MARY, QUITE CONTRARY
Mary Steichen Calderone and the Entangled Ideology of Sixties Era Sex Education

Sarah Brafman

Senior Thesis, Department of History
Columbia University
Submitted: April 2010

Professor Samuel Roberts and Professor Alice Kessler-Harris, Advisers
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Preface**  
FEAR & FEMINISM IN BIOGRAPHY  4

**Introduction**  
7

**Chapter 1**  
FORBIDDEN FRUIT: Sex and Social Control  20

**Chapter 2**  
REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCIES: Sex and the Sixties  41

**Chapter 3**  
MORAL HIGHGROUND: A Values Debate Begins (and Continues)  61

**Chapter 4**  
BASIC INSTINCT: Humanism and Sex Education  76

**Conclusion**  
86

**Bibliography**  
90
Acknowledgements

Only one name appears on the title page of this work, but this project was anything but a solo pursuit. I would like to first thank the reference librarians at the Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard for their patience, congeniality and endless help. They made my first foray into archival research an absolute pleasure. I would especially like to thank Linda Leahy who graciously went above and beyond to accommodate my tight research schedule.

I owe much of my intellectual growth at Columbia to Professor Alice Kessler-Harris. Professor Kessler-Harris has challenged my definitions of feminism, activism, politics and good writing. Her criticism, gentle prodding, and encouragement on this, and previous, papers, have taught me what it means to be a true mentor.

I owe Professor Samuel Roberts tremendous thanks for the faith he put in this project and for his constant support, generosity of time and wise insight. I learned from Professor Roberts the crucial lesson that it is “the work on the table,” that matters. Many thanks go to my History, Women’s & Gender Studies and Anthropology professors who have contributed greatly to my intellectual enrichment and expanded worldview.

I will be hard pressed to work with another group of frontiers-people of the same caliber; my fellow thesis writers were intelligent, critical and passionate and I thank them for making this journey a pleasant and challenging one. Finally, to my friends and family, thank you for living this experience with me.
While researching sex educator Dr. Mary Calderone, I struggled with the idea of assessing, criticizing and historicizing this woman’s, or any person’s, life. Am I being too critical, I worried, too laudatory, not critical enough, not laudatory enough? Am I even allowed to have an opinion of Calderone and still consider myself a legitimate historian? Am I justly substantiating the importance of this woman’s life? Am I letting my own biases and contemporary thinking affect my research? Am I letting the fact that I am a feminist and Calderone squarely refused to affiliate as a feminist influence my assessment of her?

Fortunately, other biographers struggled with similar predicaments. In the introduction to her biography of civil rights activist Ella Baker, historian Barbary Ransby writes, “No single descriptor ever seems adequate to capture the richly nuanced complexity of a life fully lived…. every term is inherently inadequate, each one loaded with someone else’s meanings, someone else’s baggage.”¹ Directly addressing my concern about the contemporary lens and feminist dilemma, sociologist Shulamit Reinharz explains, “the ‘problem’” for a feminist researcher “is frequently a blend of an

intellectual question and a personal problem” where life and work are “intertwined.”\(^2\) Ransby also warned against “imposing our contemporary dilemmas and expectations on a generation of women who spoke a different language, moved at a different rhythm, and juggled a different set of issues and concerns.”\(^3\)

While Calderone may have been confronting the issues surrounding sex education during a different generation, to this day, sex education remains a subject of national debate and vehement controversy. Some favor abstinence-only education, others comprehensive sex education. In the past year alone, for example, *The New York Times* has published four separate editorials weighing in on the dispute.\(^4\) My own experience typifies this larger debate and the narrow approach it often takes.

Until I came to Columbia, I attended only orthodox Jewish schools. Among the three different schools in two different states, I received no instruction in sex education. By “no sex education,” I mean none—not even abstinence-only sex education; speaking about abstinence meant having to at least allude to sex in some, albeit minute, respect.

Far from unique, this phenomenon is common amongst private orthodox Jewish high schools.\(^5\) Fortunately, within the last three or four years educators and progressive members of the Orthodox Jewish community have begun addressing this gaping

---


\(^3\) Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker*, 3.


educational hole.\textsuperscript{6} Ironically, educators consulted SIECUS, Calderone’s brainchild, when developing the curriculum for these schools.\textsuperscript{7}

Unpacking the history of sex education, then, focusing on one woman’s efforts during the 1960s and 1970s, is both a contribution and a necessary educational catharsis - a stamp that says this subject matter is worthy of extensive and critical discussion.

Despite the significant critique I may have of her work and legacy, in some respect, I owe Calderone a certain amount of gratitude for providing me with the sex education I never had.


A blue-eyed, grey-haired woman wearing a light blue housedress and matronly sandals walked confidently across the stage and took her seat across from television host Dick Cavett. The lean woman, with strong cheekbones and knowing eyebrows looked as if she could be anyone’s grandmother. Until, she spoke.

She recalled speaking to a group of 9th grade boys alone, after asking their teachers to leave the room. One 9th grade boy inquired, “Is there such a thing as too much masturbation?” Without hesitation, Calderone replied, “When you get tired, just stop.”8 In that moment, Calderone embodied the title one historian gave her: sexual confidant to people across the nation.9 Calderone’s response perfectly adhered to her method of teaching sex: she spoke directly and straightforwardly to young people, making them forget she was fifty years older than they.10

“When it comes to sex, Dr. Calderone is the woman with all the answers,” founder and former Executive Director of the National Organization of Women Dolores

---

10 Ricky Lee Lazell to Mary Steichen Calderone, March 1971, in Box 14: Folder 230, Mary Steichen Calderone Papers, 179; M-125, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (hereafter cited as Calderone Papers). In his letter inquiring about pre-marital sex, seventeen-year-old Lazell wrote that he hoped Calderone was between 35 and 40 so that she “may understand us.” She wrote him back promptly with a keen understanding of his issues. She was 66 at the time.
Alexander wrote in 1966. As an articulate and beautiful woman, she was also “an aesthetic-pleasure to listen to.” More than having all the answers about sex, Calderone possessed a new outlook on the subject that challenged prior and current generations’ sexual attitudes and expectations.

Dubbed the “grandmother of sex education,” Calderone founded the Sex Information Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) in 1964 at age sixty, making it the first volunteer health organization devoted entirely to educating and disseminating information to adults and youth about positive human sexuality. Positive human sexuality meant treating sex as a wholesome and productive part of life, and not simply as an agent of disease or social ill. Until SIECUS, many health organizations still deemed sex a forbidden subject, viewing it primarily as the root cause for social ills such as venereal disease and obstruction of family values. SIECUS, on the other hand, proudly planted the word “sex” in its title and sought to emphasize the “creative and re-creative functions” not only of sex but also of human sexuality.

----

12 Florence Clothier to Mary Steichen Calderone, January 22, 1974, in Carton 2: Folder 50, Florence Clothier Papers, 75-34--80-M204, Schlesinger Library, Radcliff Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Clothier was a close friend and confidante of Calderone’s.
13 Mary Calderone, “Guest Editorial: Sexual Energy-Constructive or Destructive?” *Western Journal of Surgery Obstetrics and Gynecology* [November 1963]: 277, in Box 13: 223, Calderone Papers. Calderone would have likely considered Alexander’s statement a mischaracterization as she writes, “Not any of us alive today is, nor probably ever will be, an ‘authority’ on sex, for this areas of man’s being more than any other is like quick-silver, or like Proteus, that fabled Old Man of the Sea, who changed shape every time you thought you thought you had hold of him.”
Calderone’s achievements tell the story of an immensely accomplished life; medical director of Planned Parenthood, founder of a new and unprecedented sexual health organization, teacher, advocate, physician, mother, grandmother. While these achievements reveal great personal success, questions as to the role and larger significance of her work and sexual philosophies remain. Where and how do Calderone and her brand of sex education fit into the history of the 1960s? How might her work be contextualized within the framework of the political and social upheaval of the era? How were her attitudes towards, and goals for, sexuality and sex education informed by other philosophies and social movements from that time period? How did her ideology influence ideas and practices of other fields and movements? Finally, how did Calderone’s ideology influence the future of sex education?

In an era torn between preserving Victorian era middle class values and revolutionizing notions of sexual propriety, SIECUS and Mary Calderone stood a middle ground in a polarized political arena. Yet that center eventually became the focal point of its own controversy, proving that moderation can also be divisive.

On the one hand, Calderone’s mission encouraged the preservation of middle class morality as she continued to advocate that young people wait to engage sexually until marriage. On the other hand she promoted a progressive social agenda calling for a new, positive, open and comfortable approach to discussing sex. Such moderation rendered Calderone a particularly divisive figure, irking radicals on both ends of the

---

15 Mary Calderone, “Talk to Vassar Freshman,” [lecture, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY, September 20, 1963], in Box 13: 222, Calderone Papers. Calderone iterates this point in various sources and publications, though her Vassar lecture is one of the most commonly cited sources reflecting this attitude. Additionally, this point about Calderone and SIECUS’ oscillation is not new. See Irvine, *Talk About Sex*, 17-18.

16 Mary Calderone, “Untitled” [lecture, New York: 1948-1950?] in Box 13: 222, Calderone Papers. A note by Calderone on the document says that the paper “is undated, unpublished, probably 1948-1950 when I was speaking to PTAs as a school physician through the Mental Health Association of Nassau County”
political spectrum as well as later historians’ and memoirists attempting to make sense of her contributions during the Sixties.\(^\text{17}\) Positioning herself as a centrist also left her particularly susceptible to scrutiny in instances when she seemingly contradicted herself. For reasons to be considered in this work, many Sixties historians omitted her from the record completely. This thesis has two priorities: first—to ensure that Calderone’s contributions find a place among the larger narrative of political and social histories of the period. The second priority is to contextualize and understand sex education as Calderone conceived it, within the larger narrative of the Sixties and the sexual revolution.

**Methods and Sources**

As no full biography of Calderone currently exists, Calderone’s life story remains piecemeal.\(^\text{18}\) To paint the fullest possible picture of her life and work, particularly the parts pertaining to her work as a sex educator, this thesis draws largely from the primary

---


\(^{18}\) While no full biography is in print to date, University of Massachusetts Medical history professor Ellen S. More is currently working on a manuscript for a full length book about Calderone entitled *Sexuality and American Society: Mary Steichen Calderone and the Politics of Sexuality in Modern America*. The book is under contract to Beacon Press.
source collection found in Calderone’s papers, located at the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at the Radcliffe Institute of Advanced Study at Harvard University. Calderone’s papers contain a large collection of her published and unpublished writings, photos, personal letters, professional correspondence and newspaper clippings detailing the criticisms SIECUS faced. The archive also houses a short oral history with Calderone recorded as part of a family planning Oral History Project as well as a video collection of several interviews and lectures Calderone gave.

The collection does have one serious drawback. Calderone oversaw the organization of her archive. Hints of her participation in the organization through the occasional signed note, marking or correction are intriguing, but I suspect some information may have been intentionally or unintentionally omitted because it was organized at Calderone’s discretion and with a seemingly specific intent. In a 1979 letter written to SIECUS “Old Timers,” Calderone asked board members to send in SIECUS materials to collect for her archive, writing:

Bear in mind that SIECUS is a unique organization with a unique history of a quite extraordinarily short time span for the amount it has accomplished and what it stands for. Some day someone will be writing a history of the human sexuality movement as we can now easily recognize it all over the world, and anything you can remember will be grist to the mill of a social historian looking for just that kind of material.\(^{19}\)

Unsurprisingly, Calderone wanted the collection to reflect the organization’s “unique history.” Still, her papers do not avoid the negative or darker sides of her life or the organization. The collection includes a large number of clippings depicting Calderone negatively as well as “crank” correspondence she received, but with a caveat.

\(^{19}\) Mary Calderone, “Letter to ‘SIECUS Old Timers’,” January 24, 1979, in Carton 12: Folder 555, Emily Hartshorne Mudd Papers, 73-143--90-M103, Schlesinger Library, Radcliff Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA [hereafter cited as EHM Papers].
Researchers are not allowed to photocopy these documents or publish the names of the authors. In an attempt to balance this possible (or probable) bias, I also consulted the archives of several of Calderone’s colleagues’ and their correspondence with her to ameliorate the possible distortion embedded in Calderone’s own papers.

Moreover, because of the specificity of Calderone’s papers, they have limited value as they do not situate her in the larger context of the era. I have evaluated this context by considering other primary sources from the time period including the writings of other notable sex educators, such as Lester Kirkendall, feminists, civil rights workers, and philosophers. I have also examined a diverse body of Sixties scholarship to elucidate the important points of intersection between Calderone’s life and other important moments and developments of the Sixties.

The secondary literature serves two distinct purposes in this work. Social histories of sex education help synthesize the fragments of the primary literature. Several of these works, while not entirely devoted to Calderone and wholly incomplete when it comes to their discussion of her, do indeed address and frame Calderone’s life specifically.

---

20 “‘Crank’ Correspondence,” Carton 1: Folders 11-12, Mary Steichen Calderone Papers, 74-128--81-M35; T-50, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. [hereafter cited as Calderone Additional Papers]
21 Charles Stern Ascher Papers, 1926-1979, Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New York, NY; Emily Hartshorne Mudd Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass; Florence Clothier Papers, 1916-1982, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Ascher, Mudd and Clothier were all close colleagues and personal friends to Calderone and their papers include significant correspondence with Calderone, clippings of her and information about SIECUS.
However, the political histories largely expose the flaws in the way Calderone and sex education are historicized. Beyond that, histories of feminism also shed important light on the intersection, or lack thereof, of shifting feminist attitudes towards sexuality and Calderone’s sex education philosophy. Histories of the Sixties, sex education and feminism are vast. This thesis certainly does not claim that these are the only works that exist on these topics. Rather, it relies on a few, carefully chosen, representative works to provide access to the era.

**Historiography: Valued Change**

This project applies three historiographical traditions: political histories of the Sixties, social histories of sex and sex education and histories of liberal Sixties movements in particular. Calderone and sex education belong in all three narratives, yet each has failed to fully appreciate Calderone’s accomplishments and significance. No work satisfactorily provides both a proper bibliographical look at Calderone while also contextualizing her in larger Sixties history. For the most part, sweeping Sixties histories overlook Calderone and sex education. Several works of sex education history come close to bridging Calderone, sex education and larger political trends of the Sixties. However, a proper biography of Calderone, centered on her work with SIECUS, deserves a focused analysis.

---


-13-
Leftist political narratives of the Sixties focus on historicizing the sexual revolution and on how the shifting sexual norms were used as ideological tools of power. However, they rarely discuss sex education. For instance, in his discussion of the Berkeley student protest movement that took place in the early 1960s, historian Lewis Feuer writes, “The Berkeley student movement tended to search for its distinctive form of protest in sexual behavior. Every student movement in history has tried to define the counterpart of its political revolt in sexual terms.” Feuer discusses sex in order to contextualize student protest movements. Sex education, unaffiliated with protest ideology or student movements, falls outside the bounds of such historical analysis and is thus absent from Feuer’s, and other leftist historians’, narratives.

Liberal, or more generally progressive leaning, political narratives differ from leftist historical portrayals of the sex revolution, offering a more critical view of it, but still remain relatively mum on sex education. In the rare case that they do mention sex education, they do so only in the context of the sex revolution. In the Sixties history, *America Divided*, historians Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin mention sex education

---


only within the context of the women’s movement. They write, “Personal issues not
directly linked to women’s equality remained more controversial—such as the teaching
of sex education in public schools…”

The authors merely brush over sex education, giving no further explanation than that one short mention. That kernel of information, however, warrants further explanation.

