
41 "Letter of Support for Moses Harman by Alice Stone Blackwell, associate editor of the *Woman's Journal*, 1894" in Wagner, ed., *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 373.
42 "The Post Office vs Free Speech," *Woman's Journal*, Aug. 12, 1904, 126.
43 Alice Stone Blackwell, "Moses Harman," *Woman's Journal*, Feb. 12, 1910, 28.
44 "'Free Love' Charge Held Ridiculous," *New York Times*, Feb. 15, 1914. See also "Feminism and Suffrage," clipping, box 5, folder 40, Madeline McDowell Breckinridge Papers, 1867–1923, no. 52M3, Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.
45 Margaret Sanger, "Dirt, Smell and Sweat," *New York Call*, Dec. 24, 1911, 15.
46 *Birth Control Review*, Feb. 1917 (emphasis in original).
47 For more on Mary Ware Dennett, see Constance M. Chen, *"The Sex Side of Life": Mary Ware Dennett's Pioneering Battle for Birth Control and Sex Education* (New York: The New Press, 1997), John M. Craig, "'The Sex Side of Life': The Obscenity Case of Mary Ware Dennett," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 15 (Jan. 1995): 145–66; Lauren MacIvor Thompson, "The Politics of Female Pain: Women's Citizenship, Twilight Sleep and the Early Birth Control Movement," *Medical Humanities* 45 (Mar. 2019): 67–74; Laura M. Weinrib, "The Sex Side of Civil Liberties: United States v. Dennett and the Changing Face of Free Speech," *Law and History Review* 30 (May 2012): 325–86.
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49 "An Endorsement of Birth Control," National Birth Control League, microfilm M-138, part B, Dennett Papers.
50 Mary Ware Dennett to Lucy Burns, Nov. 17, 1917, folder 223, Dennett Papers (emphasis in original).
51 Loretta J. Ross, "African-American Women and Abortion" in *Abortion Wars: A Half Century of Struggle, 1950–2000,* ed. Rickie Solinger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 4.
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55 "Feminism and birth control," *Equal Rights* 14, no. 28, Aug. 20, 1927, 220.
56 Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 142.
57 Mary Ware Dennett to Nina D. Hess, Apr. 26, 1921, series 3, reel 15, Women's Studies Manuscript Collection, Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
58 Undated report, Catharine Waugh McCulloch Papers, series VI of the Mary Earhart Dillon Collection, 1869–1945, collection A-68, microfilm M-133, reels E13–25, Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
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61 Mrs. Leonard D. Adkins to Mrs. Day, July 21, 1928, Annie Gertrude Webb Porritt Papers, collection SSC-MS-00123, Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History, Smith College Special Collections, Northampton, MA. Also quoted in Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 91.
62 Gordon, *Moral Property of Women*, 205. An extensive literature describes this transformation, illustrating how women's clubs and the ABCL, working alongside eugenicists, bundled birth control activism

together with calls for restrictive social hygiene and eugenic measures. These groups lobbied for a successful and widespread legal program of state sterilization initiatives for "unfit" populations that lasted well into the late twentieth century. See Elof Axel Carlson, "The Hoosier Connection: Compulsory Sterilization as Moral Hygiene" in *A Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era,* ed. Paul A. Lombardo (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Rebecca M. Kluchin, *Fit to Be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America, 1950–1980* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009); Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Fixing the Poor: Eugenic Sterilization and Child Welfare in the Twentieth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017); Edward J. Larson, "'In The Finest, Most Womanly Way': Women in the Southern Eugenics Movement," *American Journal of Legal History* 39 (Apr. 1995): 119–47; Rensing, "Feminist Eugenics in America"; Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); and Mary Ziegler, "Eugenic Feminism: Mental Hygiene, the Women's Movement, and the Campaign for Eugenic Legal Reform, 1900–1935," *Harvard Journal of Law and Gender* 36 (Winter 2008).

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