

Mission Accomplished: Margaret Sanger and The National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control, 1929-1937

By Vanessa Murphree
and Karla K. Gower

Although Margaret Sanger is generally known as a radical who began her fight to legalize birth control in 1914, she adopted a more conservative and professional approach in April 1929 with the establishment of the National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control (NCFL). This study examines how the NCFL used communication objectives, strategies, and tactics to implement a widespread public relations campaign in order to make birth control legal as well as socially acceptable. Specifically, it focuses on how the NCFL used both internal and external media to articulate its identity to its various publics, including its ideological argument for legislative change, connected members of Congress to their constituents, and used the media to “go public” during a time of political and economic distress.

When the Second Circuit Court of Appeals handed down its decision in *U.S. v. One Package* in December 1936, Margaret Sanger declared it a “‘momentous victory’ marking ‘the close of one epoch and the dawn of another.’”¹ The ruling dismissed a federal case against the medical director of Sanger’s Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau in New York City for importing contraceptive materials from Japan. The director had been charged with violating section 305 of the Tariff Act, which prohibited the importation of contraceptive devices or information into the United States.

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From Cheesecake to Chief: Newspaper Editors' Slow Acceptance of Women

By Norman P. Lewis

The struggle of women journalists to achieve equality in the newsroom begs the question of whether editors were reflecting social mores or practicing a more virulent form of male supremacy. The latter explanation is supported by a study of 680 editions of the newsletter of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Bulletin, from its inception in 1925 through the 1988 tenure of ASNE's first female president. Until the second wave of the women's rights movement took hold, editors saw women as sexual objects and housewives whose fragile and emotional natures left them congenitally unsuited for newsroom roles beyond the women's section. The unfiltered words of the editors betray a systemic gender bias that explains why newsroom discrimination was more entrenched than in society as a whole.

Members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors opened their mail in January 1956 to find a picture of a forlorn woman peering past her typewriter and a new topic on the cover of the organization's monthly newsletter. ASNE members considered the *Bulletin* a prized benefit for its how-to articles and management advice from peers. Now, the cover of the ASNE newsletter trumpeted, for the first time in 383 editions, concern about women in journalism—specifically, their absence. The cover introduction wondered why so many female college graduates were choosing advertising or public relations instead of the city room, even though “prejudices have pretty well disappeared.”

That rosy assessment of fading discrimination is contradicted

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The Bay Bridge Metonymy: How Maryland Newspapers Interpreted the Opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge

By David W. Guth

Using metonymy as a means of analysis, this paper measures the different editorial approaches Maryland-area newspapers had to the opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in 1952. The bridge opened travel routes to a historically isolated section of the state. Newspapers on both sides of the bay saw the bridge as a metonym for man's supremacy over nature. To a lesser degree, they also viewed it as triumph of capitalism. Western Shore newspapers widely saw the bridge as a metonym for statewide unity. Eastern Shore newspapers viewed it more as a metonym for unwelcome change and the achievement of regional equality. The bridge also became a metonym of redemption for former Governor William Preston Lane, Jr., who had championed the bridge and other road improvements—as well as budget and tax increases to pay for them—at the cost of his political career.

On the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in 2002, a *Baltimore Sun* editorial said, “In a way its creators never could have anticipated, the 4.3-mile double span has struck a deep emotional chord in most who live in the region.” The *Sun* editors also said, “Sadly, much has also been lost in the process, especially the rustic quality of life that made the Eastern Shore so attractive to urban and suburban refugees.

“The strip malls and condo complexes just over the bridge on Kent Island are enough to make an old-timer weep.”¹

Ironically, the *Sun* rarely expressed that concern in 1947 when

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When Police Dogs Attacked: Iconic News Photographs and Construction of History, Mythology, and Political Discourse

By Meg Spratt

On May 3, 1963, what began as peaceful demonstrations by civil rights protesters in Birmingham, Alabama, turned into violent confrontations as law enforcement turned their fire hoses and police dogs on the crowd. Charles Moore, shooting for *Life*, and Bill Hudson of the Associated Press each caught the drama on film. Their images were seen across America in major national print media within days. Hudson's photograph of a police dog straining on his leash, teeth bared, toward the stomach of an apparently non-resisting Black man, was destined to become one of the most repeatedly published still photographs of the decade. Taken on May 3, 1963, the photograph appeared on the front page of the *New York Times* on May 4, in the May 10 issue of *Time* magazine, and the May 13 issue of *Newsweek*. Moore's series of photographs showing attacking dogs and fire hoses turned on the protesters was featured in *Life* magazine's May 17 issue, and like Hudson's photograph, became some of the best-recognized icons of the civil rights era.

This small collection of photographs taken by two men on a single day have become far more than static factual visual records of one clash between races and ideologies. An exploration of the use of these images at two distinct points in American history uncovers the initial ambiguity of their meanings, and their eventual acceptance as cultural icons of vital present day American beliefs regarding race and equality.

From the 1950s through the 1990s, print news media vividly depicted racial clashes as American Blacks

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