

THEN AND NOW

ABORTION RIGHTS ACTIVISM IN CANADA

A REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE PRIMER



1970 - 2020



CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE 1970 ABORTION CARAVAN

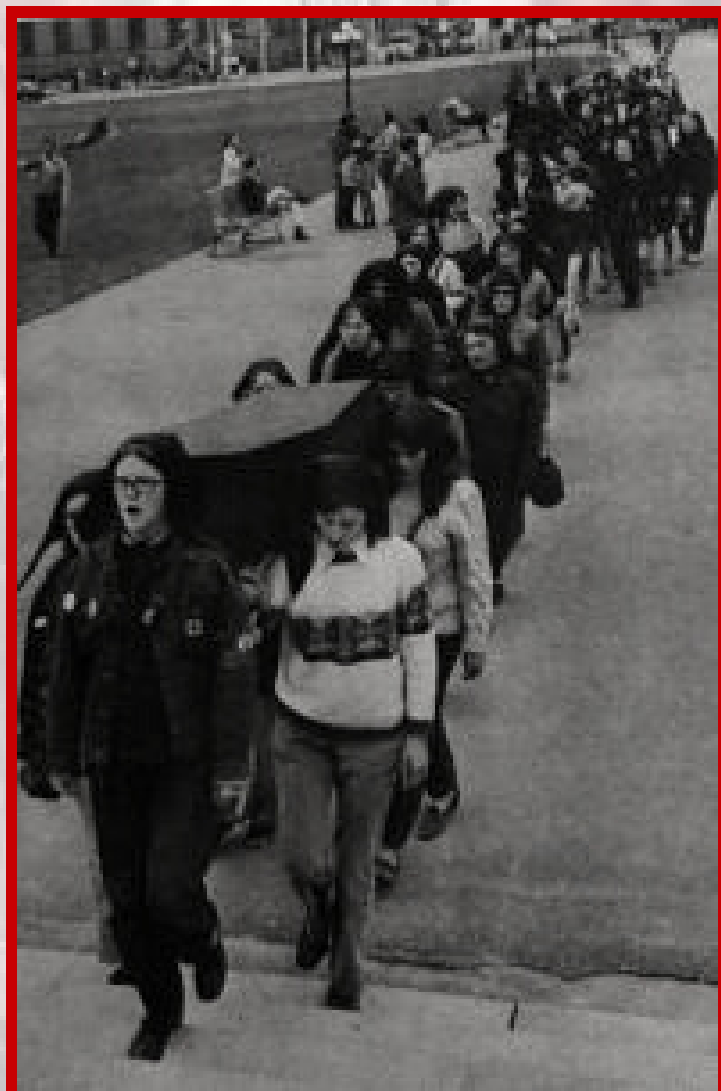


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EDITORS' THOUGHTS:

A WORD OF THANKS FROM TWO FEMINISTS, FOR WHOM ABORTION HAS ALWAYS BEEN LEGAL

11 May 2020

Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to engage with our project, "Then and Now: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the 1970 Abortion Caravan". This preface is the first in a series of position papers that our feminist collective will release to mark the occasion. The Caravan was a second-wave feminist action that played a central role in the formation of Canada's abortion rights movement. In May 1970, seventeen women set out on a two-week trek from Vancouver to Ottawa to reject Canada's criminal abortion law and demand free legal access. In the papers that follow, we underscore the significance of the Caravan in Canadian history and showcase how pro-choice organizing in this country has evolved over the past 50 years. This project reflects the collaborative effort of feminist organizations from across Canada, which is on land that was and still is known to First Nations people as Turtle Island.

Though we are explicit in our pro-choice stance, we recognize that abortion is a complex and polarizing issue. It was when the Caravaners demanded legal reform in 1970, and it remains so today. We expect that readers will have a wide range of views on abortion. You may identify as pro-choice, along with [77% of recently-pollled Canadians](#) who support a woman's right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. If "supportive" does not characterize your position on this issue, thank you, nevertheless, for engaging with us here. Abortion is difficult to talk about, both privately and publicly. Central to living in a democracy, however, is having the freedom to dialogue on a variety of social issues - even about those which we feel ambivalent or disagree.

