

ABORTION AB

Toronto Committee to Defend Dr. Morgentaler
P.O.Box 186, Station F, Toronto, Ontario

February 28, 1974

AB 1-111

Dear Friends:

With less than two weeks to go, the Abortion Tribunal to Defend Dr. Morgentaler is promising to be a significant and exciting event. We have just received word that, after a fund-raising benefit which raised over \$1000 for transportation to Ottawa, over fifty people in Winnipeg have indicated their intention to attend the Tribunal. People in most other major cities and many smaller ones have also informed us that interest in attending the Tribunal is high and in most areas it is simply a matter of raising the necessary funds to travel to Ottawa.

In Toronto we are involved in all the final details for the Tribunal program, the International Women's Day Party and, of course, selling bus tickets for the trip to Ottawa. We suspect that many people who are planning to attend the Tribunal have not yet bought their tickets which are \$12. for unsalaried people and \$14 for salaried. Since the bus company requires a certified cheque before we leave and forty-eight hours notice if we need more buses, please contact us today to make arrangements to buy your ticket. Tickets will be available at the Party on March 8 by cash or certified cheque only and because of the confusion that last-minute ticket sales will create, we strongly advise against waiting until that time.

The importance of the Tribunal cannot be underestimated. The governments, both in Ottawa and Quebec, have been unrelenting in their attack on the abortion rights movement. The Tribunal was initially seen as an event which would not only expose the restrictive anti-abortion law but also provide a powerful argument for the dropping of all charges against Dr. Henry Morgentaler of Montreal, who at that time was the only public victim of this law.

Since that time additional charges have been laid against Dr. Yvan MacHabée, a colleague of Dr. Morgentaler. Justice Minister Jérôme Choquette recently decided to proceed on these charges under preferred indictment which will deny Dr. MacHabée the right to a preliminary hearing and take the case directly into trial. Joanne Cornax, the head nurse at Dr. Morgentaler's clinic, was also charged at the beginning of February with conspiracy to perform illegal abortion. This was at the same time that the Department of Internal Revenue raided the house of Dr. Morgentaler trying to find proof of income tax evasion. Finally, on February 21. seventeen police officers raided the office of Montreal gynecologist Dr. Robert Tanguay and took everyone into custody, including eight women waiting in the office, none of whom were there for abortions. Dr. Tanguay was detained overnight and charged on eight counts of performing illegal abortion in 1972, 1973 and 1974.

So it continues. Every day the abortion law exists women will be denied the right to safe, legal abortion, sometimes with tragic results. Individuals like Drs. Morgentaler, MacHabée, Tanguay and nurse Joanne Cornax, who seek only to provide their patients with competent medical care will be prevented from doing so by this barbaric law and those who enforce it. Without a massive public cry of protest, we can be sure that this list of public victims will continue to grow.

The Tribunal offers all supporters of women's right to abortion the opportunity to come together from all parts of the country to demand an immediate end to the public and private victimization taking place under the federal abortion law and the immediate repeal of that law.

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We urge you to plan to attend the Tribunal. Your support is also needed in many other ways. We need volunteers for the last minute details in the Toronto Defense Committee office (96 Gerrard Street East, 22nd Floor, Kerr Room). You can also help by providing sleeping accomodation for Tribunal participants on Saturday, March 9. Most people from across the country have exhausted all funds in travel expenses and cannot afford expensive hotels. Please phone the office (863-9999) if you have billeting space available reasonably accessible from downtown. Finally, funds are still urgently required to meet the many organizing costs of the Tribunal. This money must all be raised in Toronto because of the financial demands on other cities regarding transportation subsidies to Ottawa. If you have not already done so, please help by sending in your contribution today.

Finally, a word of thanks to the many people who have expressed their support for the work of the Toronto Committee to Defend Dr. Morgentaler in organizing this important event. All we need now to make March 9 a truly successful day is your participation!

ON TO OTTAWA!

Anna Cushman
Coordinator