In contrast, accounts of the conservative political development of the Sixties do
sincerely discuss sex education. In Suburban Warriors, Lisa McGirr’s history of the rise
of the New Right, the author devotes a majority of a chapter on “New Social Issues,” to a
discussion of Sixties sex education and the conservative backlash against it. However,
while McGirr does a good job of articulating the conservative attacks against sex
education, she focuses more on explaining the conservative position than analyzing the
SIECUS position. She also makes no mention of Calderone or her role in the debate.
Thus, while informative, in the context of a history of Calderone and SIECUS, McGirr’s
analysis is rather limiting.

Histories of sexuality include surprisingly little information about Calderone and
SIECUS. Historians John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman barely mention SIECUS in
their comprehensive text on sexuality, Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in
America. They mention the organization once, only to say it “counted over three

---

26 Isserman and Kazin, America Divided, 309.
27 See Mary Brennan, Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP [Chapel Hill:
28 McGirr, Suburban Warriors, 227-231.
29 See John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Friedman, Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America [New
History [New York: Routledge, 2001].
hundred organizations opposing sex instruction in schools.”\(^{30}\) They give no background as to the development or agenda of Sixties era sex education. Historian David Allyn hardly devotes more space to a discussion of sex educational history in his book *Make Love, Not War, The Sexual Revolution: An Unfettered History*. While an opinionated and worthy perspective, Allyn’s analysis is far from objective. His attitude toward Calderone and SIECUS is clearly judgmental. Allyn begins his discussion of sex education by writing that SIECUS’ purpose was to “make information about sex education available to school administrators,” when in actuality SIECUS’ scope extended far beyond disseminating information to schools.\(^{31}\) Secondly, his assessment of Calderone is latent with twinges of subjectivity. Allyn makes claims such as “being respectable was more important to SIECUS than taking a strong stand on sexual issues,” or “Calderone often encouraged sex education on the grounds that it would keep children from growing up to be homosexual,” without providing strong enough evidence to support the assertions.\(^{32}\) His criticism is well taken but must be considered within a greater context, a context that Allyn does not provide.

Histories of sex education obviously present far more information about the sex education movement.\(^{33}\) While comprehensive, these works often suffer a problem of context and scope. Books such as Jeffrey Moran’s *Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20\(^{th}\) Century* discuss Calderone’s life and work with SIECUS at length. Moran’s thorough work is one of the most comprehensive treatments of SIECUS


and Calderone; his work on the subject is commendable. However, because the premise of his book is “the shaping of adolescence in the 20th century,” Moran’s focus zeroes in on SIECUS’ role specifically within schools and its pertinence to adolescents. However, we know from Calderone herself that her sex education philosophy extended beyond the desire to teach sex education in schools to adolescents. As she wrote in one article, “the original purpose [of SIECUS] never mentioned schools at all, but rather focused on the total society in a spirit of challenge, inquiry, openness and rationality.”

Calderone admits that schools placed the heaviest demands on SIECUS but the fact that the organization and Calderone intended to focus on all of society necessitates a history that considers sex education not only in schools but also across the societal landscape. Additionally, Moran provides very little background of Calderone’s biography prior to the founding of SIECUS, despite the fact that her background provides important insight into her

In another example of sex educational history, Janice Irvine offers a comprehensive and highly analytical study of SIECUS and Calderone. Yet, like McGirr, Irvine’s work focuses primarily on SIECUS’ connection to the New Right and the attacks wielded against it by conservatives and evangelicals. Similar to McGirr, Irvine includes virtually no biography of Calderone and even less discussion of SIECUS’ connection to liberal movements during the Sixties.

35 Moran, *Teaching Sex*, 163-165. Moran provides a brief overview of Calderone’s life prior to founding SIECUS.
36 Irvine, *Talk about Sex*, 26, 87. Irvine does make reference to Calderone’s distance from feminism and the criticism she received from liberal and feminist critics due to her allegiance to evangelical Marabel Morgan.
Finally, particularistic histories of Sixties liberal movements, such as the feminist movement, largely exclude a discussion of sex education.\textsuperscript{37} For instance, though historians Nancy Cott and Elizabeth Pleck include Linda Gordon’s essay, “Birth Control and Social Revolution,” in their feminist anthology, \textit{A Heritage of Her Own}, the only mention of sex education comes in essays discussing pre-19th century sex education.\textsuperscript{38}

Surveying the historical landscape, one is left with an intriguing but fractured history of Calderone and her legacy. The goal of this paper is to piece together the disparate narratives and tidbits of her life presented in current histories into a well-rounded history both of her personally and her approach to sex education. I give equal weight to her personal biography, her pioneering efforts in sex education and her connection to both the conservative and liberal movements of the Sixties.

\textbf{Rebranding Activism}

Through her decades-long quest for a broader definition of sex education, Mary Calderone embodied a unique position as an evolutionary intellectual/activist, one who created something new but took cues from earlier generations of activists. She generated a brand of activism and ideology that embraced certain larger trends of the Sixties while scorning others. Unpopular among Sixties historians, particularly political historians who favor documenting revolutionary and sweeping moments, Calderone both

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
Complicates and completes our understanding of the Sixties, necessitating an exploration of her views from various angles.

Chapter 1 recalls the origins of sex education in the United States and its rooting in negative ideology that treated sex as a social ill and dirty word. Calderone’s early life parallels this time period. Chapter 2 transitions into the Sixties era and explores the foundations of the sexual revolution as well as the reemergence of sex education thanks to Calderone’s vision after it dissolved into “family life education” post World War II. Chapter 3 considers the shifting moralities taking place during the Sixties and Calderone’s specific, at times contradictory, moral views on sex education. This chapter also focuses on the Christian and secular factions that vehemently opposed Calderone because of her moral stances. Finally, Chapter 4 explicates Calderone’s theories of human identity related to sex education and compares this ideology to the identity-politics driven agendas of several other movements working simultaneously in the Sixties. Fundamental ideas within different movements about how to treat and view people, informed the efficacy of sex education and Calderone’s position in the larger political context of the Sixties. Calderone’s humanistic ideals further demonstrate her discomfort with revolutionary ideas of the era and lend themselves to liberal criticism. Similar to her moral positioning, Calderone’s humanistic approach emerged both from personal and professional ideology. Chapters 3 and 4 are specifically thematic in order to analyze sex education within two dominant conceptual frameworks of the era.
God made man, frail as a bubble;  
Man made love—love made trouble.  
God made the vine—then is it a sin that  
Man made wine to drown the trouble in?  

-Authoritative 39

Calderone’s sex education ideology emerged from a tradition begun long before she was a child, let alone a grandmother. In 1966, she wrote an article in Look magazine commenting on the current fermenting social and sexual changes taking place. “Few are the rules about anything, including sex,” she wrote. “I’m a religious person, but I don’t believe the old Thou Shalt Nots apply anymore.” Her assertion suggested forgoing some of the anachronistic, censorious moral judgments attached to sexual instruction in favor of more realistic and socially aware sexual prescriptions. While a departure from some of the prevailing prudish attitudes of that period, her prescription also sounded resoundingly familiar.

Thirty-five years before Calderone’s Look article, in a letter-to-the-editor written in the Journal of Social Hygiene, sociologist Hornell Hart wrote, “Instead of saying to young people, ‘thou shalt not!’ We are beginning to say something like this: You are

40 Mary Calderone, “Sex Education Comes of Age,” Look Magazine, March 8, 1966, in Box17: 285, Calderone Papers. This article sparked widespread controversy. Pieces of this article were taken out of context, pieced together with excerpts from other article and quoted in a pamphlet protesting sex education, see: Harold W. Minor et al., Sex Education: The Schools and the Churches [Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1971], 73, in Box 14: 232, Calderone Papers.
searching for fulfillment of your personality, for release and integration of your powers and purposes.”

Like Calderone, Hart did not advocate complete sexual emancipation, condoning extra-marital and pre-marital sexual relations, but believed that the message sent needed to speak to the youth of the generation rather than employ ineffective and admonishing tones.

Written during two very different eras, in very different contexts, Hart’s and Calderone’s parallel language points to an important reality: Not only did sex education exist before the Sixties (it dates as far back to the late eighteenth century), hints of positive sex education (the type of sex education Calderone advocated, not simply disease prevention, hygiene or morally judgmental education) also took shape as early as the late teens and early 1920s.

Calderone’s work as the medical director of Planned Parenthood suggested her connection with the birth control movement, particularly the work of Margaret Sanger. Calderone’s unique place in the history of 20th century sex education drew both from the birth control movement and the earlier sex education movement.

Her work uniquely synthesized early 20th century movements, but Calderone foundered when it came to identifying and synthesizing several of the movements and currents developed during her own professional lifetime. Not only that, Calderone failed to recognize the inherent politicization of both the earlier sex education movement and the Sixties movements. Before establishing that critique, I will review Calderone’s early life and the development of the sex education and birth control movements. This review

---


-21-
will shed light on Calderone’s professional outlook and connection to early 20\textsuperscript{th} century currents.

\textbf{Seeds of Sex Education}

Sex education has a centuries long history. As the American Revolution raged, 3,500 miles away German theologian and education reformer Christian Gotthilf Salzmann planted a seed of an idea that would lead to an entirely different battle on American soil. In his 1777 work \textit{Secret Sins of Youth}, Salzmann proposed a plan for adolescent sex instruction through the teaching of plant reproduction as a metaphorical and gradual way of teaching human reproduction.\textsuperscript{42} Salzmann’s suggestions, based largely on Rousseau’s Emile, was one of the earliest articulations of the need for some formalized instruction on matters related to sexuality.\textsuperscript{43} However, more than one hundred years elapsed before any meaningful developments in this area transpired in the United States.

One of the more definitive developments came in 1899. The First International Conference for the Prophylaxis of Syphilis and Venereal Disease met in Brussels. The discussion centered on finding solutions to the global venereal disease problem.\textsuperscript{44} At the


\textsuperscript{43} See Frederick Eby and Charles Finn Arrowwood, \textit{The Development of Modern Education} [New York: Prentice Hall, 1934], 482. The authors suggest that Rousseau claimed sex education needed implementing as early as 1762 at the time of Emile’s publishing.

\textsuperscript{44} Maw, “Fifty Year of Sex Education History,” 45-46. Though 1899 marked a monumental and evolutionary moment for sex education both for the U.S. and internationally, several important developments occurred before 1899 in the United States. In 1881, the Blackwell sisters argued for the implementation of educational, rather than punitive, methods when it came to regulating female prostitutes. It should be noted that Blackwell penned the first feminist sex education work, \textit{Counsel to Parents o the Moral Education of their Children}. See Alan Hunt, \textit{Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral
end of the conference, the participants resolved that education, rather than law
enforcement, would be the best approach to eradicating venereal disease. Historian
Wallace Maw expresses the monumentality of the moment writing that it represented one
of the first efforts “of medical men and laymen to reconcile justice and morals with
science.”45 Not only did it affect the direction of education, the conference directly
related to sex education for among the various stipulations, the men called for the
“offering of education in sex morality to the public.”46 Twentieth century educators
heeded the call.

The first decade of the 20th century brought marked change. Between 1903 and
1910, educators established over twenty “social hygiene” organizations dedicated to
fighting venereal disease throughout the U.S.47 1904 marked a particularly watershed
year for sex education. Not only was it the year of Calderone’s birth, it also marked one
of the first implementations of sex education in schools, in the Dewitt Clinton High
School in New York City.48 1904 also saw the publication of two pivotal works,
Adolescence by psychologist G. Stanley Hall and Dr. Prince Morrow’s Social Diseases
Regulation [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 150. Also in that year, Dr. Prince A. Morrow
translated Fournier’s Syphilis and Marriage, which discussed the effects of disease on family relations. In
1888, the Child Study Association, organized under the guidance of social reformer Felix Adler as an
outgrowth of the Society for the Study of Child Nature, began sponsoring sex education geared towards
adolescent development. See “Some High Points in the History of Sex Education in the United States,”
Journal of Social Hygiene 24 [December 1938], 584. The article makes the assertion that their sex
education program began immediately after the creation of the organization. Thereafter, through the end of
the 19th century, several other established organizations and newly formed organizations deliberated over
the teaching of sex primarily within frameworks of moral education, family adjustment education and
disease prevention. In 1892, the already-established National Education Association passed a resolution
recognizing the need for moral education to prevent disease and vice. In 1893, the Congress of Elementary
Education, a branch of the NEA, more concretely discussed including moral education in the lower eight
grades. In 1895, the National Council on Education also debated the teaching of morals. Founded in 1897,
the Congress of Mothers focused its attention on child development, family adjustment and relationships in
the home and the schools.

45 Maw, “Fifty Years of Sex Education History,” 47.
46 Maw, “Fifty Years of Sex Education History,” 47.
47 Among the more notable organizations was the American Federation of Social Hygiene and the
American Social Hygiene Society
48 Maw, “Fifty Years of Sex Education History,” 66-67
and Marriage providing the intellectual backbone of the sex hygiene movement as it called for a campaign against disease and sexual immorality.\textsuperscript{49} As historian Jeffrey Moran describes it, “Prince Morrow’s genius was to form these scattered insights about medical and moral failings into a coherent vision of social crisis and social reform.”\textsuperscript{50} That vision called for the synthesis of hygiene and moral education into one mobilized effort.

‘A Man Is What His Sex Is’\textsuperscript{51}

Much of this early education reflected Morrow’s vision, treating sex as a problem, an agent of disease, a tool of moral degeneration. However, this period also saw several influential scholars advocating for a positive approach to sex education.\textsuperscript{52} In his 1912 \textit{Methods of Race-Regeneration}, eugenicist Caleb Saleeby promoted educating parents and opposed the negative approach to sex hygiene, arguing that the salvation of the race depended on a positive approach to education and an understanding of the appropriate, yet beneficial, use of sexual instincts and energies.\textsuperscript{53} In Britain, sexologist and social reformer Havelock Ellis promoted gratification rather than self-control.\textsuperscript{54} And despite certain failed attempts at institutionalizing sex education in public schools and objections

\textsuperscript{49} Moran, \textit{Teaching Sex}, 23-24.
\textsuperscript{50} Moran, \textit{Teaching Sex}, 26.
\textsuperscript{51} John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, \textit{Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America} [New York: Harper Row, 1988] 225-226; The authors cite this phrase as a “traditional dictum”
\textsuperscript{53} Maw, “Fifty Years of Sex Education History,” 55.
\textsuperscript{54} Maw, “Fifty Year of Sex Education History,” 56.
from various authorities, schools assumed sex education as their responsibility.\textsuperscript{55} In fact, in 1912, the commissioner of education, for the first time, publicly announced the need for sex education, and not simply from outside doctors giving lectures but from lay teachers inside the classroom, intended to encourage integrated and frank discussion.\textsuperscript{56} The integrated method of sex education served a two-fold purpose—firstly, it transitioned sex education more seamlessly into the curriculum, giving the teachers proper instruction in teaching the subject and secondly, avoided the publicity and criticism associated with bringing outside lecturers into schools.

