Reproductive Health, Reproductive Rights

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Published by The Ohio State University Press

Rosen, Robyn L.
The Ohio State University Press, 2003.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/33044.

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Notes to Introduction

1. Dummer to Anthony, June 12, 1917, box 26, Ethel Sturges Dummer Papers (hereafter cited as ESD Papers).


3. Lynne Curry puts it another way when she writes that during the early twentieth century, “A broad coalition of public health practitioners, social welfare advocates, and women’s rights supporters argued that a sound and democratic future depended upon mothers’ ability to produce and maintain a robust citizenry.” Curry, *Modern Mothers in the Heartland*, 1.

4. The exception to this is Carol R. McCann’s *Birth Control Politics in the U.S., 1916–45* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), which argues that birth control reformers need to be examined in the context of other reformers from the period, including “welfare feminists.” She focuses on shared discourses such as the economic ethic of fertility, racial betterment, and racial liberalism.

conducted as part of a somewhat larger discourse on national deterioration, depopulation and race suicide” (116).


9. Meckel, Save the Babies, 5.

10. According to Sonya Michel, what separated maternalists from feminists in this era were the former’s affirmation and the latter’s rejection of the social structures that imposed dependency upon women. This distinction will become quite clear in chapter 2, when Dummer’s feminism is counterpoised to both conservative and progressive maternalism.

11. Ladd-Taylor has focused on different ideas about gender roles to distinguish sentimental maternalists from progressive ones. My emphasis, however, is on the political environment within which women reformers operated. Therefore, I call Putnam a conservative maternalist, rather than a sentimental one, to underscore her ties with larger conservative political forces in the interwar years.

12. Indeed, there is certainly a link between the fact of Dummer’s radicalism and her lack of political success, as chapter 2 will show. This link has been noted by historians studying women’s political culture and maternalist activism. For example, according to Koven and Michel, in their edited volume on maternalist politics and the welfare state, “the fact that most of the women and movements we explore ultimately lacked the political power to refashion the state according to their own vision does not diminish the importance of that vision, their accomplishments, or their legacy.” Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States (New York: Routledge, 1993), 3. This interest in and respect for the politics of women “who dared to imagine what it would be like to enter into their newly born ‘mother world,’” has inspired my own work on second-tier leaders.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. Elizabeth Putnam to Dr. Tagliaferro Clark, May 6, 1927, box 30, Elizabeth Lowell Putnam Papers (hereafter cited as ELP Papers).


3. Ladd-Taylor would categorize Putnam as a sentimental maternalist because of her conservative and specifically antigovernmental politics, but her ideas often clashed with the group represented in Mother-Work by the National Congress of Mothers as much as it did with feminists and progressive maternalists.


6. The first phrase is borrowed from Kathryn Kish Sklar. The quote comes from Koven and Michel, “Introduction: Mother Worlds,” *Mothers of a New World*, 2.

7. While ideologically closest to the reformers Ladd-Taylor has called “sentimental maternalists,” Putnam’s politics cannot be captured by this description. Unlike these women who held staunchly to traditional notions of family and gender roles, and supported temperance and child labor reform, Putnam launched an impressive political career after the Nineteenth Amendment was passed. She also fought against prohibition and child labor reform, and even toyed with the idea of supporting birth control. Some of these seemingly odd or disparate positions stemmed from the realities of partisan politics; her choices became constrained as she rose in the ranks of the conservative wing of the Republican Party. Thus, her career suggests the need to expand our analysis of women’s reform behavior into the larger context of political culture.

8. Linda Gordon, “Social Insurance and Public Assistance: The Influence of Gender in Welfare Thought in the United States, 1890–1935,” *American Historical Review* 97 (February 1992): 19–54. In addition, see Virginia Sapiro, Barbara Nelson, and Gwendolyn Mink. The CB certainly had its flaws when it came to the policies it developed on behalf of women and children (especially the former), as has been well documented by the above-mentioned historians as well as, more recently, by Sonya Michel in her groundbreaking book *Children’s Interests/Mothers’ Rights* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999). The Bureau’s shortcomings will be made abundantly clear in the next chapter. However, for the purposes of putting the work of individual reformers into context (one of the fundamental aims of this project), Putnam’s activities on behalf of mothers and infants are as important as the activities of those feminists whose work we have admired. I argue that activists like Putnam, who made absolutely no attempt to cross class, ethnic, or racial boundaries, mitigate the CB’s awkwardness in these areas.


11. Ibid., 68.

12. Ibid., 69.


14. Putnam to editor of the *Worcester Telegram*, October 6, 1911, box 4, ELP Papers.

15. Ibid.


17. Ibid., 107.

18. Ibid., 108.

19. Ibid., 109.

20. Putnam to William Taft, August 14, 1909, box 6, ELP Papers.

21. Putnam’s preference for a clean milk supply was echoed by the leaders in the public health arena in her home state. The monthly *Bulletin for the State Board of Health* in 1906 argued against an overreliance on “municipal milk stations and philanthropic distribution” and for clean milk and breast-feeding.