If you have had an abortion, you will bring this lived experience with you as you engage with our work. For some, the experience will have been positive and affirming; for others, painful or simply practical; for others still, an event you may not have reflected upon for years. If you know or have supported someone who has terminated a pregnancy, you too bring lived experience to this issue. We encourage you to take time and reflect on that experience - whatever it may be. If you feel totally disconnected or opposed to abortion, take pause and consider why.

Also consider this: [1 in 3 women in Canada will have an abortion in their lifetime](#). There is thus a high likelihood you know someone who has terminated a pregnancy, someone who is currently deciding whether to, or someone who will do so in the future. What is more likely is that you know several people who have had an abortion -

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they may be your mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters, friends, lovers, acquaintances, or colleagues. These people are also your fellow citizens, and their right to abortion has long been secure under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* - specifically, the Section 7 right to "life, liberty and security of person". Madame Justice Bertha Wilson forcefully underscored this point when she ruled in [R. v Morgentaler \(1988\)](#) - the Supreme Court case that decriminalized abortion in Canada:

"This decision is one that will have profound psychological, economic and social consequences for the pregnant woman. The circumstances giving rise to it can be complex and varied and there may be, and usually are, powerful considerations militating in opposite directions. It is a decision that deeply reflects the way the woman thinks about herself and her relationship to others and to society at large. It is not just a medical decision; it is a profound social and ethical one as well. Her response to it will be the response of the whole person."

Although the Caravaners were not directly involved in this historic ruling, they were among the first social activists to draw public attention to the inhumane nature of Canada's criminal abortion law. While [Dr. Henry Morgentaler](#)'s legal crusades also drew mass attention and have been [written about extensively](#)—and rightly so—the 1970 Abortion Caravan is also central to our movement's history, though lesser-known. As author [Karin Wells](#) (2020) shows in her new book, [The Abortion Caravan: When Women Shut Down Government in the Battle for the Right to Choose](#), even the women of the Caravan did not realize the depth of their impact for many years.

For us—two 30-something women who research and engage in pro-choice organizing—the Caravaners' impact is clear. These women belong to [a cadre of feminist leaders from the 1970s and '80s](#) who fostered broad public support for abortion, which paved the way for feminist battles in clinics, the courts and the streets that ultimately led to legal reform. Since then, hundreds of thousands of Canadians have terminated pregnancies under the care of compassionate, medically-licensed providers. Many of the original Caravaners are still with us and politically active, and we are grateful to organize with them. As young women, we value these cross-generational relationships and have learned much from our feminist foremothers about the meaning of the second-wave mantra "the personal is political". We hope this project results in more Canadians feeling similarly grateful for the Caravaners and their consequential work. On that note, we turn it over now to an original Caravaner.

REFLECTIONS ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY: FROM DAWN HEMINGWAY (CARRELL), ONE OF 17 WOMEN ON THE 1970 ABORTION CARAVAN

The 1960s were exceptional times for our generation. As women, youth, students, and workers, we rose up and joined together to fight for our rights and to gain more control over our lives in Canada and around the world. As activists, we waged struggles against racism and sexism, in support of a healthy environment, as well as to improve wages and working conditions and to organize the unorganized. Tuition fees made it difficult for working-class youth to attend university. As students, we demanded access and a place in decision-making on campuses. On the streets, we marched in opposition to wars of aggression launched by the United States against Vietnam, Cambodia, and other countries. Our opposition extended to the role of the Canadian government. Everywhere, young people questioned and critiqued the status quo and the prevailing culture - and women stood in the front ranks.

As a key part of this upsurge, women's liberation groups sprung up across Canada. We demanded the right to control our own bodies as a necessary part of gaining control over our lives. This included the right to birth control, abortion and all health-related services that are vital for a good quality of life. Abortion remained an offence codified in Section 251 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*. Omnibus bill C-150, which came into law in 1969 under the Trudeau government, had been touted as "legalization" (Wells 2020: Appendix 1). It "allowed" women access to abortion if they received "approval" from a Therapeutic Abortion Committee (TAC) composed of three doctors determined the pregnancy endangered the mental, emotional or physical health of the mother. What proponents of the Bill failed to point out was that the bill did not require hospitals to set up TACs or provide abortions; that many small and rural communities across Canada did not even have hospitals; that abortion clinics continued to be illegal; and, most importantly, that women did not have the right to make this choice for themselves.