John C. Burnham importantly points out that although this was certainly out of the norm for the period, hints of more radical notions about sex, such as the concept of romantic love, arose in the early Progressive era among a contingent of young progressives.\textsuperscript{57} In 1914, for instance, Walter Lippmann wrote:

\begin{quote}
So too, the day is passing when the child is taught to regard the body as a filthy thing. We train quite frankly for parenthood, not for the ecstasies of the celibate. Our interest in sex is no longer to annihilate it, but to educate it…and there are an increasing number of people who judge sexual conduct by its results in the quality of human life. They don’t think that marriage justifies licentiousness, nor will they say that every unconventional union is necessarily evil.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{55} Moran, Teaching Sex, 50-55. The first test case of sex education across a large school system came in 1913, when the progressively minded superintendent of the Chicago school system, Ella Flagg Young, agreed to allow a sex education curriculum for this reason: “The child is told in school that if he doesn’t keep his skin clean, his system will fill up with poison, that if he abuses his stomach, he’ll suffer with indigestion, if he gathers the contagion of tuberculosis, he’ll die of consumption, but never a word of sex organs and the terrible cost of abuses.” Though the students appeared to benefit from the sexual hygiene course (more than 20,000 attending the lectures), requesting more information and facts, the program only lasted one year. The intellectual grounds for initiating the program—it employed the outside lecture-method—were precarious to begin with and the programs met resistance both from parents and politicians.

\textsuperscript{56} Maw, “Fifty Years of Sex Education History,” 82.


Lippmann’s opposition to the confusing double standard importantly foreshadows Calderone’s approach, an approach founded and executed some forty years later.

Lippmann’s prescription indicated the shift that ensued between 1914 and 1929 as the movement moved further toward a sexually positive course of action, again one that deemed sex gratifying rather than gruesome. In Benjamin Gruenberg’s 1922 High Schools and Sex Education, written in reaction to a 1920 national survey evaluating the state of sex education, the sex educator proposed “that a positive sex education program should not be a separate course on sex but must consist of lessons about sexuality integrated throughout the public school curriculum, included in courses on biology, PE, social studies and literature.”

Sex education was “no longer about ‘emergency’ sex education but allowing educators to educate ‘the whole child’…to embrace the positive aspects of sexuality, even as he or she delayed expressing them physically.” In a later writing in 1928, Gruenberg more explicitly stated, “Since the aims of our education efforts are to promote the development of the child to the fullest use of his capacities…we must guard, first of all, against laying the emphasis upon what we must not do.”

And in 1929, Max Exner, largely a moderate, morally minded educator, announced, “Today we no longer conceive the purpose of sex education in negative terms…the essential objective is self-realization, fullness and richness of life, and social progress.”

---

59 Moran, Teaching Sex, 102.
60 Moran, Teaching Sex, 102.
Other, more progressive, educators adopted fervent positions on positive sex education. Notably, Mary Ware Dennett, sex education and birth control advocate, felt the American Social Hygiene Association and other sex education organizations administered “prudish” information about sex. She took it upon herself to write a new sex pamphlet, *The Sex Side of Life*, which addressed such subjects as intercourse, orgasm and birth control.\(^\text{63}\) Moran writes that she did this not so much for effect as because “she felt that society’s increasing stress on marital fulfillment made it imperative that young people be taught about sexual relations without so much obfuscatory talk of flowers and the lower mammals.”\(^\text{64}\)

Radical notions notwithstanding, despite the government’s newly minted sponsorship and validation of sex education beginning after the First World War, “traditionalists” (primarily religious leaders) accused even morally motivated sex educators of tarnishing society.\(^\text{65}\) In their view, sex education brought significant and unwelcome social changes such as the creation of social settlements.\(^\text{66}\) Thus, sex

---

\(^{63}\) Moran, *Teaching Sex*, 90.

\(^{64}\) Moran, *Teaching Sex*, 90.

\(^{65}\) Cook, “The Evolution of Sex Education,” 89-90; Maw, “Fifty Years of Sex Education History,” 99-107; Moran, *Teaching Sex*, 105-106. In 1918, the Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service called attention to the growing Venereal Disease problem plaguing the country, particularly soldiers. In response, Congress passed the Chamberlain-Kahn Act, promoting sex instruction in schools citing “the essential problem” to be one of education as “young men need to know accurately the dangers that follow sexual vice.” In 1922, Tigert, the Commissioner of Education and Cummins, the Surgeon General said, “It was the war that revealed the immediate urgency of this.” Over the next ten years, the government directly helped establish school programs for sex hygiene and education. In that year, the President also appointed a Committee of Fifty to study social hygiene. In 1920 and 1927, the U.S. Public Health Service, the U.S. Bureau of Education and the American Social Hygiene Association conducted two national surveys in order to study the condition of sex education in schools. The surveys represent the first comprehensive study of the state of sex education. After the first survey sent to 12,025 schools, yielded 6,488 responses of which over 50 percent did not teach sex education, the government published a 98-page manual, *High Schools and Sex Education*, outlining how to properly teach sex.

\(^{66}\) Moran, *Teaching Sex*, 64. In 1921, Gruenberg became head of the Child Study Association. The organization expanded its sphere of influence to include study of children’s sex problems along with other problems of child-care. In 1922, the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial Fund established grants for the organization of research and training centers for research and development. Between 1922 and 1930, thirty centers were established.
educators often aligned with the “sexual ‘liberals’ who demanded more openness in the public discussion of sex…and a greater freedom in sexual relations.”\textsuperscript{67} As Moran writes, “Social hygienists and sex educators pursued, all in all, an ambitious program: to bring society to recognize that a sexual crisis was lurking, to break the cherished silence about sexuality, to change society’s view of adolescence, and to reform sexual relations.”\textsuperscript{68} Though most sex educators’ intentions may have been the preservation of the traditional social fabric from moral disintegration, it could not be argued that they were somewhat progressive as their ambitious program threatened prior notions that morality could only be taught in the church.\textsuperscript{69}

Educators who engaged with new psychological ideas such as “individual fulfillment” and adopted vocabulary such as \textit{personality, repression and adjustment}, articulated a softer moral message. As Havelock Ellis phrased it, “sex penetrates the whole person; a man’s sexual constitutions is part of his general constitution. There is considerable truth in the dictum: ‘A man is what his sex is.’ In these terms, sex was becoming a marker of identity, the “well spring of an individual’s nature.”\textsuperscript{70} Rather than teach sex from the standpoint of “absolute morality”, prominent educators such as Max Exner, Roy Dickerson and Thomas D. Eliot and Hornell Hart instead used language of “civilized morality.”\textsuperscript{71} This meant that they shed the harsh, punitive language of the Victorian era and employed a different model of moral education. For example, Eliot advised reformers to “foresee, formulate, interpret, absorb, and socialize the new state of

\textsuperscript{67} Moran, \textit{Teaching Sex}, 64.
\textsuperscript{68} Moran, \textit{Teaching Sex}, 66.
\textsuperscript{69} Moran, \textit{Teaching Sex}, 65.
\textsuperscript{70} D’Emilio and Freedman, \textit{Intimate Matters}, 225-226.
\textsuperscript{71} D’Emilio and Freedman, \textit{Intimate Matters}, 172. The term “civilized morality,” is based on a 1908 Freud article, “‘Civilized’ Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Disorder.”
affairs,” to establish, “a new code of morals which will not be anti-social.” These educators spoke about novel, positive, concepts such as personal gratification, but argued that only marriage offered real satisfaction and chastity remained crucial.

What may have once been considered selfishness was now considered “mental hygiene.” Developments in the psychology field directly impacted both these sex educators and Calderone’s own theories on sex education. For this reason, sociologist Kristin Luker calls the social hygienists the “mother” movement to the “larger group that would try to help Americans have happier and more erotically pleasurable marriages.” As the country headed into the worst economic depression it would ever see, sex education continued to diverge from common social, and political, practice.

**Exceptional Childhood**

---

72 Moran, *Teaching Sex*, 94.

73 Note the perpetual usage of maternal imagery when describing movements pertaining to sex and sexuality, both in the early movement and during the Sixties. In a way, it speaks to the femininity associated with trying to reign or control matters of sex while rampant or uncontrolled sexuality is associated with masculinity. Creating such imagery only reinforces gendered expectations and roles when it comes to matters of sex.
Amid the churning social changes of the early 20th century, Mary Calderone grew into a wide-eyed and precocious young woman. Calderone’s early life and biography are key to understanding her professional achievement and the Sixties reforms she participated in. Like many of her professional predecessors, Mary was unconventional. Born to renowned photographer Edward Steichen and singer Clara Smith Steichen in 1904, Mary and her younger sister Kate spent the years prior to World War I living in Paris. At age 10, she and her family returned to New York and her parents divorced soon after. After the bitter divorce, in which Clara accused Edward of adultery, Clara took Kate back to Paris, and Mary stayed in New York with her father. In May of 1915, after a bout of chicken pox, Mary moved in with Dr. and Mrs. Leopold Stieglitz, brother and sister-in-law of Edward’s mentor, photographer Alfred Stieglitz.

Mother and daughter remembered the separation quite differently. Years later, Clara recalled that, sick in bed and covered with pox, Mary begged to go to Paris with
her. Mary, on the other hand, remembered feeling thankful for the separation. Her mother, she said, “fastened onto” Kate and “lived vicariously through her… manipulated and controlled her. I was fortunate to be separated from my mother by the time I was 10.”

In New York, Mary attended secondary school at the prestigious, all-girls Brearley School, skipping her senior year and graduating in 1922. At Brearley, Mary developed a rigorous work ethic that remained with her throughout her career. Reflecting on her time at Brearley, Calderone said that one teacher in particular, Ann Dunn, “instilled in me the feeling that I must live up to myself and develop work habits—what I call ideal-building.”

Calderone received much encouragement and positive reinforcement as a child, which would later encourage her drive and ambition. She recalled, “nobody ever said, ‘women can’t do this,’ or ‘women never do that.’ Yet, one area remained taboo during her adolescence: sexuality. During her 1982 Cavett interview, Calderone revealed her mother’s stern approach to sexuality calling her mother “cruel” and “obstructive,” and asserting that she “would never do to my children what my mother, in her well meaning un-wisdom had done with me, which was fight my sexuality, my childhood interests, my childhood curiosity, my sense of bodily pleasures, which most children are born with

---

74 Penelope Niven, Steichen [New York: Clarkson Potter Publishers, 1997], 422.
75 Ellen S. More, Restoring the Balance, 205-206.
normally.” As Edward Steichen’s biographer Penelope Niven described it, Clara “squelched her [Mary’s] spirit, her creativity, her sexuality.” Ultimately, both her father’s and her mother’s influence informed Calderone’s personal and professional life, especially her attitudes towards sex education and women’s issues.

**Sex Meets Sanger**

Like sex education, the crusade for women’s sexual health began long before Calderone joined the movement. While Calderone matured into adulthood and sex educators gained footing in schools, Margaret Sanger battled over birth control. Beginning in 1910, Sanger began her largely solo quest to legalize contraception. In 1912, she started her own magazine, *The Woman Rebel*, with articles emphasizing a woman’s right to her own body. Though the publication violated the Comstock anti-obscenity laws, Sanger persisted in distributing it. Finally, when one pamphlet caught

---

79 Niven, *Steichen*, 531.
81 D’Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 231-232. After attending a socialist lecture in Manhattan in 1910, she moved from the suburbs into the city and joined radical circles, opening her home to activists such as Bill Haywood, John Reed and Alexander Berkman. Sanger found that both middle-class and working-class women suffered from not being able to control their fertility. Older feminists clung to the idea of “voluntary motherhood”—the concept advocating that women be allowed to put limits on their husbands’ sexual impulses—as an effective solution to women’s birth control issues. Male radicals, another population that could have stepped in, valued the class struggle more than women’s issues. Thus, she took up the fight alone.
the authority’s attention, they charged Sanger with nine counts of violating obscenity laws, and she fled the country.\textsuperscript{84}

When Sanger returned to the U.S. in 1915, birth control had become a cause célèbre.\textsuperscript{85} She capitalized on this mobilized energy opening the first birth control clinic in 1916, only for it to be shut down days later. Despite its closing, historians John D’Emilio and Estelle Friedman write, “One can hardly overestimate the importance of the emerging birth control movement. It signaled a profound shift in the sexual norms that had reigned supreme among the middle classes for half a century.”\textsuperscript{86} Not only did it impact female sexuality, but it also led to shifting social norms and signaled the beginning of a new sexual era.

Still, the birth control movement remained radical through the 1920s, and birth control remained a social pariah. In 1923, Sanger sought the re-opening of the clinics, establishing the Clinical Research Bureau as an arm of her American Birth Control League and lobbying Congress and the medical community for support. It was not until 1931, after several Congressional hearings, that Sanger’s movement gained legitimacy and widespread publicity.\textsuperscript{87} Notably, the doors opened for doctors to distribute contraception in 1936, when a federal appeals court ruled that the anti-contraception

\textsuperscript{84} D’Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, 232. This was largely due to the fact that anarchist Emma Goldman picked up the battle where Sanger left off. When she too was arrested for openly advocating for birth control, the judge at her hearing effectively sided with her as he proclaimed, “The trouble with our people today it that there is too much prudery…we are all shocked by many things publicly stated that we know privately to ourselves, but we haven’t got the nerve to get up and admit it.”

\textsuperscript{85} D’Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, 233.

\textsuperscript{86} D’Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, 234.

\textsuperscript{87} D’Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, 245. The sixteen cases brought forward dealt mostly with the shipping and manufacturing of contraceptives.
stipulations in the Comstock Law unlawful, arguing that new methods of birth control were far safer than they were when the law was first passed in 1873.\textsuperscript{88}

By the time Sanger merged the Clinical Research Bureau and American Birth Control League into the Planned Parenthood Federation of America in 1942, the birth control movement had largely shed its ostracized social position (though the medical field, namely the AMA and the New York Academy retained certain reservations).\textsuperscript{89} The organization adopted “middle-class professionalism” and “shaped it birth control message accordingly, revealing in the process the ways that American sexual and social mores were changing.”\textsuperscript{90} Planned Parenthood helped shift the debate from one that centered on sexual liberation to one more traditionally focused on family planning. Soon thereafter, sex education followed suit, tailoring its language and curriculum to address “family-life,” rather than explicit sexuality.

**Paradigm Shift**

By the end of the 1930s, as birth control gained political acceptance, sex education became distant from the political sphere. Thomas Parran, Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service in 1936, established a new social program to combat venereal disease based largely on ideas of welfare Capitalism concerned with protecting

\textsuperscript{88} D’Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 245. While a significant development for all strata of society, the advent and dissemination of birth control often produced unintentionally negative consequences. As Freedman and D’Emilio point out, “ironically, racial prejudice caused the South to take a leading role in the incorporation of birth control into public health services…fear of black population growth during the Depression encouraged a move toward state-supported birth control.” That explains why in 1937 North Carolina was the first state to use tax dollars to sanction contraceptives.

\textsuperscript{89} “The PPFA’s contraceptive clinics of the 1940s became the object of much negative opinion on the part of the AMA and the New York Academy of Medicine, ostensibly for being under lay control and unaffiliated with either a hospital or a department of public health.” More, *Restoring the Balance*, 208. The New York Academy also criticized the clinics for being run mostly by women physicians, some foreign and accented.

\textsuperscript{90} D’Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 248.
employees. Parran viewed providing venereal disease education as “a peculiar opportunity for enhancing the human machinery which is at your disposal.” In other words, venereal disease costs employees time and money. Parran intentionally avoided employing a moral argument, concluding, “that it is much easier” to see “that treatment its obtained by all people who require it, than it is to alter the way of life of a people.” Social hygienists, on the other hand, were more intent on “preserving sexual ethics,” than on curing diseases and felt Parran’s personal crusade sidestepped their agenda completely. Ultimately, both Parran and the sex educators wrongly abandoned the medical and moral synthesis that earlier educators advocated. Calderone was the first to restore that connection many years later.

