

Two-hundred thousand women in Canada have illegal abortions every year.  
40,000 women are admitted to hospital with complications.  
5,000 suffer severe disability.  
At least 1,000 die.

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A safe illegal abortion performed by a qualified doctor costs from \$300 to \$1,000.  
A bad illegal abortion done by a butcher or quack is as low as \$10 and as high as \$100.  
A legal abortion in a hospital costs around \$50 under OMSIP.

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The average working woman in Canada earns around \$3,500 a year.  
10% of families are supported completely by the mother's earnings.

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Thousands of women try to abort themselves by such home remedies as knitting needles, bleach, Salvo tablets in the vagina, coat hangers, etc.

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A Toronto gynecologist says 25,000 illegal abortions are performed in the Toronto area each year.

THE ABORTION CARAVAN WILL ARRIVE IN OTTAWA ON MAY 8 AFTER STOPPING IN SEVERAL CITIES IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO.

for more information call  
923-6821 afternoons or  
964-7486 and  
925-1786 evenings.

VISIT THE BIRTH CONTROL CLINIC ABOVE THE ROYAL BANK AT HARBORD AND SPADINA FOR INFORMATION ON BIRTH CONTROL AND LEGAL ABORTION.

open Tues., Wed., and  
Thurs. nights from 7 to 9.

FOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF TIME, PLACE AND TOPIC OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION MEETINGS

call 920-5806.

A SUMMER COURSE ON WOMEN'S LIBERATION IS PLANNED

call 532-6609.

# ABORTION IS OUR RIGHT

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# WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

ILLEGAL ABORTION IS A SILENT, UNRECOGNIZED, AND GRIM REALITY FOR WOMEN IN CANADA. Every year our inhuman laws take their toll in the deaths of countless women, women who cannot accept the rules of a society which denies them the basic right to decide when and if they will bear and raise children. So desperate are many women when faced with an unwanted pregnancy that they place themselves in the hands of a "back-street abortionist" who may not even know the size of a uterus and who would never consider sterilizing their knives. Others try to abort themselves with anything they think might work--coat hangers, bleach, knitting needles, Salvo tablets in the vagina. These are not horror stories invented to frighten teenage girls, but realities which anyone working in the emergency unit of a big hospital sees every day.

EVERY YEAR, NEARLY 200,000 WOMEN IN CANADA TRY TO ABORT THEMSELVES OR HAVE ILLEGAL ABORTIONS. AT LEAST ONE-FIFTH OF THESE WOMEN ARE ADMITTED TO HOSPITALS WITH COMPLICATIONS. WE ESTIMATE THAT 5,000 SUFFER STERILITY OR SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS. AT LEAST 1,000 WE ESTIMATE, DIE.

Doctors and nurses have told us that 3-4 women a night are admitted to Toronto General Hospital Emergency with complications following illegal abortion, and that the most common complaint among women admitted to Emergency at St. Michael's Hospital on weekends is uterine hemorrhaging. Toronto East General reported 500-550 "incomplete abortions" a year, with 20 seriously infected and one death. From these figures, we estimate that about 2,300 women in Toronto were admitted to Emergency with complications in these three hospitals alone.

Figures on illegal abortions in Canada are very hard to pin down. THERE ARE NO OFFICIAL STATISTICS AVAILABLE. Some hospitals do not distinguish between miscarriage and abortion. Death or serious injury are often attributed to more "respectable" causes. Since Women's Liberation in Toronto alone speaks with about 1,000 women a year seeking safe, illegal abortions, we feel that our figures may fall far short of the truth.

ON MAY 8, 1970, A CARAVAN OF WOMEN FROM ACROSS CANADA WILL ARRIVE IN OTTAWA. The caravan will bring a coffin, symbolizing all the women who have died from illegal abortions. We will place this coffin and with it the responsibility for the death of our sisters at the feet of the men who make the laws of this country. Women's Liberation groups in cities across Canada will bring the Caravan to Ottawa as part of our fight for the right of all women to abortion on demand.

Throughout the campaign and until all laws regarding abortion are repealed we will urge women to act for themselves to demand the right to control their own bodies.

Can the men who make "our" laws imagine the desperation of a married woman with four or five children who learns that she will have to take on the responsibility for an extra child that the family cannot afford? She is the one who worries about what necessities this new child will be taking away from all the others.