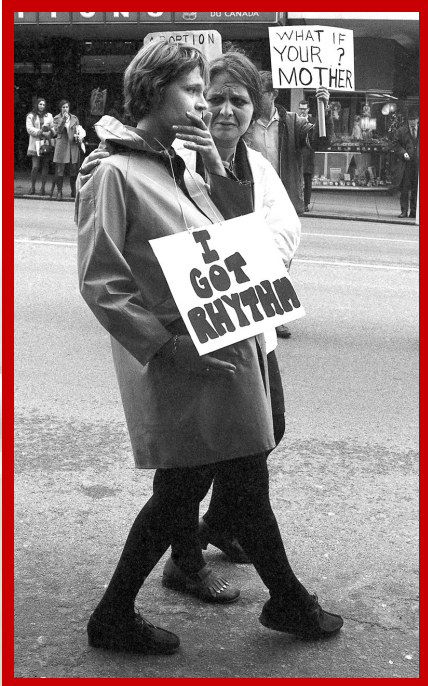


PHOTO CREDITS: Rhoda Rosenfeld

Failure to provide this critical health service affected thousands upon thousands of our sisters, mothers and daughters in multiple ways – the most horrific being the death of more than 2000 women in Canada every year due to botched "back street" abortions. This had to stop!

Free abortion on demand became a national rallying call. In 1970, those of us in the Vancouver Women's Caucus put forward a proposal to women's liberation groups across the country: "Join together in a Caravan from the West coast to Ottawa demanding abortion as a right for all women and its removal from the *Criminal Code!*" (Wells 2020: Appendix 2). On 27 April, we began our long trek – led by a Volkswagen van, with a coffin on top representing all the women who had died from unsafe abortions. Painted on the side panel was the slogan: "Abortion is Our Right!" and "Smash Capitalism!", which recognized the systemic roots of women's oppression and exploitation. We were activists and organizers, and in partnership with women across the country, we paved the way for events in cities and towns as we travelled from province to province. Guerrilla theatre, demonstrations, debates, and discussions put the right to abortion in the spotlight everywhere.

Outraged when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and key Cabinet ministers refused to meet with us in Ottawa, we were undeterred. Once again, we displayed our organizing skills by planning a large demonstration around the Centennial flame outside the Parliament buildings – seemingly the culmination of our trek to Ottawa. At the same time, behind the scenes, a small group of us dressed in "proper" ladies' attire. With mysteriously obtained passes, we entered the House of Commons visitors' gallery – undetected.

Once successfully inside, one after another we rose up and began shouting from our gallery seats that abortion be removed from the *Criminal Code* and that access be recognized as a right for all women. Security rushed over to remove us but were shocked and angered to discover that we had chained ourselves to the gallery seats! Off they went for wire cutters. Ultimately, we forced the closure of Parliament for the first time in Canadian history! Our work had only begun, but the right to abortion was now squarely on the agenda of the country from coast to coast.

Looking back 50 years later, what have we accomplished? One thing for sure: it is wonderful to see a new generation of young women come forward to take up this work. All of us together, we have and are making a difference. Abortion is no longer in the *Criminal Code*. Access is better, although still an issue. The gender wage gap has shrunk, yet remains. There is more recognition of the leadership role of women in multiple spheres and more women-centered health care options, including practitioners with that focus. Although wars of aggression, poverty, racism, sexism and other challenges remain in society, we've made a difference in those areas as well. Indeed, one lesson of the Caravan remains clear, and that is our determination to take things into our own hands and be our own change-makers. We didn't wait for politicians to agree with or represent us in 1970. We set about taking on the challenge ourselves. Whether back then or today, when women—younger and older—work together, organize ourselves and speak our minds, we can move mountains!



PHOTO CREDIT: [Charlotte Bedard](#)

A CALL TO ACTION IN THE MONTH OF MAY

The 1970 Abortion Caravan culminated on Mother's Day weekend in mid-May. The 11th was particularly significant, as it was the day the Caravaners forced the closure of Parliament in Ottawa, our nation's capital. Fifty years later—on 11 May 2020—we mark this important anniversary by embarking on a virtual "trek" of our own - a 2020 Abortion Caravan, so to speak. Our feminist collective has created a series of position papers to educate the public on pro-choice organizing in Canada from 1970 onwards. The following papers build upon each other and will be posted to Action Canada's website in succession. Upon completion, this project will showcase our movement's gains, concerns and current demands.