Through the end of the Second World War and into the 1950’s social hygiene education morphed into family life education, arguing that not only were parents unequipped to teach sex at home but all areas of home life as well. Thus, family life education put the responsibility on schools to teach “family values” and “to help the child acquire the proper image of good family life.” One 1954 ASHA (American Social Hygiene Association) publication argued that this form of education cured such social ills as “divorce, masturbation, lack of self control in sexual and financial life, sexual maladjustment, delinquency, crimes and marriages of differing races, religions and nationalities.” However, a study conducted three years earlier showed that while 80 percent of schools had some form of sex education it was “hit or miss.”

---

92 Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 140.
Cook concluded that little changed from 1946-1959, of from post World War II through the 1960s. The basic aim “was to prepare individuals to fulfill their role as family members.” Though schools largely employed “disaster insurance sex education” intellectual thought and principles became more definitively grounded in positive sex education.

During the 1950s, sex researcher Albert Ellis analyzed American sex attitudes and found that, “Although the sex attitudes in the early 1950s were almost evenly divided between liberal and conservative views, by the time the 1960s arrived most of these attitudes had swung over to the liberal side [i.e. an acceptance of frank sexual discussion].” Ira Reiss, also a sex researcher, fueled the debate with his studies on pre-marital sex and the sexual problems of young people.

Alfred Kinsey produced the most publicized and controversial research. In his landmark 1948 and 1953 studies on male and female sexuality, sexologist Alfred Kinsey dispelled some of this middle-class mythology about sexual practice arguing that the “connection sex educators drew between premarital chastity and connubial bliss was more wishful fantasy than fact.” Kinsey unearthed the reality that many American, even middle class Americans, had extra-marital, homosexual and pre-marital sex. Kinsey assaulted the “hidden nature of sexual behavior” and criticized the biologically based sex education approach. Instead, he favored sex education that outlined the development of

99 Moran, Teaching Sex, 95.
sexuality from birth to adulthood. His findings not only questioned prior notions of sexuality but also laid the foundation for a new era of sexual attitudes. It would take several years after its publishing for the study to cause a tidal wave of change.

**Calderone Comes of Age**

During the thirty years (the 1920s through the 1950s) that sex education and sexual reform progressed, and then retreated, Calderone’s life rapidly progressed as well. When she entered Vassar in the fall of 1922 Calderone studied chemistry and played the role of the “glamorous young woman who spoke French perfectly” and “could ride horses better than anybody else.” While her memory takes the tone of a confident woman, Calderone was not entirely self-assured. Though she graduated in 1925 with a degree in chemistry major, she tried her hand at a career in acting only to realize that she was “no Katharine Cornell,” and so found herself seeking an alternative life path. In 1926, pregnant out-of-wedlock and feeling “romantic,” she married handsome actor W. Lon Martin. Together, they had two daughters, Nell, born several months into the marriage and Linda, born two years later. Calderone remembers the time surrounding Linda’s birth as a “messy period,” as Mary and Lon’s union crumbled. “Wrong from the outset,” Calderone admitted that the marriage was harmful to both of them. She attributed some of the problems in the marriage to her mother’s sexual negativity,
specifically her refusal to let Mary masturbate as a young girl.\textsuperscript{106} Obviously, the early years that Calderone spent with her mother in France made a lasting and damaging impact.

![Figure 2. Mary Steichen Calderone with her father Edward Steichen. 1906 [Photo Courtesy of Schlesinger Library, Radcliff Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University.]]

Divorced in 1933, Calderone worked odd jobs for several years, working as a secretary for her father and as a clerk in a Brooklyn department store.\textsuperscript{107} She also devoted herself to raising her daughters and published two children’s books with her father. Finally, yearning for a more established career, Calderone’s psychoanalyst suggested she take an aptitude test to see where her talents best fit and the results showed her adeptness at science and dealing with people. She decided to become a nutritionist.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{106} Niven, \textit{Steichen}, 531.
\textsuperscript{107} Niven, \textit{Steichen}, 532.
\textsuperscript{108} Calderone, \textit{Particular Passions}, 255
As she was on her way to the University of Rochester to pursue a Ph.D. in nutrition she went to visit friends Dr. Florence Clothier, a psychiatrist, and Dr. George Wislocki, dean of Harvard Medical School. When she told them she intended to become a nutritionist, they “jumped” on her and exclaimed: “The woods are full of lady nutritionists. You don’t want to be a nutritionist. Get an M.D…the choices of what you could go into are enormously multiplied.” She heeded their advice and two days before school began, thirty-year-old Mary visited the University Rochester Medical School and convinced the dean, George Whipple, to accept her.  

During medical school, her eight-year-old daughter Nell died from a bout with pneumonia and she lived apart from her other daughter Linda. Although she struggled with a bout of depression after Nell’s death she still graduated on time in 1939, thirteenth in her class of forty-five, and one of four women. In 1940 she interned for a year with the Children’s Medical Service at Bellevue Hospital in New York City. After Mary decided that a career in a hospital or seeing patients was not for her, she took the suggestion of one of medical school professors and pursued public health, the profession that would become her life’s calling. Reflecting on that decision, Calderone wrote, “…I don’t think I could have been passionate about such fields as tuberculosis or cancer. I need totally, passionate involvement, and a sense of meaning in whatever I do—I surely found it.”

In 1942, the same year as the founding of Planned Parenthood, the Department of Public Health in New York City awarded Calderone a two-year fellowship in public

---

109 Calderone, *Particular Passions*, 256  
110 Mary Steichen Calderone to Dr. Hans Clarke, June 2, 1958, in Box 1: 5, Calderone Papers.  
111 Mary Steichen Calderone, “To Live or to Die,” *Journal of Educational Theory and Practice* 8, no. 5 (December 1969) in Box 17: 275, Calderone Papers.  
112 Calderone, *Particular Passions*, 255.
health. During her first year, she did field work with Dr. Frank A. Calderone, then a district health officer on the Lower East Side of Manhattan who later became the deputy commissioner of health for New York City. During her second year, she went to the School of Public Health at Columbia and on November 27, 1941, married Frank Calderone. Together they had two daughters, Francesca and Maria, born twenty years after her oldest daughter Linda. Calderone loved being a mother and enjoyed staying home with her daughters until they reached school age. During the late 1940s and through the early 1950s, she also worked part-time doing health work in public schools in Great Neck, New York. In one lecture she gave between 1948 and 1950, Calderone gave a lecture about sex education, criticizing parents for their incapability at imparting healthy sexual attitudes to their children and calling for education that begins at birth and extends through the adulthood.\footnote{Mary Calderone, “Untitled” [lecture, New York: 1948-1950?] in Box 13: 222, Calderone Papers.}

Though Calderone’s lecture points to an important early sign of her approach to sex education, Calderone largely viewed her work in the public schools as “playing around,” and she soon became restless with it. Just as she did, her life took an unexpected but life-changing turn.\footnote{Calderone, \textit{Particular Passions}, 257.} The opportunity came just as the grounds of sexual thinking began shifting in new and revolutionary ways.
You say you want a revolution
Well you know
We all want to change the world
You tell me that it's evolution
Well you know
We all want to change the world.

- The Beatles, “Revolution”

The birth control and sex education movements of the early twentieth century confronted matters of sexuality in unprecedented ways. However, by the 1950s organizations affiliated with each movement, namely ASHA and Planned Parenthood, moved away from programs specifically engaging with sex to family-planning programs or family-life education curricula. Sex, however, returned in full force in the 1960s. The sexual “revolution” and resurgent sex education movement of the Sixties brought sex back to the center of social conversation. Both movements, even the “revolution,” were in some respect evolutionary, related to these two earlier movements. During this period, Calderone played a key role in restructuring and re-conceptualizing the function and reputation of Planned Parenthood and the public health field in general. Her complicated place in Sixties history emerges from her leadership during this period.

Some historians argue that Calderone pioneered sex education in the 1960s in order to curb the sexual revolution. Others argue her work was part of the revolution.

The reality is that sex education was its own entity, begun simultaneously with, if not before, the sexual revolution. The movement was unique, born of Calderone’s distinctive motivations as well as informed by her work at Planned Parenthood, prior sex education models and the larger currents of the sexual revolution. While larger Sixties narratives discuss and politicize the sex revolution, they ought to also include Calderone and the sex education movement. Calderone and SIECUS fit in due to their distance from, and allegiance to, political movements of the Sixties. This chapter of history begins just as Calderone turned fifty.

Life, Unplanned.

One day during the summer of 1953 Calderone received a phone call. “How would you like to be medical director of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America?” said the voice on the other line. At fifty-years old, Calderone accepted the offer and began working in September of that year. At what was hardly the crème de la crème of medical jobs, Calderone later learned she was hired because no respectable male physician would accept the job.

Calderone first encountered birth control in 1953 when she herself got fitted for a diaphragm. However, she recognized that most women still did not have the means or the access to “family planning services,” even eleven years after the founding of Planned Parenthood. Calderone saw her role as Medical Director within the realm of family

---

118 See Judith Irvine, Talk About Sex, 32.
119 Calderone, Particular Passions, 257
120 More, Restoring the Balance, 212.
planning, focusing on reproductive health and attaining contraceptive alternatives for married women. Only later would her focus shift to sex education and the study of sexuality.

Calderone also questioned Planned Parenthood’s mission and practices. Almost immediately, she took issue with Planned Parenthood Federation of America [PPFA] founder Margaret Sanger’s approach to birth control advocacy. “It’s hard to realize now,” Calderone wrote in 1981, “but in 1953 birth control was more of a propaganda than a medical movement. The medical profession distrusted PPFA because they disliked Margaret Sanger. She had tended to “make enemies of the medical profession.”/calderone, particular passions, 257

Calderone’s goal for PPFA then, was to get “this whole concept of family planning accepted in the medical field,” and for PPFA to be viewed as a “sound medically based organization.”/more, restoring the balance, 209. Calderone particularly wanted the AMA’s and the American Public Health Association’s (APHA) approval as they each determined medical policy and had the ability to make a wide impact on birth control legitimacy. Importantly, Calderone thought in “broader numbers,” focusing on the wide dissemination of birth control.

Although Calderone diverged from Sanger’s ideas, she chose to work for the organization Sanger founded. Differences aside, Calderone fundamentally believed in the mission of Planned Parenthood if not the execution of its goals. Her work can still be squarely placed within the lineage of birth control history.

Motivated by her desire to legitimize and bolster PPFA’s image, Calderone organized the first major international abortion conference in 1955. Her aim was to reduce abortions by increasing access to contraception and sex education, specifically

121 Calderone, Particular Passions, 257
122 More, Restoring the Balance, 209.
123 More, Restoring the Balance, 209
among the under-privileged. Calderone gathered physicians, the Population Council, medical schools, municipal public health department officials and Planned Parenthood employees at the Arden House of the New York Academy of Medicine. In a letter to her former medical school professor, Hans Clarke, Calderone summarized the impact of the conference:

It was the first time such facts have been gathered in one place and the important thing for everyone to realize is that our laws have promoted criminality and dishonesty among the medical profession as well as great suffering in the great mass of unwillingly pregnant women. As citizens I think we can all do something to clear up the mess.

This assessment points to an early example of Calderone’s subtle political influence. Calderone zeroed in on the notion that people had a responsibility to provide access to tools of family planning as “citizens”, making the issue a matter of patriotic and democratic concern. In an address she delivered several years later entitled “Challenge to Democracy,” Calderone appealed more emphatically to people’s political consciences in her quest for universal access to birth control. She declared, “We are standing by letting this go on and we are not seeing to it that these women…have made available to them the same medical services that we enjoy. Are we better than they, to have the privilege of better medical practice? I say this is undemocratic.” Physicians at the conference also drew comparisons between American policy and foreign policy, praising international methods over the United States’. One Swedish doctor, Af Geijerstam who attended the conference pointed to the Swedish government’s policy on birth control and abortion control as a model the United States should follow. He

124 More, Restoring the Balance, 209
125 More, Restoring the Balance, 209. Calderone held the conference in that facility to appeal to the medical audience.
126 Mary Steichen Calderone to Dr. Hans Clarke, June 2, 1958, in Box 1: 5, Calderone Papers.
highlighted not only the effective legalized abortion policy but also Sweden’s thorough sex education program, which included advice on contraception given in an “openminded and unbiased way.”\textsuperscript{128}

The conference proved such a success that Calderone compiled and edited the different presentations into a volume entitled, \textit{Abortion in the United States}. Planned Parenthood only gained more notoriety and legitimacy as the years went on. In 1957, after spending eight weeks with Frank sailing to the Caribbean on their sailboat, the \textit{Tradition}, Calderone returned to work with fresh ideas for Planned Parenthood.\textsuperscript{129} She created the Clinical Investigation Program, a project that tested different forms of birth control and determined their “use-effectiveness.” Calderone established the program to “boost PPFA’s scientific expertise in birth control.”\textsuperscript{130}

Once she addressed the medical issues, Calderone then turned to the political. In that same year, 1958, she pushed APHA to lobby for family planning’s inclusion within national public health policy.\textsuperscript{131} On a local level, she pushed them to endorse the dissemination of birth control at hospitals and public health centers.\textsuperscript{132} Though her ultimate goal was to gain medical footing, Calderone understood the importance of political involvement and advocated tirelessly on that front as well. Her work paid off. In 1959, The American Public Health Association adopted a resolution to incorporate family planning (i.e. birth control) into its public health practice.\textsuperscript{133}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{128} Mary Steichen Calderone, ed. \textit{Abortion in the United States} [New York: Hoeber-Harper, 1958], 29.
\textsuperscript{129} Frank and Mary Calderone to Family and Friends, 1957, in Carton 1: 4, Calderone Additional Papers.
\textsuperscript{130} More, \textit{Restoring the Balance}, 209.
\textsuperscript{131} More, \textit{Restoring the Balance}, 211.
\textsuperscript{132} More, \textit{Restoring the Balance}, 211.
\textsuperscript{133} Mace, \textit{Living in the Light}, 79.
\end{flushright}
A year later, Calderone published a work entitled *Release from Sexual Tensions*, a work offering sexual advice to married, heterosexual couples who may be experiencing sexual hardships in their relationship. The book pointed to Calderone’s growing interest in sexuality rather than exclusively in reproduction or family planning. In a daring move, Calderone prohibited the publishers from advertising her book in the “blatantly sensational” *marriage books* section of bookstores. The book wound up relegated to the “back of the bookstore.”

Not only did the book stray from sensationalism and differ from other “marriage books,” certain sections marked yet another deviation from Sanger’s ideology. Masturbation was the clearest example of their divergence. Sanger strongly opposed masturbation. In her 1920 book, *What Every Girl Should Know*, she wrote that she “never found any one so repulsive as the chronic masturbator.” On the contrary, Calderone devoted multiple sections of her work trying to dissuade readers about the negative stereotypes associated with masturbation and detailing its benefits.

The book also took on a progressive tone as it touched on the foundations of a growing unrest among women. Calderone alluded to the growing number of women who felt discontented in their role as mothers and homemakers. She began the section, “Maladjusted Parents,” with a scenario. “Let’s assume the mother resents her status,” she writes. “She feels trapped and unappreciated in the household…hating her own role as a wife and mother, she feels she has to compete in the home to prove her

---

superiority. These emotions…are fairly common.”138 Published three years before Betty Friedan’s Feminine Mystique unapologetically illustrated the angst and boredom of American housewives, Calderone already understood the helplessness women felt in their socially determined roles.