25. Putnam “Suggestions on Prenatal Care Founded on a Five Year Experiment,” read before AASPIM, November 1914, box 4, ELP Papers.

26. In 1915, neonatal mortality rates (deaths within the first month) were 4.3 percent, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. Meckel, Save the Babies, 259.

27. Ibid.
28. Putnam, final draft of article for Modern Hospital, November 2, 1917, box 3, ELP Papers. This article was published in the February 1918 issue of the Modern Hospital. It is noted that the published article contains part of the report made by Elizabeth Lowell Putnam to the AASPIM, box 28, ELP Papers.

29. Ibid.


32. Putnam, final draft of article for Modern Hospital, November 2, 1917.
34. Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 143.
37. Meckel, Save the Babies, 109.
38. Senate Bill no. 506, enclosed in a letter from Massachusetts Congressman B. L. Young, April 26, 1920, box 16, ELP Papers.
39. B. L. Young to Putnam, April 26, 1920, box 16, ELP Papers.
41. Mrs. Max West to Putnam, November 25, 1912, box 30, ELP Papers.
42. Putnam to Mrs. Max West, March 17, 1913, box 30, ELP Papers.
43. Ibid.
44. Julia Lathrop to Putnam, October 31, 1912, box 9, ELP Papers.
45. Julia Lathrop to Putnam, November 14, 1912, box 30, ELP Papers.
46. Julia Lathrop to Putnam, November 5, 1912, box 30, ELP Papers.
47. Putnam to Julia Lathrop, November 12, 1912, box 30, ELP Papers.
48. The first milk station was established in New York City in 1892. Meckel, Save the Babies, 78.
49. Putnam to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, April 10, 1914, box 30, ELP Papers. It was noted at the bottom of the letter that a copy was sent to representative Gardner and Senator Weeks. Florence Kelley and Julia Lathrop asked Lovejoy to initiate a letter-writing campaign on behalf of the CB once the House Committee on Appro-
plications denied the Bureau’s request for increased funding. Lovejoy sent letters predominantly to NCLC members for signs of support. Putnam was no supporter of the NCLC; she opposed child labor reform as an unnecessary intrusion into the economy and family life. That Putnam received one and then went on to respond to his request illustrates the complexity of reproductive reform politics.

50. Putnam, Presidential Address to the AASPIM, December 1918, box 4, ELP Papers.

51. In 1916 Mrs. West, author of the Bureau’s Prenatal Care, asked Putnam to send materials to the Health Officer from Liverpool, England, who requested practical information on setting up prenatal care programs. In 1918, Lathrop relied on Putnam to be host to a visiting dignitary from New Zealand who had done important work on maternal and infant welfare. West to Putnam, April 1, 1916, Children’s Bureau–Central File (CB–CF) 4–15–4–1–1; Lathrop to Putnam, January 15, 1918, CB–CF 4–15–5–0–1.

52. Putnam to Dr. George Vincent, January 9, 1918, box 15, ELP Papers.

56. Ironically, Putnam’s words can be seen as echoing the position of one of the key feminist theorists of the early twentieth century, Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Only one year earlier, in 1915, Gilman spoke of the “overwhelming mass of sentiment on the side of continuous indulgence” in relation to the birth control question. In the same article (Forerunner 6, no. 7 [July 1915]: 176) she also named “a desire for ‘safe’ and free indulgence of the sex instinct without this natural consequence” as one of the main reasons behind the birth control movement. Despite these critiques, Gilman gave her first half-hearted endorsement of birth control in this same issue of the magazine. Presaging the direction of the Sanger-led movement, Gilman argued that physicians should have the right to teach such practices to their patients at their discretion.

57. Putnam, presidential address to AASPIM, Dec 1918.
58. Ibid.
60. Charles Zeublin to Putnam, September 2, 1916, box 30, ELP Papers.
61. Ibid.
63. Mary East to Putnam, April 1917, box 30, ELP Papers.
64. Vera P. Lane to Putnam, August 4, 1919, box 30, ELP Papers.
65. Mary Ware Dennett to Putnam, September 9, 1919, box 30, ELP Papers.
66. Putnam to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, January 5, 1921, box 17, ELP Papers.