- Abortion Rights Activism in Canada: 1970 to 1988
- Decolonize Abortion Care: Reproductive Justice for Indigenous Communities
- Expanding Abortion Care Training and Provision
- New Brunswick Must Fully Fund Abortion: #SaveClinic554
- International Solidarity and Abortion Access
- Abortion Care Includes Trans and Gender Non-Binary People
- Comprehensive Sex Education and Abortion Care for Youth
- Countering Opponents
- Destigmatizing Abortion in Canada

These papers were written by people whose intersectional identities reflect our movement's diversity. We are young and old, women and men, and people who vary by ethnicity and identify as LGBTQ+. Some of us have had abortions; others have not.

May is a month of renewal and growth that transitions us between the spring equinox and summer solstice. It is a time to come together to honour maternity and the matriarchs in our lives. It is about celebrating birth. Whether or not your political values align with ours, the reality is that abortion is critical to maternal healthcare and thus central to a celebration of life. Our feminist collective thinks it imperative that Canadians reflect on all pregnancy outcomes, which includes abortion, and hope our project facilitates such reflection.



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A FINAL NOTE ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

When our collective began meeting in Fall 2019 to plan for the Caravan's 50th anniversary, we had no idea that life would change so drastically. COVID-19 disrupted the commemorative plans we had long been making and forced us to move our in-person actions online. It is important to the members of our collective that we physically gather to honour the 1970 Abortion Caravan—and that is what we will do—but only when we can all be safe.

COVID-19 has also made the demands we outline in the position papers that follow all the more urgent. Canada's patchwork quilt of abortion access hurts us all. Without providers terminating pregnancies after 23 weeks and 6 days gestation, some Canadians will be forced to choose between travelling to the United States where later term abortions are available or carrying unwanted pregnancies to term. This pandemic is thus a forceful reminder of how relevant the Caravaners' demands for free, safe and legal abortion are today, as they were in 1970.



PHOTO CREDIT: [Rise Up! Feminist Digital Archive](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following feminist organizations came together to create this project: [Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights](#), the [Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics](#), [SHORE Centre](#), [National Abortion Federation Canada](#), the [Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada](#), [Choice in Health](#), the [Canadian Association of Midwives](#), and the [Rise Up! Feminist Digital Archive](#). We are grateful for the intellectual and technical support that each of these organizations has provided.

We want to give special recognition to our co-editors and contributing authors Jaime Nikolaou and Robyn Schwarz. We also extend thanks to other contributing authors, whom we have alphabetized by surname: Jill Doctoroff, Frédérique Chabot, Ness Fraser, Clare Hacksel, Nick van der Graaf, Dawn Hemingway, Rachel Hurst, Brockenshire Lemiski, Megan McCann, Laura O'Connor, Maria O'Leary, Karen Pearlston, and Cathy Walker. We are immensely grateful to the following people for their editorial support: Joyce Arthur, Lyndsey Butcher, Carolyn Egan, Sandy Fainer, Bonnie Fox, Carly Greco, Jordana Greenblatt, Clare Hacksel, David Jefferess, Sheri Krieger, Karen Pearlston, Jacqueline Potvin, Bojana Radan, Judy Rebick, Michelle Robidoux, Margaret Ross, Janet Solberg, and Karin Wells - along with others who wished to be thanked anonymously. Alicia Langill and Jo Scofield supported us invaluablely with graphic design, as well as copy-editing. Finally, we want to thank Nahanni Fontaine, and extend gratitude to all Indigenous women across Turtle Island whose labour, knowledge and expertise went into developing many of the ideas we discuss here. As settlers who are not native to this land doing sexual and reproductive health work, we recognize that we are part of a history of colonization and acknowledge that Canada and Canadians are still occupying Indigenous land.

As a feminist collective, we have learned so much by collaborating with each other on this project, as the Caravaners did 50 years ago. We are proud to carry their legacy forward on our own virtual trek in May 2020. Both then and now, all are welcome on our Abortion Caravan.

Yours in Choice,

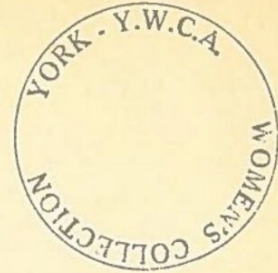
The Abortion Caravan, 1970-2020

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ABORTION CARAVAN DEMANDS

WE DEMAND:

- I. REPEAL - That in this session of Parliament the government sponsor a bill removing all mention of abortion from the Criminal Code.

PARDON -- That all persons charged under sections 209, 237 and 238 of the Criminal Code be pardoned by the Minister of Justice.
- II. That the government provide access to FREE AND SAFE BIRTH CONTROL for all women.
- III. The construction of women's community-controlled clinics to provide free birth control, abortion on demand, and pre-natal and post-natal care; to be financed 50% by Federal funds and 50% by Provincial funds to come from taxing corporate profits specifically for this purpose.

BRIEF OF THE ABORTION CARAVAN, MAY 1970

We women are not here to beg male politicians for our rights. We are here to tell you what our needs are, and to find out whether you are prepared to act. We demand answers on behalf of all the women in this country who are today wondering if they are pregnant; for all the women who can only worry about their futures since they cannot plan them. Women must find answers today and every month. We cannot wait for the male politicians' months and years of useless discussions. We want answers today to our demands. We will get more answers this week and next week and next month from our local hospitals and doctors.

THE PRINCIPLES OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO ABORTION

Get Your Laws Off Our Backs!

We women will have control of our bodies. We can no longer put up with the present situation where our entire lives are controlled by the medical profession and the politicians and lawmakers - all men. Trudeau's "Just Society" has no place in the wombs of the women of Canada. No one should make a decision for a woman about how to control her body or when and how she will have her children. It is her future, her very life, as well as that of her children, that is being decided, and a truly 'just' society must recognize the basic human rights of fifty percent of the people.

We have been given a reformed abortion law. This law has done nothing but give the doctors the right to do as they wish. If these men think that young girls should be punished for being pregnant they can say no to an abortion. If they, who have never been pregnant or missed one menstrual period in their lives, think that an abortion is more 'traumatic' than bearing an unwanted child, they can say no. If these doctors are too busy making thousands of dollars a month from women patients, and have not got room in their schedules for a woman with no money, they can say no to an abortion. And no woman can even be considered for the abortion board unless she can find a doctor, and in most cases two psychiatrists, who will take her case to the board. Nineteen women out of twenty who want abortions are refused by their doctors before they even get to the hospital board.

Therapeutic abortion boards, that is, a half-dozen little male gods who sit at a table once a month, can say yes or no to the desperation and aspirations of thousands of women in every city of this country. What blatant male supremacist arrogance! We demand immediate repeal of all abortion laws by this government and we are going to rid ourselves of those hospital boards.

We Have No Rights Without Birth Control

Women do not even have the possibility of control of our lives without access to birth control. Our training for jobs is irrelevant when we cannot plan when and how we will be able to work. Therefore, we are forced to marry to support ourselves rather than to plan our lives according to our individual interests. There must be totally

free access to birth control for all young women from puberty, so that they can have the same freedom to choose their futures as young men do. We want real equality for a change.

In the world of the 1970's there is no more room for the double standard. Young women will no longer accept the hypocritical ideas of a sick society that teaches them how to sell their bodies in home economics courses, on T.V., in the advertisements of every magazine and then turns around to say that they as women have no right to sexual expression. A truly moral society would teach young people the responsibilities of their relationships and give them the means to be responsible - for themselves. Let us stop warping the personalities of young women by teaching them to be afraid of their basic human needs, and allow them to enjoy being human through control over their bodies.

At present, millions of women know nothing about birth control. Even the Planned Parenthood Federation, one of the few sources of information, refuses to give the facts to young unmarried women. We do not need any more contradictory moral values pushed at us, we just need the information in order to be able to make our own decisions about our lives.

No More Forced Birth Control

We are absolutely opposed to all forms of 'population control' by any government which are nothing more than forcing birth control and sterility on certain women because they are poor. When we demand women's control over our bodies we mean total control. If we are poor, we demand the same rights as rich women, that is to have children or not, as we see fit. Birth control and abortion is our right, but should not be forced on us. Some of the men in this government are against abortion on the grounds that it is murder of a potential human being, while all the governments of this country allow their welfare departments to permit abortions for women on welfare only if they agree to sterilization and this in return for a mere pittance to feed their existing children! The hypocrisy of this government is clear to all women - let rich women do as they like and force the rest of us to suffer.