Sex consumed Calderone’s thoughts early in her PPFA career. As she later recounted it, she woke up one morning thinking:

My goodness people never have sexual intercourse in order to have babies, people have intercourse in order to have pleasure. You love each other, so what is wrong with pleasure? How can we deny it so fiendishly when it’s universal? Every baby experiences sex in the cradle. How can it be wrong?...I was thinking to myself, There has to be a way of legitimizing sex, not just by the marriage ceremony, but legitimizing the being of sex. Just the fact that it exists should be enough to legitimize it, but for centuries that hair shirt thing is what people have been doing. Deny and suffer and that means you are pure and good, the old Puritan Christian attitude.”139

Calderone’s thoughts cast sex in a positive light while shunning the Puritanical denunciations of sex. Her charge sounded quite similar to that of the more progressive 1920s educators. Yet her statement also revealed several novel revelations about sex. Firstly, broaching sex outside the context of marriage by “legitimizing the being of sex,” reframed the sex education model completely. No longer did the discussion about sex need to pivot around marriage, preserving marriage, ridding society of harmful agents that stood in the way of that construct. Instead, Calderone suggested, sex was an entity unto itself, worthy of examination and instruction on its own merit, as part of the human experience. Moreover, the notion that sex was ultimately about pleasure rather than reproduction directly challenged prior conceptions of sexual propriety. The practical substantiation for her approach came at the turn of the decade in a physically small but hugely powerful way.

139 Calderone, Particular Passions, 258.
Pregnant Pause

The advent and FDA approval of oral contraception, or simply the pill, in 1960, validated Calderone’s ideal sexual framework as it allowed humans “to separate [their] sexual and reproductive lives.” According to Planned Parenthood’s records, within five years of The Pill’s approval, roughly twenty-five percent of married women in America had used it.\(^{140}\) That five year window from 1960-1964 saw a torrent of change: changes in sexual mores, changes in social behavior and changes in national politics and great changes in Calderone’s professional life. Whether or not the Pill sparked that change is the subject of wide debate.

Revolutionary Road(s)

Historian M.J. Heale writes that the Sixties is often seen as an era of: “prosperity and an unusually youthful population,” “racial and cultural politics displacing class and economic politics,” “Cold War,” “personal as political,” or “industrial versus post-industrial political culture.”\(^{141}\) In some ways, the sexual revolution that took place fits into all of these visions as sex evolved not simply for the sake of itself but as a channel for ulterior political, racial and cultural expression.

What exactly then was the sexual revolution? Historians’ and other experts’ answers differ. A 1964 \textit{Time} cover article called the increased promiscuity of the sixties “the second sexual revolution,” the first being post World War I.\(^{142}\) Yet, not everyone agrees a “revolution” took place. Clinical psychologist Isadore Rubin called the new


\(^{141}\) Heale, “Sixties as History,” 135.

openness to sexuality an evolution, not a revolution, arguing that after Kinsey’s study circulated, people simply felt freer to speak about their behavior. But the behavior itself remained the same.\textsuperscript{143} Stanford psychologist Nevitt Sanford conducted a twelve year study of sexual practices at three colleges and concluded in 1965 that there was “no revolutionary change in the status of premarital intercourse since the 1920’s.”\textsuperscript{144} [ADD REISS assertion that the revolution wasn’t a myth from the article in EHM papers Folder 557]

Most people feel that a revolution did transpire, in varying forms. Many attribute the sexual revolution to the advent of the pill, but others contest that interpretation. Lewis Frank, executive director of the Information Center on Population Problems argued that promiscuity (or careless sex) existed long before the pill came along. “Many youngsters,” he argued, “using Saran wrap and Seven-Up douches, are practicing contraception on the level of the ancients.”\textsuperscript{145} University of Iowa professor Ira L. Reiss agreed that change in practice took place during the Sixties but argued that birth control was not the igniter. He wrote: “These methods produced no immediate radical changes in the extent of premarital sex. Sexual standards and behavior seem much more closely related to social structure and cultural and religious values that to the availability of contraceptive techniques.”\textsuperscript{146}

Indeed, historians D’Emilio and Freedman argue that amid the social and political upheaval of the 1960s, sexuality was bound to transform radically as well.\textsuperscript{147} Authors

\textsuperscript{144} Asbell, \textit{The Pill}, 197.
\textsuperscript{145} Asbell, \textit{The Pill}, 198.
\textsuperscript{146} Asbell, \textit{The Pill}, 199.
\textsuperscript{147} D’Emilio and Freedman, \textit{Intimate Matters}, 300.
Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin argue that “Most significantly, it was an insurgency rooted in the conviction that the erotic should be celebrated as an utterly normal part of life….millions of the young abandoned old strictures against premarital intercourse, oral sex, and candid public discussion of all aspects of lovemaking.”

Technically, the notion of a “sexual revolution” came from a 1945 English translation of German psychoanalyst Wilhem Reich’s 1920 work *The Sexual Struggle of Youth* about the author’s hope for a sexually liberated society. Historian David Allyn suggests that the sexual revolution experienced different iterations with different developments or rather, “evokes different events and eras to different people. For example, in 1954 a Harvard sociologist, Pitirim Sorokin defined the “sex revolution” by the increasing divorce rate, smaller family size, raunchy dance moves, and society’s general “sex addiction.” Only a few years later, in the early sixties, common parlance used the sexual revolution to describe the effects of the pill on the sexual behavior of white, middle-class female college students, then as a term describing the Supreme Courts decision to overturn literary obscenity laws, then as a characterization of Masters and Johnson’s studies on sex, then as a way of describing the increasing nudist tendencies in media and other areas of artistic life.

Toward the end of the decade and into the next decade, different groups appropriated the term, feminists viewing it as the realization that women were treated

---

152 See Kristin Luker, *When Sex Goes to School: Warring Views on Sex and Sex Education since the Sixties* [New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006], 82-83.
154 Allyn, *Make Love, Not War*, 4-5
inferiorly, student leftists as overcoming sexual repression and gay men saw it as a moment of sexual liberation, a time they could come out and identify their sexuality. Recognizing the real oppression that took place during the 1940s and 1950s, David Allyn refutes Michel Foucault’s analysis that repression was a false claim. Moreover, he claimed that sex revolutionaries were “individualists,” who “refused to bow to convention,” employing the tactics of both the French and Industrial Revolutions—i.e. a mixture of calculated and sudden transformation.¹⁵⁵

Allyn concludes, based on the wide range of ideas as well as varied supporters and critics, that the sexual revolution was a “deeply American Revolution, filled with the contradictions of American life. It was spiritual yet secular, idealistic yet commercial, driven by science yet colored by a romantic view of nature.”¹⁵⁶ One definitive example of this entwined relationship between sex and politics played out on the Berkeley campus during the early 1960s. “Among a segment of activists of the Berkeley student movement, three forms of sexual behavior appeared,” notes historian Lewis Feuer. “Sexual behavior began to take on an ideological function. One had ‘ideological sex’...first, a positive advocacy of interracial sexuality, second, a positive advocacy of promiscuity, taking form in, third, a positive advocacy of sheer, undiluted orgy-ism.”¹⁵⁷ The local newspaper reported: “In Berkeley, amidst all the other forms of rebellion afoot, there is very much a sexual rebellion in the making also.”¹⁵⁸ Each form of sexuality served as a tool of rebellion be it against racism or prudery. Professors addressed the changing mores as well, arguing that students’ behavior could best be explained by their

¹⁵⁵ Allyn, Make Love, Not War, 7.
¹⁵⁶ Allyn, Make Love, Not War, 7.
¹⁵⁸ Feuer, Conflict of Generations, 420.
feelings of alienation.\textsuperscript{159} One spokesman echoed that sentiment that sex remedied alienation declaring, “The radical political fraternity…believes strongly that a movement that screws together glues together. Or, to be specific, that Socialists who sleep together creep together.”\textsuperscript{160}

Most major events of the Sixties from the Civil Rights Movement to the Vietnam War to the Women’s Movement to the New Right to the student protests to religious rejuvenation to the Gay Rights Movement all included changes in sexual attitudes and practice. It is no wonder then that it is mentioned in most of the political historiographies of the era. The question then, is where does sex education fit into this framework?

\textbf{The Final Mission}

The pill may not have been the sole precipitator of the sexual revolution, but it certainly shook up Mary Calderone’s world. The pill fairly quickly became socially accepted marking a monumental victory for Calderone and Planned Parenthood. D’Emilio and Freedman cite the media as one source of approval, writing, “Newspapers and mass-circulation magazines applauded its marketing and use.”\textsuperscript{161} The final victory came when, in 1963 the AMA appointed a Committee on Human Reproduction to “revise its policy on contraception,” arguing the “medical profession should accept a major responsibility in the matter of human reproduction…disseminating information to physicians on all phases of human reproduction, including sexual behavior”; and that “the

\textsuperscript{159} Feuer, \textit{Conflict of Generations}, 421.
\textsuperscript{161} D’Emilio and Freedman, \textit{Intimate Matters}, 251.
prescription of child-spacing measures should be available to all patients…” The widespread accessibility and use of the pill effectively closed a chapter in the hard-fought battle for birth control.

Beginning in 1960, years before the AMA victory, Calderone chose to focus on matters of sexuality rather than reproductive control. That interest took an important professional step in 1961. At the National Council of Churches conference on Church and Family in Green Lake, Wisconsin, religious leaders and educators discussed everything from masturbation to homosexuality to premarital and extramarital sex. Calderone realized that these people were already on board with the need for family planning. Now, she wanted to address sex education. When she got up to give her presentation, she abandoned her original lecture. She proclaimed, “Why do I need to talk about family planning? Everyone here is already convinced…what I’d like to talk about is sex education, and the role of the churches in sex education. The schools won’t do it and the parents don’t know how, so the churches must.” Less than a week after the conference ended, Calderone wrote a letter to her dear friend Charles S. Ascher gushing that the conference was “epoch making” and expressing her feeling that, “many results will come from this [conference].” The open, honest discussion of sexual matters such as she had never experienced prior, had clearly moved Calderone. That conference turned out to be a pivotal life moment.

---


163 Calderone, Particular Passions, 259.

164 Calderone, Particular Passions, 259.

165 Mary Steichen Calderone to Charles Stern Ascher, May 10, 1961, in Box 1, Catalogues Correspondence, Charles Stern Ascher Papers, Columbia Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New York, NY.
So began Calderone’s “final mission.” Over the next three years, she casually met with various colleagues who attended the 1961 conference, sex researcher Lester Kirkendall in particular, and ruminated about how to best proceed with the need for sex education. At one meeting in 1963, while at the Groves Conference on Marriage and the Family, Calderone took out a piece of note-paper and jotted down an action plan: first would come the establishment of a “voluntary health organization.” Secondly, it would be modeled after PPFA with a board of directors, staff and affiliates. In a 1963 article, “Sexual Energy-Constructive or Destructive,” she wrote, “this organization would serve as clearing house, sounding board, interpreter and leader for sex information and education—for the professions and for the general public.”

Several aspects of the sexual landscape irked Calderone. “In the aspects of sex that are good and warm and constructive, and in our frantic search for a more meaningful and fulfilling experience, we are ‘sex-starved,’ whereas we are ‘sex-saturated’ in the ugly, exploitive aspects of sex.” Moreover, she was livid that many textbooks omitted basic facts on human reproduction and attributed it to the “cowardice of the school board.” She also rejected how literally sex was treated, arguing that the discussion of emotions and feelings was integral to any discussion of sex.

Calderone placed the blame on educators and parents, arguing that “the irresponsible release of sexual energy has been accomplished by us [her current

---

166 Mary Calderone, “Sexual Energy-Constructive or Destructive” [lecture, Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine, San Francisco, CA, October 17, 1963], 9, in Box 13: 224, Calderone Papers.
167 Calderone, Particular Passions, 259
168 Calderone, Particular Passions, 259
Calderone cited one young woman who said that because adults effectively neglected to teach children about healthy sexual practice, kids understandably experimented with their sexuality. As Whit Hobbs, senior VP and director of Creative Services, Benton and Bowles, Inc., said in a speech delivered before the Michigan Press Association, “Today’s bright, serious young people, --who are our one and shining hope in this beleaguered world—want our respect, our help, our love, and our understanding. They want to be taken seriously. They want solid answers. They want to be talked to in a new way. On their level. Simple and clear and bold and honest.” Only new solutions, or a “new code of sexual behavior,” would resonate with the youth of the Sixties.

Foreshadowing the forthcoming “solution” in their 1963 annual Christmas letter to friends and family, Frank and Mary wrote:

The winds of change have blown heavily this year, for the Calderones as for everyone else. It has been a year of appraisal, reappraisal, decision….expansion of [Mary’s] department at Planned Parenthood-World Population (note the new name) is anticipated for 1964, to allow for orientation of a new medical director as she eventually moves into other activities—of which more in next year’s newsletter.

Calderone’s decision to leave Planned Parenthood was not entirely motivated by idealism. After several letters of correspondence with then-PPFA President Dr. Alan Guttmacher, Calderone discovered she was being paid a part-time salary for a full-time position because as a married woman, she “didn’t need” more money. Her distaste at...
discovering this information coupled with her growing sense that “handing out contraceptives was not enough,” led Calderone to resign from Planned Parenthood on July 1, 1964, her sixtieth birthday.

Six months later, Calderone announced the establishment of the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States.\textsuperscript{179} The organization started out with a total staff of two, Calderone and a secretary, on a budget of $5,500 taken out on private, non-interest, long-term loan.\textsuperscript{180} The organization’s stated purpose was:

To establish man’s sexuality as a healthy entity;
To identify the special characteristics that distinguish it from, yet relate to, human reproduction;
To dignify it by openness of approach, study, and scientific research designed to lead towards its understanding and its freedom from exploitation;
To give leadership to professionals and to society, to the end those human beings may be aided towards responsible use of the sexual faculty and towards the assimilation of sex into their individual life patterns as a creative and re-creative force.\textsuperscript{181}

Calderone wanted to emphasize that “sex involves something you are, not just something you do.”\textsuperscript{182} “One comes to recognize that we never act as non-sexual people, as non-men or non women.”\textsuperscript{183} Calderone felt that society lacked a proper sexual vocabulary. “People don’t have a…concept of anything, except fucking,” said the graying woman.\textsuperscript{184} Her goal was to define sexuality in a way that could be incorporated into a healthy every-day lexicon and to shed it of its equivalency with “fucking” or as a way of invoking gender:

I had a little script. Sexuality means everything that you are, that you were born with, that you experienced, that you thought about, that happened to you, which related to your

\textsuperscript{179} Guttmacher and John Cotton, memorandum of resignation, February 18, 1964, all in Box 12: 205, Calderone Papers.
\textsuperscript{182} SIECUS, \textit{The SIECUS Purpose}, in Box 14: 226, Calderone Papers.
\textsuperscript{183} John G. Rogers, “Dr. Mary Calderone-Sex Educator,” \textit{Parade}, June 18, 1967, in Box 1: 1, Calderone Papers.
being a sexual person. And that is your sexuality at any given moment. What you remember and what you’ve learned and what you do or decide not to do, whatever. And they would say, “Oh.” And then they add a new word to their vocabulary…and that I suppose is really a great achievement. To have put that word [sexuality] into common usage.  

