**HOMEWORK: Margaret Sanger**

In the 1870s, the Comstock laws, made contraception illegal and declared information about family planning and contraception "obscene." However, Margaret Sanger was willing to go to jail to help women have a choice in reproduction.

Sanger’s mother had 18 pregnancies, bore 11 children, and died in 1899 at the age of 40. Working as a nurse with immigrant families on New York's Lower East Side, Sanger witnesses the sickness, misery, and death that result from unwanted pregnancy and illegal abortion.

In 1916, Sanger, her sister, and a friend open America's first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, New York. The clinic she opens provides contraceptive advice to poor, immigrant women, some of whom line up hours before the doors open. Police raid the clinic and all three women are convicted of disseminating birth control information.

That same year, Sanger incorporates the American Birth Control League, an ambitious new organization that embraces the global issues of world population growth, disarmament, and world famine. The two organizations subsequently merge, and later become Planned Parenthood.

In 1948, Planned Parenthood had awarded a small grant to Gregory Pincus, a research biologist who undertook a series of tests leading to the development of the birth control pill. On May 9, 1960, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the sale of oral pills for contraception. The pill is an instant hit and has huge consequences in freeing women to control their lives. Finally women have an easy and reliable means to prevent unwanted pregnancies and plan their families. Within five years, one out of every four married women in America under the age of 45 has used the pill.

**Eugenics**\* & Birth Control:

At a time when birth control was still not publicly accepted in American society, some eugenicists believed birth control was a useful tool for curbing procreation among the "weak." In the 1920s and 30s, Sanger calculated that the success of the eugenics idea gave her own movement strength, and tried to ally her cause with the movement. Eugenics was a dominant theme at her birth control conferences, and Sanger spoke publicly of the need to put an end to breeding by the unfit. In 1920 Sanger publicly stated that "birth control is nothing more or less than the facilitation of the process of weeding out the unfit [and] of preventing the birth of defectives."

**\*Eugenics:** the science of improving a human population by controlling *who* reproduces, this idea was most notably used in Nazi Germany

1. How did Margaret Sanger contribute to the women’s movement?
2. What do you think of Sanger’s alliance with the eugenics movement?

While you watch the film, ***Iron Jawed Angels***¸ take notes on the **attitudes** of the following groups.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **White women** | **Men in general** | **Politicians** |
|  |  |  |
| **Pro-Suffrage Women** | **Woodrow Wilson** | **Black women** |
|  |  |  |

Identify the arguments made for suffrage in the film:

Identify the arguments against suffrage in the film: