

# The Public Eye

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## Reproducing Patriarchy

### Reproductive Rights Under Siege

by Pam Chamberlain and Jean Hardisty

A woman's ability to control her reproductive decisions—her reproductive rights—involves more than her right to safe and legal abortion. Reproductive rights encompass the right to bear and raise children, the right to access adequate reproductive health care, and the right to prevent pregnancy or terminate an unwanted or unsafe pregnancy. In the almost thirty years since the 1973 Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*, much of the public's attention has been absorbed with the struggle over the right to abortion. The US political right wing has played a central role in that struggle, with nearly every right-wing politician promising a "litmus test" of opposition to abortion for government and judicial appointments. But the right's attack on women's reproductive rights goes far beyond its attack on the right to abortion. The same political forces that work to deny women access to abortion and birth control often simultaneously work to deny women their full range of reproductive rights.

Nevertheless, the centerpiece of the right's attack is the abortion issue. Abortion is not simply a medical procedure or a moral question. It is a political issue that will never go away. Its supporters and foes are locked in an ever-changing struggle. In the 1990s, that struggle became more violent. Abortion rights activists, always demon-

nized and threatened by anti-abortion activists, now actually fear for their safety. What is the make-up of the anti-abortion movement, how does it relate to the larger attack on reproductive rights, and how can women expect their rights to be attacked in the future?

#### The Right's Attack on Choice

The anti-abortion movement was active in this country long before the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision provoked its revitalization. But prompted by that decision, the movement shifted into high gear, gaining greater prominence and experiencing a dramatic jump in membership. In addition to its enormous influence within the arena of reproductive rights in the US, the effort to prohibit abortion played a crucial role in the emergence of the New Right at the end of the 1970s. The New Right used the abortion issue to recruit members to its larger agenda. Reaching out to virtually every sector within the anti-abortion movement, the New Right's leaders argued that their family values agenda would restore the country to an imagined earlier period of morality and virtue.

The anti-abortion movement's membership is largely made up of conservative Christians, both Catholic and Protestant. Some of these conservative Christians are also members of the larger Christian Right, which has become a political powerhouse since being nurtured by the New Right to become politically active. The Christian Right now wields considerable power within the electoral right in this country. Because

Christian Right activists are uncompromisingly anti-abortion, the anti-abortion movement benefits from the Christian Right's political strength.

While the anti-abortion movement is part of the right today, the right does not "own" the anti-abortion movement. Nor does the Catholic Church. In fact, the anti-choice movement is made up of a number of competing sectors, each often accountable only to itself. Adherents of the sectors range from conservative Roman Catholic traditionalists to members of far right paramilitary organizations. The sectors' diversity can be confusing to pro-choice activists, who often assume that the movement is uniform in its beliefs and political strategies.

Loosely defined, the sectors of the anti-abortion movement are: conservative Catholics and the official Catholic Church establishment; conservative evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants; and hard right paramilitary formations, which are often, but not always, openly white supremacist and/or anti-Semitic. A small anti-choice constituency comes from more progressive, evangelical religious organizations. While many anti-abortion activities are affiliated

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# From the Director

The mainstream media reports no aspect of US women's reproductive rights as prominently as the widespread use of violence against abortion clinics and abortion providers, including large scale destruction of property and even murder. But violence is only one of the right's many tactics. The forms of its attacks are ever-changing, and now include lawsuits, blatantly unconstitutional legislative initiatives, the closing of hospital-based clinics, and various methods of discouraging doctors from learning abortion-related medical practices. Because these tactics receive almost no media coverage, they often fly "under the radar" of public awareness.

In this issue of *The Public Eye*, we map the history of the right's attack on women's access to abortion, while outlining the rest of the right's agenda for control of women's reproductive rights. This broader agenda includes, among other tactics, spearheading government initiatives to limit childbearing by poor women while encouraging childbearing by middle-class women. In this issue, we pay homage to the historical struggle for abortion rights and to the contemporary pro-choice movement that works tirelessly to preserve those rights. We also note the relative inattention that a predominantly white and middle-class pro-choice movement has paid to other violations of women's reproductive rights, such as sterilization abuse, forced or coerced contraception, population control, and "family cap" programs for welfare recipients.