As a clearinghouse for sexual information, SIECUS was a third-party resource. The intent was for schools, churches and communities to use the organization’s materials to teach sexuality. SIECUS sold “a philosophy, not a neat little package.” SIECUS did not brand sex education; how communities digested and interpreted the information was left to their discretion. In fact, Calderone refused to speak at schools unless the request came from directly from students, her presence was part of a conference, or the school willingly partnered with the community to bring her. Even so, in the first year of its existence, Calderone travelled over 50,000 miles lecturing about sex education.

Almost immediately after the announcement, SIECUS hit the ground running doling out information. The organization predominately prepared Study Guides (which were essentially curricula), reading lists and weekly newsletters. Calderone only lectured at schools if students themselves requested her. As soon as Calderone announced the formation of SIECUS she met “instant response on the part of the press,” and a flood of workers, psychiatrists, college professors, parole officers, public health officers, nurses, teachers and school superintendents,” sent requests for information.

---

185 Irvine, Talk About Sex, 31. See Calderone, oral history conducted by Tolman, July 6, 1987.
186 Rogers, “Dr. Mary Calderone-Sex Educator,” in Box 1: 1, Calderone Papers.
187 Rogers, “Dr. Mary Calderone-Sex Educator,” in Box 1: 1, Calderone Papers.
189 Helen Manley, “Starting a Program of Sex Education,” The Individual, Sex and Society, ed. Carlfred B. Broderick and Jessie Bernard [Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1969]. Manley outlines SIECUS’ recommended sex education curriculum. She stipulates the topics, questions and vocabulary that teachers should address at different grade levels.
190 Frank and Mary Calderone to Friends and Family, Christmas 1964, in Carton 1:4, Calderone Additional Papers.
Clearly, sex education was in short supply and high demand. Between October 1965 and January 1967, SIECUS received 7,000 requests for information, reprints and Discussion Guides; they sent out 50,000 pieces of material.\(^{191}\) SIECUS’ mission extended far beyond sex education in public schools. Calderone wrote and lectured on everything from sex education for young children to teenagers to college students to middle age adults to the elderly.\(^{192}\) Calderone’s personal schedule emphasizes this breadth of outreach. From 1966-1969, Calderone spoke at fourteen schools, eighteen universities, twenty-one professional organizations, and to adults in thirty-seven communities.\(^{193}\) This was in addition to the dozens of lectures she gave to educators, religious leaders and medical groups.\(^{194}\)

From the very start, Calderone was SIECUS’ spokesperson and figurehead. Moran aptly called her “the orphaned subject’s guardian.”\(^{195}\) One anecdote from the 1964 Calderone Christmas letter encapsulates Calderone’s almost-immediate notoriety:

Although Mary has made it clear that she is not qualified to be a counselor in any field, but looks upon her role as stimulating thinking, posing challenging questions and being

---

\(^{191}\) SIECUS, *The SIECUS Purpose*, in Box 14: 226, Calderone Papers.

\(^{192}\) For references on adolescent sexuality see Mary Steichen Calderone, “Sex and the Adolescent,” *Clinical Pediatrics* 5, no. 3 [March 1966], in Box 16: 253; Mary Steichen Calderone, “Sex Education and the Very Young Child,” *PTA Magazine* 61, no. 2 [October 1966] in Box 16: 256; Mary Steichen Calderone, “Sex Education for Today’s Children,” *Hempstead Consultation Service* [March 1967] in Box 15: 237, all in Calderone Papers; For references on teenage sexuality see Mary Steichen Calderone, “Teenagers and Sex,” *PTA Magazine* [October 1965], in Box 15: 246; Mary Steichen Calderone, “Sex and Your Teenager,” *Farm Journal* [February 1966], in Box 15: 250; Mary Steichen Calderone, “Contraception, Teenagers and Sexual Responsibility,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 2, no.1 [April 1966], in Box 16: 253, all in Calderone Papers; For references on sexuality and college students see Mary Steichen Calderone, “Sex and the Campus,” *The Intercollegian-Annual Freshman Issue* [1966], in Box 16: 257; Calderone Papers; Mary Steichen Calderone, “Sex and the College Student,” *Journal of the American College Health Association* 17, no. 3 [February 1969] in Carton 12: 557, EHM Papers; For a reference on adult sexuality see Mary Steichen Calderone, “Sex Education for the Whole Society,” *The North Central Association Quarterly* 45, no. 4 [April 1971], in Box 17: 284, Calderone Papers; For a reference on sexuality and the elderly see Arthur S. Freeze, “Meet Mary Calderone,” *Modern Maturity* [August-September 1978], in Carton 12: 555, EHM Papers.


\(^{195}\) Moran, *Teaching Sex*, 160.
the administrator for SIECUS, some people cannot be persuaded on this, for she recently received a letter addressed as follows: Dr. Mary S. Calderone, Sex Information Counselor for the U.S., c/o Postmaster, New York! P.S. it reached her on Long Island!¹⁹⁶

But fame had its drawbacks. As the spokesperson and symbol of the movement, Calderone soon found herself at the center of vehement controversy.

**Muddled Clarity**

Calderone and SIECUS’ attitudes about morality brought them closer to certain groups and movements. But their ideas and attitudes about identity politics and human rights often isolated Calderone and SIECUS from certain liberal movements. Participation in both the morality and identity politics debate situated SIECUS in a sea of Sixties political upheaval.

Sex education is hard to historically label. As Irvine argues, on the one hand “SIECUS-style sex education can rightly be considered yet another mechanism by which sex is spoiled through speech and silences of discourses.” Yet, “SIECUS and its associates were also viciously attacked and marginalized” especially for their “implicit challenge to the Romantic ideal of childhood.”¹⁹⁷ This apparent paradox, Irvine concludes, “bespeaks the complicated fields of power that circulate in regard to sex…”¹⁹⁸

Those tensions render sex education a particularly difficult field to historicize.

Heale describes the historiographical landscape of Sixties political history explaining “Broadly there are…three competing political stories, one focusing on the protest movements, one seeing the era as primarily concerned with liberalism, and a third

¹⁹⁶ Frank and Mary Calderone to Friends and Family, Christmas 1964, in Carton 1:4, Calderone Additional Papers.
¹⁹⁷ Irvine, *Talk about Sex*, 33.
emphasizing the return of right-wing politics.” Histories usually follow one political narrative. However, sex educational history uniquely bridges that segregated political historiography as the sexual liberalism Calderone espoused met heavy criticism both from leftists and conservatives, placing all three usually disparate political categories under the same historical umbrella.

---

199 Heale, “Sixties as History,” 137. In his assessment, Heale views liberalism as the notion that “the state assumes much responsibility for the good life.” However, I am using a different definition of liberalism. Liberal in this paper is taken to mean the strong compulsion to pursue equal and civil rights but non-radically, which differs from Leftist protest movements whose goal was to utilize radical activism.
MORAL HIGHGROUND: A Values Debate Begins (and Continues)

We cannot talk about human sexuality without talking about values, but they’re not the ‘no’ values, they’re the ‘yes’ values.

- Mary Calderone

The central conservative truth is that It is culture, not politics, That determines the success of a society.

- Daniel Patrick Moynihan

The Sixties was a time of great moral debate and shifting ideology. SIECUS found itself at the center of that morality debate perhaps more than any other movement during the Sixties. The organization became unwittingly politicized and politically embroiled because of it. SIECUS’ nuanced and rather subjective approach to morality, viewing it as a fluid and contextually based concept, sparked a right-wing uproar that still echoes through 21st century American political culture. That uproar “signaled the growing political visibility and viability of the right wing by the end of the sixties.” The conservative right also proved the effectiveness of engaging in a single-issue attack, especially one as charged as sexual politics. To its severe detriment, SIECUS’ approach to “New Morality” inadvertently gave rise to the “New Right.”

200 Irvine, Talk about Sex, 27. See Calderone, oral history conducted by Tolman, July 22, 1987
Historians have already written extensively about the conservative attacks SIECUS faced.\textsuperscript{202} The difference between this history and the others is one of framing, not content. This already well-formulated controversy once again deserves attention for three reasons. Firstly, the SIECUS morality debate belongs in conversation with the other sectors of society that advocated for a “new morality,” but simply evaded the kind of controversy SIECUS suffered. Additionally, some historical hindsight regarding the parallels between the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century movement and the Sixties movement are in order. Secondly, it deserves attention because the morality debate as a catalyst for a larger developing conservative political machine justifies further inquiry. Thirdly, the morality debate and the conservative backlash must be presented in tandem with the human rights versus identity politics debate in order to convey the full extent of SIECUS’ political reach and significance.

Calm Before the Storm

Prior to 1968, SIECUS faced little criticism. In fact, in November 1967, mere months before right-wing opponents assailed Calderone and SIECUS with vitriolic attacks, \textit{Current Biography} published a biography of Calderone. In it, the author remarked how widely accepted sex education had become and contrasted Sanger’s cold reception with the warmth accorded to Calderone by physicians, sociologists, public health officials and clergymen. In that same year, in the annual Calderone Christmas letter, Frank wrote, “It is exciting to see SIECUS fulfill the role that its Board had projected for it, and Mary derives deep satisfaction from her work.

Both husband and biographer spoke too soon. For the first three years of its existence, SIECUS seemed, as they each said, to be charting a smooth and successful course. Up to that point no person or group voiced opposition to its moral agenda. However, unlike Moran who argues that SIECUS took a morally neutral approach, in itself subject to controversy, Irvine disagrees arguing that SIECUS was anything but value-free. In fact, Calderone insisted it [sex education] be value-based.

Before 1968, during the four years prior to the right-wing attacks, Calderone, made it clear that SIECUS upheld a certain value system, albeit one that differed from anything that existed before. In an article directed at physicians, she argued that there existed a “double standard of morality,” one in which:

We count on the old “thou shalt not” morality to control the sexual conduct of our young people, while we urge them into early dating and precocious adult behavior for the sake of status…we criticizes or young people for a lack of responsibly, while we wall them off in a kind of adolescent dream world where have to change to participate meaningfully as necessary members of the community. We cling to the notion that premarital sexual experience for young males is necessary and inevitable; inconsistently taking for granted the source of this experience will not be our daughter. Finally, we regard as nonvirginal the girl who has had a single sexual experience through rape; while we consider as virginal the girl who repeatedly has every part of her body explored by every part of a male body to the point of mutual orgasms provided his penis does not enter her vagina.

The only way to make sense of these contradictions is to confront sexuality constructively and head on. A straightforward, non-skirting approach, Calderone argued, was society’s new moral obligation. Sociologist characterized Calderone’s approach as espousing “normative morality,” meaning the moral code shifted based on contexts and

---

203 Moran, Teaching Sex, 193; Irvine, Talk About Sex, 28.
204 Irvine, Talk About Sex, 27; See Calderone, oral history conducted by Tolman, July 22, 1987.
social surroundings rather than being based on absolute morality. This approach explained SIECUS’ approach to contraception for un-married teenagers. As an unpublished 1968 SIECUS position paper best articulates it:

By the time they reach the age when their peers may be engaging in sexual activity, young people should have been given a thorough knowledge of contraception itself, and various misconceptions about it should have been discussed and clarified. This means fairly early in their Junior High School years, and for some groups considerably earlier. At all ages, when young people ask questions about contraception their questions should be answered openly and honestly.

While Calderone opposed pre-marital sex she acknowledged that it took place and therefore adolescents should understand how to use contraception. Thus, not only did Calderone and SIECUS preach positive sex education, but established what would later be referred to as “comprehensive sex education,” advocating the teaching of birth control practice in schools.

Calderone’s novel iteration of morality linked to the church’s evolving moral outlook. As a devout Quaker, Calderone viewed religion as a central part of life and maintained that SIECUS needed to foster strong ties with faith communities. Calderone found the church so central that she said “the churches have to take the lead in this area of sexuality.” The union between SIECUS and church was a natural fit since many Protestant churches had already begun shifting their attitudes towards sex beginning in the early 1960s. In fact, a bishop, Bishop J.A.T Robison first coined the term, “new morality,” as a theological term. In his 1963 book Honest to God, “new morality”

208 Moran, Teaching Sex, 165.
challenged the idea that all actions are “pre-judged,” and argued instead that actions would be judged with motives and reasons in mind. Far from light-hearted, the church’s notion of “new morality” demanded serious behavior from its worshippers.

The progressive tone of “new morality” revealed itself when it came sexual matters. Robinson specifically discussed morality and its effect on sexuality. “Should birth control services be provided to unmarried persons?” church leaders inquired. Genne writes that the churches agreed “the movement seems to be moving toward the protection of the baby from being born unwanted and rejected by its parent and by society.” Furthermore, “there is agreement that a baby should not be regarded as ‘punishment’ for the mother.” There are two groundbreaking claims in Genne’s declaration. The obvious one is the church’s allowance for pre-marital use of birth control. The second is the fact that the church took into account the feelings of women and their right to not be “punished” for their biology.

Other areas of society also interpreted “new morality,” in ways that jived with the church’s definition, again showing the connectivity among various societal spheres and the effects of this shift on social moral expectations. For example, in the educational world, more emphasis was placed on students’ making “responsible decisions,” in all aspects of their life, and especially in sexual circumstances. As Lester Kirkendall wrote in a 1966 article, “Two Issues in Sex Education:”

Educators are now dealing with a generation of youth, which looks for evidence, asks for reasons, weighs and evaluates. This is the essence of scientific inquiry – the highly prized processes of rational thinking. Teaching family relations or health (or any) class which

---


-65-
falls back upon preachy, moralistic indoctrinations is simply not heard by today’s youth, taught as they have been to seek the solution to their problems in a very different way.  

Decision-making perfectly coalesces with the “new morality” values of prior reason and judgment as it values the process by which students come to make decisions and not simply the outcome of the decisions they make. Kirkendall logically categorized the notion of rational thinking and questioning as “scientific inquiry,” not a matter of religiously based “new morality.” What this shows then is firstly that the church’s “new morality” with its emphasis on careful prior reasoning and judgment mimics “scientific inquiry.” Secondly, it shows the interconnectedness of religion, science and education and the power of each when it came to taking a new stance on morality. As Calderone aptly said at a conference between SIECUS and Academy of Religion and Mental Health, “In this exploration of what morality is, I see two great groups joined in the struggle, the religionists and the scientists.”

Though many educators, religious leaders and physicians supported the framework for moral change, a small but vocal minority soon came along and vehemently opposed SIECUS’ non-absolutist, “‘yes’ values” approach. The delicate unity among science, religion and education was short-lived. The movement was about to become “a symbol of change amid deep resistance.”

The Rise of the Moral Minority

Bishop Robinson could have hardly imagined the kind of uproar his turn-of-phrase would eventually create. While sex education made waves throughout the U.S.,

---

214 Irvine, Talk About Sex, 27. See Calderone, oral history conducted by Tolman, July 22, 1987.
215 Irvine, Talk About Sex, 34.
another current slowly gained footing: the coalition of the political and Christian right. The unity between political and religious groups grew out of mutual critiques of the social and political changes of the Sixties. Both movements gained traction individually. Sex education brought them together.

Fears of communist plots, religious decline, outrage at the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Supreme Courts overturning of obscenity laws prompted the “meteoric rise” of Evangelicalism, fundamentalism and Pentecostalism during the mid-1960s.\textsuperscript{216} They originally focused on targeting supposed Communist plots.\textsuperscript{217} Political conservatism began in the early 1960s with small grassroots groups focused on targeting purported communist cells, including Civil Rights groups.\textsuperscript{218} Toward the mid-sixties, however, the activism shifted to “single-issue” campaigns expressing “general concern over moral corruption and traditional values.”\textsuperscript{219} A turning point came when, in 1966, Ronald Reagan ran his California gubernatorial campaign on a platform of middle-class conservatism and a restoration of “moral values.”\textsuperscript{220} Sex, specifically sex education, was the easiest target and symbol of this so-called moral deterioration in need of restoring. Reagan targeted sex education with a larger agenda in mind; he “deployed sex as a metaphor,” argues Irvine, “to mobilize broad, inchoate cultural anxieties.”\textsuperscript{221} Reagan saw great political (and personal) potential in marrying culture and politics.