While Canada has refused us the right to abortion, refused to make birth control available to us, it does want to make them available to the third world. In Latin America, in Brazil and Trinidad, where Canadian corporations such as Brascan, owned by present and former members of the Liberal government, make profits from the resources belonging to some of the poorest people of the world, Canadian and American governments think they can deter the peoples' just demands for self determination by 'population control'. As long as the rights of women, children, Indians, Blacks, workers and students are being denied, as long as any living person suffers injustice, we can not listen to arguments about the rights of the foetus : In this society concern for the foetus is not matched by an equal concern for the living child.

Maurice Strong, president of the Canadian International Development Agency, our representative on the U.N. Fund for Population Activities Advisory Board, is considering joining a \$15 million

project for birth control for the third world. But, the federal government has established no domestic policy on birth control, except a policy to avoid it, by saying it is a matter for provincial governments.

One in ten families in this country are maintained solely by women, who can earn an average wage which is half the wages that men are paid. Most Indian and Metis women of the rural areas of the North cannot find jobs. How do all these women afford the present cost of \$300-\$400 for an illegal safe abortion? They cannot. Where and how do they get birth control when they want it? They do not. But when they are forced on welfare because they cannot find jobs or cannot earn enough to pay the extra expenses of day-care, clothes, carfare, medical care, etc., the state suddenly sees fit to declare them unfit to have children.

Women Bear Total Responsibility For Children

This society that presumes to command all women to care for unborn fetuses gives no help at all in the care of living children. Every woman must take all responsibility for her children as best she can. The Childrens Aid will not help a woman with her children unless she will give them up.

Besides the right to have our children when we want them we demand the means to bear and raise them as they deserve. If it is our responsibility to reproduce this society, then the society has a responsibility to us. Childbearing is simply one function of women, it should not be our punishment.

As long as we must assume the full care of children we have basic needs that must be met. We demand laws from this government that give us the right to maternity leave with pay, security of our jobs during childbirth, and equal pay. We demand free pre-natal and post-natal care in clinics staffed by the best doctors and specialists, and controlled not by big business but by the people. No more clinics with inexperienced interns! We and our future children have an undeniable right to the best medical care available, and yet there is not one insurance plan existing that covers the complete costs of childbirth. Why should we go on paying for nothing? Why should we put up with haphazard treatment and callous indifference?

We demand low-cost housing for all mothers alone with children. We earn half of what men do and cannot afford inflated rents so our children must live in hovels or crowded homes. We demand child-care facilities now! The government maintains an economy that forces women already employed in the full time job of housework, to take jobs in order to exist. If the government wants us to work, which it obviously does since it employs large numbers of women at half-wage, it must take equal responsibility with us for child-care. It must set up child-care centers right across this country, especially for its employees. It must help us see to it that all corporations who benefit from women's half-wages provide child-care facilities to be controlled by us. We think this society owes us decent child-care but we will not let the bureaucracies and corporations run our childrens' lives the way they do ours.

IT IS OUR RIGHT TO GIVE OUR CHILDREN LIFE AS WE DECIDE.
IT IS OUR RIGHT TO GIVE OUR CHILDREN THE LIFE THEY DESERVE.

OUR DEMANDS:

1. **REPEAL** - That in this session of Parliament the government sponsor a bill removing all mention of abortion from the Criminal Code.

PARDON - That all persons charged under sections 209, 237 and 238 of the Criminal Code be pardoned by the Minister of Justice.

Politicians, doctors, hospital boards all tell us to wait and see, give the new law a chance to work. Health minister Munro has the audacity to say that any woman in Canada who wants a legal abortion can now get one. Trudeau passes the buck by saying we should go and talk to the medical profession. We are fed up with lies, stalls and diversions.

The new law is just a piece of political propaganda. It does nothing to protect the medical and human rights of women; it only protects the doctors and hospitals while we continue to be treated as we have always been treated. Mr. M. Ball, Director of Student Health Service at the University of Alberta maintains that the number of abortions performed in many hospitals is smaller than before the law was changed. An article in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix quoted a similar decrease for Saskatchewan. In Vancouver, only a few more abortions per month are performed under the new law (21 per month in 1969 and 25 per month in the first three months of 1970). Many hospitals across the country have no therapeutic abortion boards. The vast majority of abortions are still illegal (one estimate is that only one or two of every abortions performed are legal). In Toronto alone there are 25,000 estimated illegal abortions every year.