69. Putnam to Henry Cabot Lodge, May 17, 1921, box 17, ELP Papers.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
73. Putnam, address, n.d., box 3, ELP Papers. To a certain extent, Putnam's comment reflected a valid critique of the purely educational focus of Sheppard-Towner—one that may have come from the right or the left.
75. Putnam to Charles Powles, March 16, 1916; Putnam to Dr. George Kosmak, February 7, 1919, box 16, ELP Papers.
76. Putnam to Henry Cabot Lodge, May 17, 1921, box 17, ELP Papers.
77. Putnam to Col. Winslow, December 14, 1921, box 17, ELP Papers.
78. Putnam, letter to *JAMA*, 1921, box 3, ELP Papers.
79. See for example, Putnam, speech before the Tuesday Club, December 1, 1925, box 29, scrapbook, ELP Papers.
80. Putnam to the editor of the *Springfield Republican*, February 10, 1924, box 16, ELP Papers.
82. Lindenmeyer, “A Right to Childhood,” 96.
84. Putnam to the editor of the *Independent*, January 6, 1926, box 30, ELP Papers.
The first part of quote also came from Putnam's speech before the Tuesday Club, Cambridge, Mass., December 1, 1925, box 29, ELP Papers.
86. Putnam to A. Piatt Andrew, January 31, 1929, box 16, ELP Papers.
87. Putnam to Dr. George Kosmak, January 31, 1929, box 16, ELP Papers.
88. Putnam, speech before Daughters of 1812, March 1930, box 4, ELP Papers.
90. Putnam, speech before Daughters of 1812, March 1930, box 4, 48, ELP Papers.
93. Ibid.
95. Putnam to A. Piatt Andrew, March 8, 1929, box 16, ELP Papers.
96. Putnam to Dr. Tagliaferro Clark, May 6, 1927, box 30, 511, ELP Papers.
97. Putnam to A. Piatt Andrew, March 8, 1929, box 16, ELP Papers.
98. Putnam to Dr. Tagliaferro Clark, October 26, 1929, box 16, ELP Papers.
99. Ibid.
100. Putnam to Dr. Kosmak, February 7, 1929, box 16, ELP Papers.
101. Putnam to Dr. Tagliaferro Clark, October 26, 1929, box 16, ELP Papers.
102. Ibid.
103. Putnam to A. Piatt Andrew, February 27, 1930, box 16, ELP Papers.
these dynamics: “The medical inspection of schools, the physical examination and treatment of school children, the supplying of food for the indigent pupil, free dispensary treatment for the defective, and other similar provisions which have all been added to the education program of the state, all are signs of the spirit of machine centralization and control . . . which should be abandoned,” 69.


108. Putnam, speech before the Parliamentary Law Club, April 5, 1927, box 29, scrapbook, ELP Papers.

109. Putnam’s attempt to add levity to her speech went even further when she offered an example of an offensive limerick that should not be censored, “first, because although portraying vice, it makes evil thoroughly unattractive; and second, because I do not want my grandchildren singing it around the street, as they doubtless would were it censored.” Putnam, speech, April 5, 1927.


111. Putnam to Slattery, June 20, 1930, box 16, 297, ELP Papers.

112. Kathryn Kish Sklar, “Brain Work for Women.”

Notes to Chapter 2


7. Ibid., 33.

8. Ibid., 35.

9. Ibid., 40.

Emergence of the American University (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Margaret W. Rossiter, Woman Scientists in America (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), ch. 1 and 2.

11. Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 66.


13. Healy went on to an auspicious career, becoming Director of the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute, publishing several studies of delinquency, and directing the Judge Baker Foundation in Boston. Named after a leader in the juvenile court movement, the Baker Foundation sought to investigate the variable causal factors involved in delinquent behavior. On Judge Baker’s contributions to the juvenile justice system and the Foundation named after him, see William Healy, Harvey Humphrey Baker: Upbuilder of the Juvenile Court (Boston: Judge Baker Foundation Publications, 1920). Examples of Healy’s more empirical and fairminded investigations of delinquents are The Individual Delinquent (Boston: Little, Brown, 1915) and Delinquents and Criminals (co-authored with Augusta F. Bronner; New York: MacMillan, 1926). Jennifer Platt suggests that Dummer played a vital role in Healy’s “very consequential appointment” to the Psychopathic Institute in “Acting as a Switchboard.”


15. Estelle Freedman writes in her biography of penologist Miriam Van Waters that 25 percent of the girls brought to the Los Angeles Juvenile Hall were pregnant.

16. See Linda Gordon, “Black and White Visions of Welfare: Women’s Welfare Activism, 1890–1945,” Journal of American History 78 (September 1991): 559–90; and Susan Tiffin, In Whose Best Interest?. Kunzel argues in Fallen Women that social workers began by the 1920s to encourage white women to give up their illegitimate children for adoption, arguing that they were unfit mothers, whereas earlier evangelical reformers had faith in “the redemptive power of motherhood.” Regina K. Kunzel, Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890–1945 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993). Although I agree that the latter position implied a potentially radical acceptance of single-parent families as legitimate families, my research has shown that the position could come out of a feminist as well as an evangelical orientation.