\textsuperscript{216} Irvine, \textit{Talk About Sex}, 42.
\textsuperscript{218} Irvine, \textit{Talk About Sex}, 42.
\textsuperscript{219} McGirr, \textit{Suburban Warriors}, 217
\textsuperscript{220} McGirr, \textit{Suburban Warriors}, 217.
\textsuperscript{221} Irvine, \textit{Talk About Sex}, 42.
Most likely, politicians did not care one way or the other whether sex was taught in public schools but they knew many of their constituents would, especially their religious constituents. The Christian Right immediately heeded the political call and seized the opportunity to mobilize against sex education. By 1968, the Christian and political New Right had forged a formidable alliance. The movement unleashed several pronged attacks: from religious to secular, civilized to extreme. Above all, the alliance affirmed that sex education was no longer simply religious, educational and scientific but distinctly political as well.

‘Chide, Pause, Posse.’

1968 signaled a turning point for SIECUS and the sex education movement. While members of the civil rights movement and left-wing politics faced attack, Calderone and her sex education associates encountered their first moral opposition to sex education.

The extremists cried loudest. Gordon Drake was Calderone’s first extreme critic. In a 1968 pamphlet he published called “Is the Schoolhouse the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?” Drake pieced together different phrases from various lectures Calderone gave to make it seem as though Calderone advocated free love and rampant premarital sex. The Birch Society, a right wing also denounced SIECUS and sex education as “a filthy communist plot.” Calderone, he argued, undeniably corrupted the youth of the nation. The Dan Smoot Report, a radio show based out of Dallas, expressed the same vitriol. They argued that sex education belonged in the home, as a parents’ right. They argued

---

that the “secular humanist” brand of sex education in schools fostered promiscuity and turpitude and that only parents could justifiably teach their children moral absolutes.²²⁵

Among the various organizations formed in protest against sex education were MOTOREDE (movement to restore decency), POSSE (Parents Opposed to Sex and Sensitivity Education), MOMS (Mothers Organized for Moral Stability), POSE (Parents Opposed to Sex Education), PAUSE (Parents Against Universal Sex Education), PAMS (Parents Advocating for Moral Standards) & SOS (Sanity on Sex) and CHIDE (Committee to Halt Indoctrination and Demoralization in Education).²²⁶

The movement, that began as a local grassroots project to influence school boards, quickly grew into a national operation.²²⁷ Drake held rallies across the country and charged “They’ve [SIECUS and Calderone] thrown God and the Bible out of school and put sex education in.”²²⁸ With such outspoken and misconstrued attacks, it was no wonder Calderone received everything from vicious character assassinations to death threats.²²⁹

While many mainstream conservative politicians denounced the Birchers and other ultra-conservative right-wingers considering their antics too outlandish, the

²²⁵ Irvine, Talk about Sex, 28.
²²⁷ By 1969, organized extremist groups had raised $40 million for its attacks against sex education. See Frank and Mary Calderone to Friends and Family, Christmas 1969, in Carton 1: 4, Calderone Additional Papers.
²²⁹ Calderone received hundreds of threatening letters or death threats. Some examples from December 1968 alone: December 9: “your people are the kind who would not be mourned in the lease should you be found with millstones round your necks and at the bottom of the sea,” December 13: -“I hope you wake up before its too late and correct the damage you are causing to Americans,” December 24: “Re: your tour to Chicago and other cities to speak on the need for increased sex education for pre-adolescents and adolescents—why don’t you just stay at home and knit or cook or clean house, instead of adding to the harm you and your kind have already done?”[signed] one of many disgusted mothers” in Carton 1: 11, Calderone Additional Papers. Note: Historians are prohibited from citing the names of the authors of this “crank” correspondence.
extremists’ had undeniable influence on mainstream educational institutions and politics.\textsuperscript{230}

The battle began in Anaheim, California, whose School District of 30,000 students in twenty-five different schools was one of first large districts to implement a broad-based sex education program. The parental backlash began in 1968. In that year, Eleanor Howe, mother of four and a receptionist, Jan Pippenger, wife of a meat-market owner and Jim Townsend, a local Conservative launched a formal complaint against the school board calling sex education, “Godless, pornographic, and an affront to family privacy.”\textsuperscript{231} They fought the school board for two years arguing that the program was a “conspiracy” that drove a wedge between family, church and school since the schools taught “moral and religious taboos should be eliminated…while casting doubts on the traditional moral teachings of the home and church.”\textsuperscript{232} The protesters caught the attention of California politicians and in 1969 the California Republican Assembly called for the dismantling of all California sex education programs.\textsuperscript{233} In the fall of 1970, the school board conceded and dismantled the program. Though the Anaheim sex education protesters affiliated with mainstream politics while attempting to dismantle the school’s program, members such as Eleanor Howe also supported extremist views as well, illustrating the fluid and interconnected nature of extremist and mainstream right-wing politics. Howe assisted education writer John Steinbacher in the publication of his 1970 work, \textit{The Child Seducers}. Steinbacher’s views were anything but moderate. He charged:

\textsuperscript{230} McGirr, \textit{Suburban Warriors}, 224.
\textsuperscript{231} McGirr, \textit{Suburban Warriors}, 228
\textsuperscript{232} McGirr, \textit{Suburban Warriors}, 228
\textsuperscript{233} McGirr, \textit{Suburban Warriors}, 230
Sex instruction is only one small part of a massive bull-dozer operation to convert America’s public school system into a series of behavioral science clinics for reshaping and restructuring the children into the International Child of Orwell’s 1984. For a new alien strain has crept into our culture—humanism, a religion that denies the very existence of all the eternal verities...Family life and sex instruction course are, by and large, written and designed by Humanists, a small, fanatical band of extremists who seek to impose their immoral cult upon millions of American children.234

Steinbacher took particular aim at Calderone. According to him, Calderone “had some kind of special Messianic mission to make sex machines out of the whole population.”235 Though it sounds almost comical, Steinbacher’s claims against Calderone and SIECUS were taken quite seriously.

Extremist ideas were taken so seriously in fact, that they found their way into mainstream politics. On February 7, 1969, Congressman Rarick of Louisiana cited Drake’s material and arguments in the Congressional Record as he introduced bill to conduct a Congressional investigation of SIECUS.236 Around that same time, fifteen state legislators introduced bills calling for the ban of sex education programs and Nebraska joined California in outlawing its sex education program.237 Mainstream criticisms and extremists were hardly divorced from one another; rather their relationship was contingent on another, as it took the extreme to move the middle.

**Coping with Criticism**

The attacks bruised, but did not break, SIECUS. On an organizational level, SIECUS still retained a great deal of support. But finances were tight.238 Despite an

---

238 For evidence of the $360,000 see Frank and Mary Calderone to Friends and Family, Christmas 1969, in Carton 1: 4, Calderone Additional Papers; For the estimated operating budget, see SIECUS, “SIECUS-Retrospect and Prospect,” 2 in Carton 12: 553, EHM Papers.
estimated operation budget of $492,500 for 1969, the organization only raised $360,000 that year. However, money still trickled in slowly. In 1969, SIECUS did receive a $50,000 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation awarded personally by John D. Rockefeller III, who commended her for her work in a letter penned on June 9th. As for Calderone, the attacks took a personal toll but many reached out to support her personally as well. In November 1970 the columnist Dear Abby wrote to Calderone to lend her support saying, “you are a beautiful woman, Mary, inside and out. Take care of yourself. There ‘aint’ no more like you around.”

Calderone did not publicly respond to the attacks until October 1969, nearly two years after they began. In a short, three-page article that appeared in the Vassar Alumnae Magazine, Calderone confronted the “Attack on Education,” citing the attacking movement as “couches in dishonest terms, not only as to questions and accusations, but especially as to its own motivations.” Her desire in writing the article was to put out the facts and to say that SIECUS had been continuing with business as usual dispensing information etc. Calderone’s response was relatively cool considering the heat of the debate. Mary Breasted, a leftist critic of Calderone called Calderone’s gap in response-time as well as her eventual response politically naïve arguing Calderone should have fought back fiercely instead of thinking SIECUS was above this kind of attack and therefore needn’t bother itself with explanation.

---

240 Dear Abby to Mary Calderone, November 1970, in Box 14: 230, Calderone Papers
243 Mary Breasted, Oh! Sex Education, 217.
concluding that, “fighting in the mud will only soil their hands.” Calderone also resented the fact that she was being attacked for school sex education programs when SIECUS’ had not originally planned to become actively involved in school sex education but was soon “swept into it by a prodigious demand from school official who had no other place to turn for guidance.” Her primary intention had actually been to educate adults about healthy sexual practice more so than children. But now that the debate had veered into sex education in the schools, Calderone stuck by her original sentiment vis a vis morality. In an April 1970 Playboy interview she said:

I don’t see how worthwhile education about any subject can avoid moral issues. The teacher usually makes his own personal beliefs clear; but at the same time, he should be careful not to take such a moralistic, authoritarian stand that he throttles free discussion among the youngsters. If he does, there won’t be any exchange of views and they won’t teach one another, which is the best way to learn. If you want to hear a conversation on ethics and moral that would warm the cockles of a minister’s heart, listen to a bunch of adolescent boys and girls talking about sexual morality. The great thing about all our young people today is the way they challenge the adult world for its false and hypocritical values—not about sex alone but about all of life’s great issues.

Essentially, Calderone reiterated her moral stance. She did not succumb to attacks and stuck to her conviction that morality was subject to interpretation. Calderone reacted to the attacks as a rational scientist; what she really needed to do was respond like a politician. And therein lay the problem. SIECUS, which tried so hard to maintain its identity as a sound health organization, based on presenting strong scientific evidence, had, at the mercy of the New Right become a political organization. While it may not have been SIECUS’ choice the only way to fight against a political attack was with the same poison. It took SIECUS and Calderone several years to realize that its purpose had

244 Nat Lehrman, “Playboy Interview: Dr. Mary Calderone,” 64.
245 Nat Lehrman, “Playboy Interview: Dr. Mary Calderone,” 64.
246 Nat Lehrman, “Playboy Interview: Dr. Mary Calderone,” 70.
247 Nat Lehrman, “Playboy Interview: Dr. Mary Calderone,” 72.
become as political as it was scientific and to re-evaluate its mission in accordance with that realization.

Calderone and SIECUS did not realize that in some ways, quite ironically, the attackers boosted SIECUS’ cause while undermining their own. Firstly, in their quest to silence sex education the New Right had made it a national and household issue, which brought in as many supporters for SIECUS as it did detractors. Secondly, when the Birch Society called SIECUS a communist plot, they completely miscalculated the reality of the situation. For the reality was, as historian William O’Neill points out “Sex was no threat to the Establishment. Panicky moralists found this hard to believe, so they kept trying to suppress it. But the shrewder guardians of established relationships saw hedonism for what it partially was, a valuable means of social control.” Essentially, O’Neill argued, sexual freedoms led to consumerism, which ultimately led to the reinforcement of capitalism. Sex education, on the other hand, “was anything but erotic. In fact, more students were probably turned off to sex than onto it by such courses...but the sexual propaganda of the young confirmed Birchers in their delusions. As elsewhere, the misconceptions reinforced one another.” Both the Birchers and the sex educators failed to realize that mutually reinforcing predicament. At least on SIECUS’ end, that might be in large part due to its political reluctance.

Ultimately, in an era that saw strong political opinion both from the Left and from the Right, SIECUS’ remained a timid political participant. SIECUS and Calderone stood for a whole new kind of Sixties political participation. More so than the forgotten Right,

---

248 O’Neill, Coming Apart, 265
249 O’Neill, Coming Apart, 265
the Sixties history can use the addition of more of these unlikely, reticent, almost-unwilling yet crucial, political narratives.

Looking at SIECUS’ relationship with the Sixties from another lens, that of its relationship to the liberal movements, one realizes the importance and drawbacks of that nuance and timidity.
The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself.

-Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Busy combating the conservative attacks, SIECUS lost sight of possible allies in its Sixties liberal counterparts. Sixties campaigns like the women’s and the civil rights movements confronted and challenged dominant attitudes as part of a larger political agenda, driven by new political notions of identity. “The social movements of the sixties signaled the beginning of what has come to be known as ‘identity politics,’ the idea that politics is rooted in identity,” wrote former Sixties activist Alice Echols. “Class was not the pivotal category for these new social movements. Rather race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, and youth were the salient categories for most sixties activists.”

In its effort to establish “human sexuality,” SIECUS barely confronted these categories or questioned whether all people felt treated as “human” or with the same level of “humanity” in American society. This failure to understand identity politics, and implement a more nuanced curriculum for sex education (one which could have followed their own dictum that “sex is something you are, not just something you do,”) left the movement politically unequipped to handle the conservative reaction to the Sixties. This failure can be considered partially to blame for abstinence-only sex education policies of

252 Echols “Women’s Liberation and Sixties Radicalism,” 165.
the early 1980s and the absence of gender and cultural sensitivity in school sex education programs.

**Freedom Sex**

During the Sixties, Calderone was far from oblivious to the changing social currents swirling round her. However, she stopped short of incorporating any of the revolutionary revisions of ethical codes into the SIECUS agenda. She cited the civil rights and feminist movements as analogous causes, not causes for SIECUS to learn from. For example, in a 1966 issue of the *Blair Academy Bulletin*, Calderone wrote:

> Just as we are deepening our whole concept of the relationships of man to man in the areas of race, religion, and nationality, so a group of us, The Sex Information Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), is trying to deepen our concepts of the relationship between man and woman, the really critical human relationship that we all know. Consequently, I shall not discuss the sex act itself nor human reproduction but instead consider human sexuality, a very broad area.253

Calderone clearly understood the American shifts of understanding of race, gender and religion. Yet, instead of incorporating those changing concepts into her sexual ideology, she simply used them as an illustrative parallel to her cause.

SIECUS’ distance from shifting attitudes of sexuality and race is apparent in the case of their position on intercultural relationships. In March 1969, SIECUS established the Department of Intercultural Relationships. The department’s job was to work with community leaders, primarily in Harlem, to implement “meaningful sex education programs into ghetto areas” and “educate community leaders at the poverty level.”254 The approach was separatist in its nature. This was not about integrating cultures or

---


about sexual understanding between cultures, but about tailoring and segregating sex education within specific cultures and communities. SIECUS’ wanted to make “ethnic films” and develop training programs to examine “community process, its social structure, cultural behavior and principals of change which are operative in activities and events in the community.” These films, training programs and events remained separate from the general SIECUS curriculum, which made no mention of cultural specificities.

The approach was antithetical to the new approaches of liberal leaders of the Sixties. SIECUS was aware of racial distinctions, but failed to incorporate an evolving African American identity and its understanding of sexuality. While SIECUS created alternate or separate sex education programs for “ghetto areas,” other movements redefined sexuality, masculinity and femininity across racial barriers. Sixties movements of liberation and civil rights, unlike SIECUS, focused on developing interracial relationships. Until the Supreme Court ruled miscegenation laws unconstitutional in the 1967 Loving v. Virginia case, sexual segregation was the political and legal norm.