Every year in Canada 1000 to 2000 women die from illegal abortions. From 20,000 to 40,000 women enter hospitals with complications from illegal abortions. One out of every four women in Canada has an abortion sometime in her life. But these women were not the people who determined what the new law should say. Rather the new law follows closely the recommendations which the Canadian Medical Association made in 1968. We say that doctors should serve the needs of the people, not dictate to them. The Committee on Health and Welfare set up to study abortion made little effort to hear women speak on their own behalf. The token discussions around the rights of women meant nothing. The government bill was not even reviewed by this committee but rather was presented to a committee of the Justice Department which held no open hearings and in which no women spoke. And the law discriminates against all women who haven't the money and connections to find a sympathetic doctor who will plead her case.

Women in Canada are sick of politicians and doctors deciding what is best for them. It is the supreme insult that a woman pregnant with a child she does not want must prove to doctors that she is unstable, incapable of being a good mother, a failure, mentally ill, in order to get an abortion. We want an end to all laws that give control to governments, doctors and hospital boards etc., rather than to women. We want abortion removed from the Criminal Code.

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11. We demand access to FREE and SAFE BIRTH CONTROL for all women.

The introduction of the Pill has created the myth that birth control is freely available in this society. In fact, we have no way of knowing what forms of birth control may be permanently detrimental to our health. Women are barraged with a mass of contradictory information in newspapers and magazines. We live in fear because the most effective forms of birth control - the PILL and IUD - are also those forms which we are told may be most dangerous to our health.

The control over research lies in the hands of the drug companies. An example of this is a study that is being undertaken in Regina by the Community Health Clinic to study whether the Pill causes depression in women. The J.D. Zeale Company agreed to contribute pills for use in the study only if no findings of adverse effects would be published, and on the condition that nothing be published before the company looked at the findings. The priority of the drug companies is their profits, not our needs. Drug companies spend \$4,500 a year per doctor on advertising alone, and the drug industry earns the second highest profit rate of any industry.

The way that the Pill was tested shows that the drug companies are not concerned with women's health. The pill was introduced at a dosage of 10 milligrams (most women on the pill now take 1 or 2 milligrams) on Puerto Rican women about ten years ago. These same women suffered sterilization, development of masculine traits and many other forms of irreparable damage. The lives of these women are obviously expendable as far as the drug companies are concerned and their importance is nothing more than that of guinea pigs. But the wives and daughters of the directors of these pharmaceutical companies are not asked to volunteer for testing. The government and the medical association endorse this state of affairs.

Therefore, in order to ensure that all women have access to safe and free birth control, we demand the facts. We demand that the Food and Drug Directorate be responsible for disseminating information on all existing birth control and abortion methods, including information which is now secret. We demand that information on the hazards of the Pill be enclosed in all packages by law. As it stands now, many women do not receive adequate attention from doctors who prescribe pills; many doctors do not go into medical histories before they prescribe pills. Therefore women need access to information that would let them know when the Pill might be dangerous for them to take.

We demand that the Food and Drug Directorate assume its proper function of initiating and directing research into new and safe methods of birth control and abortion. We will no longer be condemned to the monopoly by the drug companies over birth control methods. How can we expect research into improving the IUD or other devices when they would reduce the profits of the drug companies? At present, IUD is unsafe because of the high incidence of pregnancy and cervical cancer. We know that this kind of birth control - i.e. a non drug type, would be best for women. It must be the responsibility of the government to research these new methods and make them free and freely available to all women.

Research should also be done on birth control for men. Only women are now forced to take the risks of drugs, suffer the side effects of the Pill and be used as guinea pigs. But birth control for women must be the first priority because we are forced, by society and by our biological function, to accept the consequences of what is a mutual act.

We demand that the Food and Drug Directorate implement this programme of research immediately, and that the programme be directed by representatives from women's community-controlled clinics in order to assure that the research will be relevant to our needs.

111. We demand the CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN'S COMMUNITY-CONTROLLED CLINICS to serve our needs and to implement our demand for free and safe birth control and abortion on demand.

Such clinics should disseminate free birth control to all women who want it; provide safe, painless abortions on demand; provide adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The staff and services of these clinics must be directed by the women of the community.

These clinics are to be financed 50% by Federal funds and 50% by Provincial funds. This money must come from taxing corporate profits specifically for this purpose.

Only when the woman of a community control their clinics can we put an end to the inhuman and haphazard treatment of women in hospitals and to the discrimination against those who cannot afford health care.