17. Dummer, Why I Think So, 54.


22. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 260.
26. This quote is from David Leigh’s article, “Emma Goldman in San Francisco,” Mother Earth 10, no. 8 (October 1915): 277.
27. Within the reproductive reform community, it was Sanger who would gain inspiration from this group of American radicals. Dummer avoided direct activism related to free love and birth control, although her ideas about Mutterschutz certainly encompassed both issues, albeit in a more romanticized form. Sanger also developed a relationship with Stöcker, although one in which Sanger exhibited much less deference to the German philosopher and activist than did Dummer. By the 1920s Stöcker counted Dummer and Sanger among her important American contacts and asked both women to sponsor a trip to the States. In 1925 Sanger helped Stöcker travel to the neo-Malthusian conference in New York.
30. Ten years after Feminism in Germany and Scandinavia was published, Anthony was still in contact with Stöcker, trying to arrange funding for a lecture tour in America, and securing her a place on the program at the sixth International Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Conference (New York, 1925).
31. Anthony also fits into this analysis of reproductive reformers because of her interest in birth control and her connection to the radical feminist group, Heterodoxy. Mary Dennett had ties to this Greenwich Village group as well.
32. Anthony, Feminism in Germany and Scandinavia, 10. Subsequent studies of the suffrage movements in the West have built on or confirmed Anthony’s original insights and interpretations. On German feminism, see Allen, Feminism and Motherhood. On France’s “relational,” “familial,” or “maternal” feminism in this period, see Karen Offen, “Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in Fin-de-Siecle France,” American Historical Review 89 (1984): 654; and “Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach,” Signs 14 (1988): 119–57.
33. Anthony, *Feminism in Germany and Scandinavia*, 87, 88.
34. Dummer to Anthony, March 21, 1916, box 26, ESD Papers.
35. Ibid.
36. Anthony to Dummer, April 10, 1916, box 26, ESD Papers.
39. For a brief discussion of the ideological differences between Gilman and Key, see Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987), 46–49.
40. Lucy Waite to Dummer, June 23, 1917, box 23, ESD Papers.
42. Tiffin, *In Whose Best Interest?*, 43.
44. Dummer to Lathrop, April 9, 1917, box 32, ESD Papers. (Also File 10,551 Children’s Bureau Records, Central Files, 1914–1920, Records Group 102, National Archives, Washington, D.C.)
45. Ibid.
46. Dummer to Julia Lathrop, August 30, 1916, box 32, ESD Papers.
47. Dummer to Anthony, February 12, 1917, box 26, ESD Papers.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Fitzpatrick provides a good background on Freund’s education and political orientation in *Endless Crusade*. She does not mention his work on illegitimacy, but places him squarely within the Progressive social science community in Chicago. Freund was one of Sophonisba Breckinridge’s mentors at the University of Chicago.
52. Emma O. Lundberg to Julia Lathrop, memorandum, September 29, 1916, File 7361.8, CB-CF.
54. Dummer to Freund, March 18, 1917, box 32, ESD Papers.
55. Dummer to Katharine Anthony, May 10, 1921, box 26, ESD Papers.
58. Dummer to Katharine Anthony, June 12, 1917, box 26, ESD Papers.
59. Ibid.
60. Fosdick was a lawyer and reformer who eventually became head of the U.S. Public Health Service.
62. Ibid., 82.
64. Dummer to Fosdick, September 27, 1917, box 24, ESD Papers.
65. Dummer to Katharine Anthony, August 14, 1918, box 26, ESD Papers.
66. Dummer to Lathrop, October 20, 1917, box 32, ESD Papers.
67. Dummer to Lathrop, September 25, 1917, box 32, ESD Papers.
68. Dummer to Lathrop, October 20, 1917, box 32, ESD Papers.
69. Dummer to Lathrop, quoted in Dummer, Why I Think So, 88.
71. Dummer to Binford, December 24, 1918, box 25, ESD Papers.
72. Dummer to Rippen, July 1918, box 24, ESD Papers.
73. In the 1910s, effective drugs to treat tuberculosis had not been discovered. The only treatment involved boosting the patient's immune system through a regime of rest, exposure to fresh air, good food and sunlight. Penologist Miriam Van Waters, who would enjoy Dummer's patronage in the postwar period, also suffered from this affliction. See Freedman, Maternal Justice, 65.
74. Dummer to Binford, February 21, 1921, box 25, ESD Papers.
75. Ibid.
76. Binford to Dummer, Feb 9, 1920, box 25, ESD Papers.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
82. Lundberg to Freund, September 27, 1921, File 10–13–0, CB-CF.
83. Tiffin, In Whose Best Interest?, 181, 182.
85. Ibid., 8.
86. See Tiffin, In Whose Best Interest?
87. For more on the Children's Bureau and its conservative position on mothers' pensions, see Sonya Michel, Children's Interests/Mothers' Rights, ch. 2 and 3.
89. Tiffin, In Whose Best Interest?, 110.
90. Dummer, notes on Anthony's contributions to The Endowment of Motherhood, November 9, 1920, box 24, ESD Papers.
92. Anthony, ed., The Endowment of Motherhood, xi. Anthony and Dummer's vision of welfare once again defied the conventions associated with their race and class.
According to Linda Gordon, white middle-class women reformers in the first decades of the twentieth century generally supported means-tested social programs, accepted the family wage, and viewed mothers’ pensions as a way to restore marriages.

93. Dummer to Lathrop, July 1921, box 32, ESD Papers.

94. On the connections between social science and social reform and the gendered forms this linkage often took in the Progressive Era, see Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade*; Leila Costin, *Two Sisters For Social Justice*; Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*; Sklar, “‘Brain Work for Women.’”

95. Copy of official statement written by Dummer regarding the funding and purpose of Thomas’s research for *The Unadjusted Girl*, box 36, ESD Papers.


97. For biographical information on Van Waters, see Freedman, *Maternal Justice*.

98. Ibid., 90.


101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid., xiii.

104. My understanding of the feminist position on maternal endowment was enhanced by the brief discussion in Ladd-Taylor’s *Mother-Work*, 112–21.

105. Dummer to Katharine Anthony, May 10, 1921, box 26, ESD Papers.


**Notes to Chapter 3**

1. For more information on Dennett’s divorce and subsequent life as a single mother, see Constance M. Chen, *The Sex Side of Life: Mary Ware Dennett’s Pioneering Battle for Birth Control and Sex Education* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

2. Although Sanger subsequently accused her of political timidity, Dennett’s associations and activities during the war put her on par with any of the radical company Sanger herself kept.

3. Although critical of Sanger in *WBWR*, Gordon tends to perpetuate Sanger’s own dismissal of Dennett as a conservative, bourgeois reformer. Chesler perpetuates Gordon’s harsh assessment of Dennett when she writes, “Paradoxically, the more conservative Dennett held out adamantly for the total repeal of obscenity statutes on free speech grounds.” In the absence of clear understanding of the nature of Dennett’s politics, this description does seem paradoxical. However, this study will explore the ideologies that made these positions logically consistent. Chen’s biography of Dennett is helpful in clarifying certain facts, but fails to provide sufficient attention to context. While adept at evoking Dennett’s personality traits and recording the major events of her life in a lively fashion, Chen does not move the discussion of Sanger and Dennett any further along. She tends to swing the pendulum in favor of Dennett’s version of the story, offering neither a critique of Dennett’s position nor an analysis of the rift between
Instead of analysis, Chen offers the following attacks on Sanger: “Like other unthinking people, whether liberal or conservative, Sanger was myopic and intolerant” (162) and “Unlike Sanger whose hysterical outbursts early in her career had alienated so many, Dennett was an experienced reformer.” (183) Thus, she shifts the historiography from Sanger’s assessment of Dennett to Dennett’s assessment of Sanger without proper historical analysis of their rivalry, its ideological underpinnings, or its place within larger discussions about maternal health, welfare and rights.

4. There has been much written about the limits that the maternalist philosophy and strategy placed on the CB. See Molly Ladd-Taylor, Sonya Michel, Linda Gordon, Gwendolyn Mink, Carole McCann.

5. Sanger had announced the creation of the National Birth Control League in the Woman Rebel before her trip to Europe in 1915, during which time the League took shape under the direction and leadership of Dennett and her middle-class colleagues. Although within a few years Sanger would be directing her appeal to a fundamentally middle-and upper-class audience, including physicians and politicians, in 1915 she was still associated with birth control radicalism and the Left.


7. See Gordon, Woman’s Body, Woman’s Right; Lemons, The Woman Citizen; Cott, “What’s In a Name? The Limits of ‘Social Feminism’; or, Expanding the Vocabulary of Women’s History,” Journal of American History 76 (December 1989): 809–29.

8. Gordon tends to do this in WBWR.


10. Ibid., 66.

11. Ibid., 167.

12. Ibid., 171.

13. Ibid., 170.


15. In fact, both women moved to New York City in the same year. For more on Sanger’s years in the city, see Ellen Chesler, Woman of Valor: Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement in America (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), chs. 3, 4, and 5. For more on Dennett’s political and personal experiences, see Chen, The Sex Side of Life, chs. 9–12.


17. Dennett to Anna Howard Shaw, August 17, 1912, box 12, MWD Papers. Quoted in Chen, The Sex Side of Life, 142.


20. “Doctors-only” legislation refers to Sanger’s strategy from 1918 on to fight for the exemption of physicians from prohibitions against the distribution of contraceptives. This type of law would leave contraceptives under the rubric of obscenity as defined by the federal Comstock Laws, and not protect laypeople from prosecution.