While SIECUS had not called for the maintenance of miscegenation laws, the organization did not focus on ending those laws, and did little after 1967 to encourage the acceptance of interracial relationships.

The design of SIECUS’ Intercultural Relationships program, which functioned solely within specific cultural communities and avoided the discussion of sexual stereotypes, failed to fully address the human sexual needs of their participants. It is

---

257 Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1 [1967].
clear, as sociologist Robert Staples has argued that both culture and social context need to be taken into account when considering sexuality, particularly Black sexuality. He wrote, “It may be said that sexual behavior and sexual attitudes are partly a function of culture and partly a function of class and of other elements in the society, and that all of these need greater investigation before continuing acceptance is allowed to some of the sexual stereotypes that exist today.”

By ignoring these key other components, SIECUS did not fully address the issues it sought to remedy. By restricting its vision to ghettos, SIECUS failed to understand how that social context was rooted in a relationship with the white middle class. Focused on its connections with religious bodies and scientists rather than building relationships with the Civil Rights movement, SIECUS missed an opportunity to become relevant to a major population group.

The Dialectic of Calderone

SIECUS overlooked an opportunity to ally with the Civil Rights movement. SIECUS’ and Calderone’s failure to connect with the feminist movement, however, was a conscious decision. Despite her acknowledgement in 1960’s *Release from Sexual Tensions* that many women were unsatisfied at home, and the belief that women have the right to control their bodies, Calderone refused to formally ally with the movement that directly combated that dissatisfaction and inequality. She condemned racial feminism, and managed to avoid discussing liberal feminism, instead focusing on her own mission of human rights.

---


259 Calderone, *Release From Sexual Tensions*, 7; Lehrman, “Playboy Interview: Dr. Mary Calderone,” 238.
During a 1970 Playboy interview, Calderone said that she was in favor of legalizing abortion, despite her ideological opposition, as she felt abortion should be in the hands of medical professionals.\(^{260}\) Her interviewer, Nat Lehrman followed up on that assertion and asked if, as a “crusader for women’s rights,” Calderone dealt with any militant feminist groups who also advocated for legalized abortion.\(^{261}\) She responded firmly, “No indeed. I think some of these organizations are shrill and anti-female, and I am not a crusader for women’s rights. Women don’t have rights—as women only. They have human rights. That’s what I crusade for.”\(^{262}\) In an article published eight months later, Calderone declared that, “for women to strike out at men at this moment is not only unwise and counterproductive, but inhuman and therefore self defeating.”\(^{263}\) Finally, infusing a personal objection, in a letter responding to a middle aged woman who wrote to Calderone pleading with her to join the women’s movement, Calderone replied that as a Quaker she “cannot feel at one with any group that tries to put down another human being. The fact that women have been so ‘put down’ by males for so many centuries doesn’t give us the license to retaliate in kind.”\(^{264}\)

Calderone’s opposition reveals that her position is not actually anti-feminist; it is anti-radical feminist. Radical feminists denounced men, society, and sexual norms, all areas in which Calderone stood on relatively traditional ground. She opposed radicals such as Shulamith Firestone and Pam Allen who, at the end of 1967 founded New York Radical Women, an organization whose first principle stated that it took “woman’s side

\(^{260}\) Nat Lehrman, “Playboy Interview: Dr. Mary Calderone,” 238.
\(^{261}\) Nat Lehrman, “Playboy Interview: Dr. Mary Calderone,” 238.
\(^{262}\) Nat Lehrman, “Playboy Interview: Dr. Mary Calderone,” 238.
\(^{264}\) Mary Steichen Calderone to Anne Brady, August 14, 1970, in Box 14: 230, Calderone Papers.
in everything,” and asked “not if something is ‘reformist,’ ‘radical’, ‘revolutionary,’ or ‘moral,’” but whether it was “good for women or bad for women?” Moreover, in her groundbreaking 1970 work “The Dialectic of Sex,” Firestone called for the “sexual freedom of all woman and children,” where “all forms of sexuality would be allowed and indulged.” As radical feminist Robin Morgan proclaimed, “more and more, I begin to think of a worldwide Women’s Revolution as the only hope for life on the planet.” According to radical feminist Kate Millett “a sexual revolution would require…the negative aura with which sexual activity has generally been surrounded would necessarily be eliminated, together with the double standard and prostitution. The goal of the revolution would be a permissive single standard of sexual freedom.” By the early 1970s, SIECUS and Calderone were veering more in the direction of political participation, but they were certainly not about to endorse a women’s revolution as part of their sexual health agenda. Understanding the sexual militancy latent in radical feminist ideology, it becomes clear why Calderone disproved of it and dismissed any notion of adopting their sexual tactics.

Her distaste for radical feminism, however, does not mean she had to dismiss feminism completely. In a December 1970 article entitled “It’s Really the Men who Need Liberating,” Calderone wrote that, “women simply cannot run this world alone. But neither can men! Together they can do it, and much, much better than it is being run at present. Together, both as individuals and as the two sexual collectives, they can help

and support each other...”269 While Calderone deemed this concept “men’s liberation,” this approach was also feminist, albeit liberal, not radical, feminism. Despite her feminist views, Calderone and SIECUS did not engage with any leading liberal feminist groups.

NOW, or the National Organization of Women embodied the tenets of liberal, or egalitarian feminists. Its statement of purpose called for the achievement of “true equality for all women in America...a fully equal partnership of the sexes...in truly equal partnership with men.”270 Thus, they were not anti-men. Whereas radical feminists opposed men and the patriarchy implicitly, liberal feminists opposed patriarchal institutions.271 Morgan called NOW the “‘NAACP of the women’s movement’ because it fights within the system,” just as Calderone and SIECUS did. And while not as apparently concerned with sexuality as the radical feminist movement, liberal feminists also cared deeply about sexual rights. In fact, in 1969, liberal feminist Betty Friedan called the right to an abortion and contraception “an inalienable right.” In the early 1970s, feminists “prodded the schools to teach that women could learn the same subjects as men, and they pushed to eliminate sex stereotypes in school materials.”272 Here, while supportive of the ideas of liberal feminism, Calderone did not follow their education agenda. In fact, during these years, Calderone controversially supported certain evangelicals, specifically Marabel Morgan, displaying “striking generosity toward a

269 Calderone, “It’s Really the Men Who Need Liberating.” 28. See also Olaf Palme, “The Emancipation of Man,” [lecture, Women’s National Democratic Club, Washington D.C., June 8, 1970], in Box 15: 238, Calderone Papers. Swedish Prime Minister Palme discusses the concept of “male liberation” in a lecture given five months prior. In a note on the lecture, Calderone writes, “very interesting that quite independently, Mr. Palme said the same thing as I in almost the same words—about 5 months before I did. We had never communicated. –MSC.”
270 Castro, American Feminism, 46.
271 Castro, American Feminism, 49.
conservative evangelical despite the personal attacks on her by some in the Christian Right.”

Calderone defended Morgan, who wrote books advising women to submit to their husbands “out of ‘feeling of camaraderie’ that they both shared the goal of ‘the real liberation of women’” as well the reality that Morgan’s book probably reached a population that SIECUS did not. Calderone failed to realize that the feminist agenda of sex education could also reach a population that SIECUS did not. It was clear that Calderone’s personal ideology charted SIECUS’ course. Her behavior angered and drove away certain SIECUS board members. While some sex educators, including Lester Kirkendall, supported the feminists approach, most, including Calderone, “failed to include sex equitable sexual attitudes, knowledge and behavior,” and continued to depict “the male as the instinctual sexual initiator and the female as the passive, morally pure sex object.”

Calderone’s connection to feminism, or lack thereof, once again speaks to SIECUS’ political place in Sixties history. The connections between feminism and sex education were there. Political alliances could have formed and feminists might have joined in the battle against conservative attacks. Instead, Calderone sought connection more with religious and medical groups and opposed the feminists’ vision of sex education.

In a moment of profound self-reflection, in 1971, Calderone admitted that her outlook was informed by her role as a scientist, not a political activist. She wrote:

---

274 Irvine, *Talk about Sex*, 87.
275 June Dobb Butts to Joyce D. Fleming, May 7, 1976; June Dobb Butts to Mary Steichen Calderone, May 7, 1976; both in Carton 12: Folder 555; EHM Papers. Note that this letter of resignation is not located in Calderone’s archive but Emily Hartshorne Mudd’s.
276 Moran, *Teaching Sex*, 197.
I’m an individual caught in a moment of tremendous human evolution, an evolution that encompasses many aspects, including the sexual. Obviously, I can’t—and don’t want to—think or behave like a teenager any loner; even though I communicate with young people on many levels. This mean I become caught in some of my own convictions—for example, my really profound belief that sex belongs primarily in marriage. As a scientist and observer, I know my belief runs counter to the current trend. So what am I to do? I can’t stop society from evolving and I can’t forcer other people to adhere to my personal beliefs. No single individual can; not even Gandhi. No even Jesus—we’re still struggling to interpret and live up to the ideals he propagated. Thus my own life is a paradox in a very real sense. Many of the things I’m open-minded about as a scientist are closed subjects to me personally. But I think this makes me bend over backward to behave with integrity as a scientist. I will struggle to reshape my personal views, though, and I’m constantly learning, growing and changing.277

Three years after that confession, Calderone proved her commitment to constantly learn, grow and change. SIECUS finally embraced the political agenda it had shirked for so long. Though imperfect, it was a more definitive step in the liberal political direction.

Lessons Learned

In 1974, after much of the energy of the Sixties movements had dissipated or taken new forms, SIECUS finally engaged in its most aggressive counter to the conservative attacks. SIECUS adopted a new, decidedly more political, mission statement. “Ironically,” Moran astutely comments, “the right-wing attack on sex education in the late 1960s had opened the curriculum further to precisely the kinds of sexual liberalism that conservatives most feared.”278 SIECUS refocused its vision from establishing “sexual health as a human entity” to demanding “sexual choice as a human right.”279 The organization finally shed its political self-consciousness and asserted a markedly political agenda. Laden with a twinge of anti-conservative protest, the new statement declared:

---

277 Lehrman, “Playboy Interview: Dr. Mary Calderone,” 240.
278 Moran, Teaching Sex, 195
Sex education, at any age, cannot be effective as long as it occurs in a society, which, in many of its aspects, inhibits rational assessment of sexuality as a central force in human behavior. SIECUS’ role is to identify and publicize social policies, which perpetuate unhealthy attitudes about sexuality and foster alienation from self and others.\textsuperscript{280}

The new charge included ten points of purpose ranging from embracing masturbation and different sexual orientations to providing contraception to minors to using explicitly sexual materials to confronting problems of sex and racism.\textsuperscript{281} The approach confronted racism for the first time.

In 1976, Kirkendall also published \textit{A New Bill of Sexual Rights and Responsibilities} signed by many of the leading sex educators of the time. The second right called for “developing a sense of equity between the sexes.”\textsuperscript{282} While still calling for a humanistic approach, SIECUS finally incorporated and recognized the unique challenges of gender and class in ways that it had not previously. This was hardly revolutionary by 1976, but Calderone did not sign the \textit{New Bill}.

Was Mary Calderone successful in her “final mission”? Certainly, the movement she propagated was instrumental in paving a new course in sex education history. However, by the time she transitioned out of her primary role at SIECUS in the late 1970s and early 1980s, conservative politicians had largely succeeded in blocking that path. When Reagan assumed the presidency in 1980, Calderone’s vision of sex education suffered an excruciating blow. “The new president appointed to every office related to sex education, contraception, or abortion someone who opposed all of the above,” wrote historian Donald Critchlow. In 1981, staunch conservatives Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Jeremiah Denton (R-AL) introduced the Adolescent Family Life Act or “Chastity Bill” which effectively overturned any legislation that allowed for birth control dissemination, family planning or access to abortion. The Act called for “chastity education” or “abstinence-only” education. Calderone’s plea for sex positivity became a distant memory.

Other liberal movements also receded as the 1970s drew to a close. They too fell prey to the conservative backlash. Yet, despite their recession, those movements achieved more tangible and lasting political victories. While feminist activity declined by the late 70s and early 80s, the women’s movement could still claim Roe v. Wade and Title IX as major victories. And though civil rights leaders still struggled to achieve true equality,

---

the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 served as hard-won steps in the battle for equality. Yet, progressive sex education crumbled under conservatism almost immediately.

Ultimately then, the sex education movement was not as markedly successful as many other contemporaneous currents of social change. The movement was not sustainable, in part due to the attacks it underwent, but primarily because it failed to see and shape itself into the wider political and social climate of the Sixties. Calderone perceived sex education to be the fulfillment of a human right, something to be accessed by all of society. But she failed to see that a movement that encompassed all of society could have drawn from similar resources as individualized movements such as civil rights or feminism. In fact, drawing from more particularistic movements may have in fact allowed for a more nuanced and better-crafted definition of sex education. Human rights do not mean applying one notion of correctness to all situations. Rather, human rights are based on appropriate treatment of people based on their unique identities. However, Calderone’s overly generalized approach blocked many contingents from potentially involving themselves: feminists, gay rights advocates, civil rights leaders, and more. Had her movement woven itself into the fabrics of these other Sixties movements, perhaps the movement would have been less vulnerable and isolated from the powerful zeitgeist of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Calderone’s “sex positive” agenda faded almost as soon as it appeared. Despite that reality, her legacy is still remarkable and relevant. Calderone’s importance remains through her ideas rather than her actions, for while the SIECUS curriculum may have been cast aside by school boards and conservative administrations the ideas endured.
There is still much to be learned from Calderone’s constructed vocabulary of sexual positivism. During the Sixties, Calderone waded through a confusing sea of public hyper-sexualization amid private sexual-repression. She viewed it as her “gift” to help people “honor their own sexuality.”\(^{285}\) She understood that American society’s schizophrenic approach did more than frustrate teenagers—it caused disease, perpetuated sexism, eroded relationships and imbued individuals with unnecessary burdens of guilt.

Today, American society needs the language of sex positivity more than ever. Politicians and even many educators narrowly argue that we must choose between abstinence education and teaching birth control. They have lost fluency in Calderone’s vocabulary. Instead of fighting over particulars of where and how to teach birth control or dispense condoms, society should focus on restoring a framework of sex-positivity. In the guideline for starting a sex education program, SIECUS educators stipulated that after liking children, the most important characteristic of a successful sex education teacher is “a positive attitude toward sex.”\(^{286}\)

In 1961, Calderone lamented that, “the gift of sex is something the American culture has abnegated.”\(^{287}\) Her mission then, in the formation of SIECUS three years later “can be said to have been…the development in society of better attitudes about human sexuality, attitudes that might hopefully be reflected eventually in improved sex legislation…and most especially, in the surer achievement by the young of positive gender identity.”\(^{288}\) Fifty years later, the subject of sex and sex education still remains

---

\(^{285}\) Calderone, *Particular Passions*, 263.


more social taboo than welcomed gift. A new movement is in order; this time, however, 

*all* liberal hands are needed on deck.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Archival Collections

Charles Stern Ascher Papers, Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New York City, New York.

Emily Hartshorne Mudd Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Florence Clothier Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Mary Steichen Calderone Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Mary Steichen Calderone Video Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Books


**NEWSPAPERS & PERIODICALS**


*Time*. Full Text Available from time.com

**SECONDARY SOURCES**

**Books**


Gilbert, Lynn and Gaylen Moore. *Particular Passions: Talks with Women Who Have*


Articles


Dissertations


Other

Yeshiva University Observer. Available online via www.yuobserver.com