She is the one who worries about her son going out on the street with a gang that steals things their families cannot afford; who worries about her daughter who starts to go out every night at 14 to escape a cramped house full of fighting smaller children and parents who are always tired. If the daughter finds excitement or love, she too may need an abortion.

An unplanned pregnancy can put a working woman out of a job when she is the sole support of her family (10 percent of all Canadian families are supported completely by the mother's earnings). Many families cannot hope to pay the bills without the wife's paycheck; an unplanned pregnancy can be a financial disaster. And in the last resort it is the woman who must take on the responsibility for a child. She may be unmarried--or deserted, divorce or separation may leave her with all the burden of bringing up a family; therefore it must be the right of each woman to decide whether she wishes to bear a child.

THE FACT THAT SO MANY ILLEGAL ABORTIONS STILL TAKE PLACE IS PROOF THAT THE NEW LAWS ARE A SHAM. Nineteen out of twenty requests for abortions to doctors are refused before they even get to the hospital boards. Only a few women, most of them middle or upper class, have the information and connections to convince doctors and psychiatrists to submit their cases to hospital boards for review. And young single women are afraid to even try.

SAFE ILLEGAL ABORTIONS, PERFORMED BY QUALIFIED DOCTORS, CAN STILL ONLY BE AFFORDED BY MIDDLE AND UPPER CLASS WOMEN. And so thousands of women who cannot support their born children, much less those unborn, are driven into the hands of "quacks" who charge \$10-\$100 to try and rid the woman's body of the unwanted foetus. These are the vast majority of the women who fill the emergency wards of city hospitals, who are often treated with contempt and disgust by the doctors there, who are made to feel so ashamed that they will sometimes not admit what they have done. WHILE DOCTORS SIT ON ABORTION BOARDS AND GRANT ONLY A FEW LEGAL ABORTIONS A YEAR, OTHERS REFUSE TO TAKE PATIENT'S CASES TO THE BOARD, AND OTHER DOCTORS ATTEND TO SEVERAL CASES OF BUTCHERED ABORTIONS EVERY NIGHT.

EVERY CHILD A WANTED CHILD!

These laws are supposed to reflect the "sacredness" of human life in this society. We know that this is utter hypocrisy when the foetus is valued so highly that it cannot be destroyed but there is so little regard for the welfare of human beings. WE CAN CREATE LAWS FORCING A WOMAN TO BEAR AN UNWANTED CHILD, BUT WE CANNOT MAKE LAWS FORCING HER TO LOVE THAT CHILD. It is inhuman for men and

women to be forced to raise a child they do not want; it is inhuman to subject a child to the resentment and despair of parents who never meant to bear it. Is it any wonder that there are so many cases of child-battering, and even cases of children dying from these beatings?

THE PRESENT LAWS ARE NOT BASED ON A CONCERN FOR CHILDREN: THIS SOCIETY IS ANTI-CHILDREN! We need more than laws which allow us not to have children; we need to build together a society that would be a nice place for kids to grow up in. The way it is now, mothers who want to work or have to work are made to feel guilty because they do not stay at home with their children. Mothers who do stay home with their children cannot admit that they feel cooped up, frustrated, and bored. Both men and women should share the responsibility for the care of children. Just because women give birth to children does not mean that they alone must care for them. We are also fighting for day-care centres where children can have relationships with lots of people--both children and adults--which will free women from having to stay at home with their children and which will be good places for kids to be.

ABORTION IS OUR RIGHT. We must demand that our needs and our rights be recognized. But it is not enough just to ask the men who make the laws to change them. IF YOU NEED AN ABORTION, WE WILL GO TOGETHER WITH YOU TO DEMAND THAT DOCTORS SUPPOSEDLY TRAINED TO MEET OUR NEEDS USE THEIR SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE FOR OUR NEEDS. We have been silent too long; too many women have died; too many women have been sterilized by back-street abortionists; too many women have been forced to have children they did not want.

WE DEMAND

- 1) THAT ALL WOMEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER THEY WISH TO BEAR AND RAISE CHILDREN.
- 2) THAT ALL LAWS REGARDING ABORTION BE REPEALED IMMEDIATELY.
- 3) THAT COMMUNITY CLINICS CONTROLLED BY THE PEOPLE BE SET UP TO DISTRIBUTE BIRTH CONTROL INFORMATION AND DEVICES, TO PROVIDE ABORTION FOR ALL WOMEN WHO WANT IT, AND TO PUT AN END TO THE CRUEL AND INHUMAN TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN PRESENT HOSPITALS.