23. Ibid., 158.

24. Dennett, “The Case for Birth Control,” Arbitrator, n.d., box 13, MWD Papers. Dennett was identified as the secretary of the National Birth Control League in this article, so it must have been written before her resignation from the NBCL in March, 1919.

25. Dennett, Birth Control Laws, 92.

26. Ibid.


28. Dennett, letter of resignation from NBCL, March 5, 1919, box 15, MWD Papers.


30. On women’s political power after suffrage, see McGerr, “Political Style and Women’s Power”; Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism; Lemons, The Woman Citizen; Scharf and Jensen eds., Decades of Discontent.

31. It is important to note that, despite the CB’s efforts, the three states that rejected Sheppard-Towner—Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Illinois—had large Catholic populations that continued to advance the notion that Sheppard-Towner was associated with birth control.

32. Sanger, “A Birth Strike to Avert World Famine,” editorial in BCR 4, no.1 (January 1920), 1. In this editorial, she argued, “It is time for the women of the world—for each individual woman to accept her share of the problem. In this hour of crisis and peril, women alone can save the world.”

33. Dennett, resignation from board of Birth Control Review, January 1920, box 16, MWD Papers.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.


37. One of the lessons reformers learned through their experience with the Sheppard-Towner Act was that self-interest and desire for control could motivate physicians as much as it could others in the professional sphere.

38. New York Academy of Medicine, Public Health Committee to Dennett, April 16, 1920, box 13, MWD Papers.

Notes

40. Dennett to Putnam, September 9, 1919, box 30, ELP Papers.
42. Ibid.
43. Birth Control Herald 1 (January 12, 1923), 1.
44. Dennett, Birth Control Laws, 173.
46. Dennett, diaries and campaign reports, December 15, 1920, box 14, MWD Papers.
47. Dennett, Birth Control Laws, 95.
50. Birth Control Herald 1 (March 8, 1923), 1.
51. Ibid.
52. Glases is quoted in Dennett, Birth Control Laws, 135, 136.
53. Birth Control Herald 1 (March 8, 1923), 1.
55. Ibid.
56. Dennett to Senator Cummins, March 20, 1925, box 14, MWD Papers.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Bronson to Dennett, February 12, 1925, box 14, MWD Papers.
62. Bronson to Dennett, February 18, 1925, box 14, MWD Papers.
63. It was later reported that both groups refused to participate, November 1925, box 14, MWD Papers.
64. Minutes of Round Table Conference, April 6, 1926, box 15, MWD Papers.
65. Bronson to Dennett, September 10, 1925, box 14, MWD Papers.
66. Dennett to Bronson, September 18, 1925, box 14, MWD Papers.
67. Dennett, Birth Control Laws, 92, 266.
68. Myra P. Gallert, memo to VPL members, December 2, 1925, box 14, MWD Papers.
69. Dennett to Representative Vaile, January 30, 1926, box 17, MWD Papers.
70. Dennett, letter sent to various legislators praising a speech by President Coolidge, December 9, 1924, box 17, MWD Papers.
74. McCann has a different interpretation of this split. She argues that Dennett’s open bill “attempted to reestablish the free market in birth control that had existed
prior to the Comstock law's enactment....Contraception was an entirely private matter; the government had no business interfering with individuals' free exercise of the private rights. Rhetoric in support of the doctors-only bill recognized the danger of capitalist market relations; it was the onus of these relations that justified the bill's restrictions" (70, 71). Here, McCann attributes Sanger's position not to expediency but solely to social welfare concerns, whereas I think it was a combination of both. Similarly, she oversimplifies Dennett’s politics in her discussion of the free market. Dennett believed in free speech and the free flow of ideas, but this did not necessarily automatically translate into support for free market capitalism. I only agree with McCann to the extent that Dennett's formulation was clearly less sensitive than Sanger's to the issues of access and provision. McCann calls Dennett’s bill “ideologically outdated” in its laissez-faire orientation, as opposed to the more up-to-date social welfare orientation of Sanger’s bill. However, I would argue that, during the 1920s, as conservatives were in the White House, progressivism was in retreat, and maternalism as the foundation for social welfare was floundering, Dennett’s bill was quite current and compatible with the decade.

75. Dennett’s response to letters requesting birth control information is quoted in Chen, The Sex Side of Life, 215.
76. McCann, Birth Control Politics in the U.S., 122, 123.
77. Ibid., 133.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid. Italics mine.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Emma Goldman, “Observations and Comments,” Mother Earth 10 (October 1915): 261, 262. When Goldman wrote this article, eugenic sterilization laws in the United States were in the process of being constitutionally challenged, and by 1918 all the state laws in existence were declared invalid. See Philip R. Reily, The Surgical Solution: A History of Involuntary Sterilization in the United States (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 40.
84. Reily, Surgical Solution, 89, 121.
85. It was unclear whether Senator Cummins or Representative Vaile wrote this letter to Sonia Bronson, January 16, 1926, box 14, MWD Papers.
87. This conversion from Sanger’s to Dennett’s orientation was all but moot because, by 1936, the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled in U.S. v. One Package that birth control could be sent to physicians through the mail, causing legislative efforts to evaporate.
88. On the Dennett trial, see John M. Craig, “The Sex Side of Life: The Obscenity Trial of Mary Ware Dennett,” Frontiers 15, no. 3 (1995): 145–66; Constance Chen, The Sex Side of Life; and Leigh Ann Wheeler, Rescuing Sex from Prudery and Prurience: Women’s Politics and Anti-Obscenity Activism in the United States, 1910–1935 (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, forthcoming). While each provides important information (and, especially in the latter case, interesting analysis), none of these accounts of the trial considers its impact on Dennett’s birth control activities.
reflects the growing rifts in the women’s movement in the 1920s. The DAR was among the first women’s groups to begin to disassociate itself from its more liberal and left-wing sisters during the post–World War I Red Scare. See Jensen, “All Pink Sisters” and Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism.*

90. Dennett, letter to friends, February 20, 1929, box 24, MWD Papers.
91. Konikow to Dennett, April 29, 1929, box 25, MWD Papers.
92. Konikow to Dennett, July 3, 1929, box 25, MWD Papers.
93. Mary L. East to Dennett, April 1929, box 26, MWD Papers.
100. Dennett to Eleanor Jones, October 19, 1930, box 18, MWD Papers.
101. It seems more than coincidental that Putnam began to write about sex education and the dangers of censorship, and even began toying with the idea of birth control, in these years. In addition to arousing the support of outraged liberals, Dennett’s calls for an end to government censorship appealed to a broader audience. Putnam, ever vigilant about the creeping intrusion of government in private life, also launched a critique of the Comstock Laws.
102. Dennett to Mary L. East, May 7, 1929, box 10, Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts Papers (hereafter cited as PPLM Papers).
103. P. B. Huse to Dennett, October 1, 1929, box 18, MWD Papers.
104. Dennett to Gallert, October 3, 1929, box 20, MWD Papers.
105. Dennett to Gallert, February 9, 1930, box 20, MWD Papers.
106. Jones to Dennett, October 16, 1930, box 18, MWD Papers.
108. Kate Crane Gartz to Sanger, March 28, 1931, box 23, MWD Papers.
109. Roger Baldwin to Dennett, December 10, 1934, box 18, MWD Papers.
110. Dennett to Baldwin, December 11, 1934, box 18, MWD Papers.
111. Ibid.
112. Baldwin to Dennett, December 13, 1934, box 18, MWD Papers.
114. Marguerite Benson to Dennett, March 16, 1936, box 18, MWD Papers.
115. Dennett to Marguerite Benson, March 18, 1936, box 18, MWD Papers.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid.
119. Ibid, 249.
120. Ibid, 250.
121. Interesting parallels exist between Dennett’s dissatisfaction with *U.S. v. One Package* and many feminists’ disappointment with *Roe v. Wade.* In both cases, activists
worried that the decisions did not go far enough to firmly establish woman’s right to control her body, but instead enhanced the power of physicians.


**Notes to Chapter 4**


4. Dennett was responding to this need for clarification and comparison when she wrote *Birth Control Laws* in 1926. Here, she laid out her case against a state-by-state reform strategy that she considered inefficient and ineffective in the face of an overwhelming variety of obstacles.

5. Prescott Hall to BCLM, May 1917, box 38, PPLM Papers (Italics mine).


8. In her letter, East quotes Ames’s criticisms and asks if she likes the revised objectives any better. May 5, 1919, box 36, Ames Family Papers.


10. Advisory Board, BCLM, memorandum, July 29, 1919, box 38, Ames Family Papers. Dennett clearly shared this desire to not raise antagonism; she also wanted to disassociate from the radical implications and origins of the birth control movement. But in the same year the FWF was created, Dennett began her ambitious federal reform campaign in Washington, D.C., illustrating that her politics were not purely based on timidity, but, rather, on a sincere desire to advance the movement.

11. Advisory Board, BCLM, memo, July 29, 1919. McCann would argue that this appeal was doomed to fail because of the difference in sexual orientation between birth control reformers and welfare feminists. However, what interests me here is the lengths the FWF would go to in order to repackage their program into one that might fit with larger social welfare efforts during and after the war.

12. In 1916 the Children’s Bureau published a study of maternal mortality. Meckel argues that, by the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, the two issues of infant and maternal mortality were inextricably linked in the minds of most reformers. However, Meckel does not address the role the birth control movement attempted to play in these campaigns. McCann argues that birth control must be seen in the context of other threads of activism on behalf of mothers and children in this period, but her emphasis is on the failure of birth controllers to convince welfare feminists to include birth control in their platform. McCann shows that, once rebuffed by
maternalists, Sangerists moved toward eugenics to popularize their cause. My study of Dennett and Ames shows options that existed to those who rejected eugenics but remained committed to the cause in the interwar years.

14. Vera P. Lane to Elizabeth Lowell Putnam, August 4, 1919, box 36, Ames Family Papers.
15. Dennett to Vera P. Lane, June 26, 1919, box 37, Ames Family Papers.
17. Ibid.
19. Lane to Dennett, September 30, 1919, box 26, Ames Family Papers.
20. The first issue of the Birth Control Review was published in 1917 and became the official organ of the ABCL in 1922. It served as an instrument of propaganda and as a way for local leagues to keep each other abreast of progress and obstacles encountered in their home states.
21. Secretary of Margaret Sanger to Lane, October 18, 1919, box 36, Ames Family Papers.
25. Scharf and Jensen argue that, during the interwar years, “The economic structure, the political institutions, and the social ideology all made it possible for individual women to achieve. The same conditions made it difficult for the women’s movement to either maintain its strength or expand as an organized group committed to social change in opposition to the established order.” Lois Scharf and Joan M. Jensen, eds., Decades of Discontent: The Women’s Movement, 1920–1940 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), 4.
26. See Reed, Kennedy, Gordon, McCann, Chesler. [au: James or Ruth Reed?]
28. Ibid.
30. Huthmacher, Massachusetts People and Politics, 70, 71.
31. Ibid., 68, 69.
32. C. R. Clapp to Ames, May 10, 1929, box 83, PPLM Papers.
33. Ibid.
34. East to members of the BCLM, November 1929, box 36, Ames Family Papers.
36. Ibid.
37. Petitions, January 9, 1930, Journal of the House of Representatives of the
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Boston: Wright and Potter Printing Co., Legislative Printers, 1930), 76.

39. Ibid.
40. It is interesting to recall that, just as birth control activists in Massachusetts became increasingly committed to the doctors-only strategy, prominent members of the ABCL were beginning to embrace Dennett’s perspective.
42. Ames to Mrs. Hawkridge, October 29, 1930, box 36, PPLM Papers.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. East to Ames, January 26, 1931, box 36, PPLM Papers.
50. The quote from Himes’s letter of resignation is found in Ames’s letter to Himes, April 13, 1931, box 36, PPLM Papers.
51. Ames to Himes, April 13, 1931.
52. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ames to Sanger, June 29, 1934, box 37, Ames Family Papers.
61. Ames, speech delivered before the Chicago Woman’s City Club, n.d., box 32, PPLM Papers.
62. BCLM to Sanger, May 12, 1934, box 37, Ames Family Papers.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Sanger is quoted in the BCLM’s responding letter, June 29, 1934, box 37, Ames Family Papers.
66. BCLM to Sanger, June 29, 1934, box 37, Ames Family Papers.
68. Ibid.
69. The BCLM was still operating under the assumption that it could not advertise its clinics as “birth control clinics” under restrictive state statutes. The term “MHO” illustrates yet another euphemism used by the League to undercut the opposition.
70. Throughout the 1930s, the pages of the BCR are filled with references to “relief babies.” Many contributors pointed to the amount of money spent (or, as some
said, wasted) on the unfit or unproductive elements of society. See Linda Gordon and Carole McCann for different but compatible interpretations of these trends in the movement.

71. Ames, Welfare Committee of the BCLM to female directors of women's work under the Civil Works Administration and other welfare committees, January 1934, box B-20, BCLM Papers, Schlesinger Library.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Mary Irene Atkinson to Mrs. Tom Ragland, July 16, 1938, quoted in Kennedy, Birth Control in America, 261.
76. Ames, Welfare Committee of the BCLM to female directors of women's work under the Civil Works Administration and other welfare committees, January 1934. (Italics mine)
78. Ames to Executive Committee of the BCLM, January 8, 1935, box 39, Ames Family Papers.
80. Kennedy, Birth Control In America, 121.
81. Gordon, Woman's Body, Woman's Right, 284.
84. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Ames to Sanger, June 29, 1934, box 37, Ames Family Papers. (Italics mine)
89. Ames to Mrs. Phillips, 1936, box 30, PPLM Papers.
90. Ibid.
91. For information on the ABCL in the mid-30s see McCann, Birth Control Politics in the U.S., 178–180.
92. Kennedy, Birth Control in America, 213.
94. Ibid.
96. BCLM, press release, October 15, 1937, box 83, PPLM Papers.
97. Dr. George Gilbert Smith to Members of the Massachusetts Medical Society, October 1937, box 27, PPLM Papers. Notes on the letter say that 5,101 letters were sent and the BCLM received 1,804 replies, with 1,790 signing in agreement of protest. Eight opposing letters were received, along with six noncommittal ones.
98. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
Notes to Epilogue