Since the 1970s, when the New Right began using opposition to abortion as a rallying issue for its early organizing efforts, such opposition has become a cornerstone of the right's contemporary resurgence. Within the anti-abortion movement, different sectors of the right often pursue different tactics. Although the Catholic Church originally led the anti-abortion movement, the Bishops and Cardinals soon lost control of it. By the late 1980s, mass-based organizations made up of conservative Protestant evangelicals and fundamentalists dominated the anti-abortion movement. Today it is a more disorganized movement, with some of the most aggressive initiatives mounted by free-lance activists who are not accountable to any organization.

The activists who defend women's reproductive rights know the right intimately. They have seen what we describe in this issue: that the right works to mobilize fear of sex and disdain for sexuality in the context of its larger agenda for women: repression, control, heterosexuality, marriage, and motherhood—without freedom and without choice.



Jean Hardisty

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with one or more of these sectors, many people who oppose abortion are not affiliated with any formal anti-choice organization. The three dominant sectors of the anti-abortion movement are usually in some relationship with the right. The sectors themselves have porous and imprecise boundaries. Some anti-abortion activists “travel” from sector to sector, and the sectors themselves change over time. The sectors often disagree with each other and occasionally there is realignment, as those disagreements cleave a sector and cause some of its adherents to change their views.

Often anti-abortion activists respond to political defeats by becoming more extreme and more rigid in their ideology and actions. Within the movement, they often compete for dominance. Internal disagreements can create the impression that the anti-abortion movement holds contradictory and incompatible views. Visualizing the anti-abortion movement as composed of various sectors helps explain differences of opinion within the movement and the coexistence within it of very different tactics for effecting change. Pro-choice activists need to understand the complexity that exists within the anti-abortion movement when they find themselves dealing with different types of opposition.

The sectors are tied together by shared political and religious principles, which emphasize the “morality” of what they call “traditional family values,” the evil of “godless” secular humanism, and the necessity for “personal responsibility.” These common elements make up the worldview of many within the anti-abortion movement.

Beyond this shared worldview, the leaders and strategists of the movement construct ways of presenting abortion to the public (“framing” the issue) that are intended to capture public opinion and turn it against women who have abortions or medical providers who provide abortions. The various movement sectors often “frame” abortion differently, each attempting to mold the public’s understanding of abortion in order to reinforce its own position. A successful “frame” convincingly

connects with and manipulates public opinion on the issue. If the sector presents its position in ways that capture the public’s imagination, resonates with widely held beliefs, and/or teaches people a new way to see the issue, it has created a powerful “frame.”

Sometimes the political “frame” promoted by the anti-abortion movement is meant to deceive the public. For instance, the anti-abortion movement would have us believe that it is simply anti-abortion; in reality, it is more broadly a movement that opposes reproductive rights, since it seeks

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### The effort to prohibit abortion played a crucial role in the emergence of the New Right at the end of the 1970s (as it) used the abortion issue to recruit members to its larger agenda.

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not only to eradicate abortion, but to limit or prohibit other reproductive decisions by women. It is important for pro-choice activists to understand the larger agenda of the anti-abortion movement, and to see it for the broad-based attack on reproductive rights that it is.

#### Early Alignments

The formation of anti-abortion sectors developed over time. Their roots stretch back to the earliest organized resistance to abortion in this country, when physicians reacted to unregulated abortion practitioners in the 19th century. In 1847, doctors created the American Medical Association to delegitimize their non-

licensed competition (who were often midwives and/or successful businesswomen) and retain control over gynecology. They claimed that the widespread practice of abortion was dangerous for women’s health. Throughout the early 20th century, many states passed legislation outlawing the practice of abortion at the state level. By 1967, it was illegal to obtain an abortion in any of the 50 states unless the life of the mother was threatened by her pregnancy.

#### The 1960s

In the 1960s, when Catholics who were engaged in social justice work and feminist activism increasingly challenged the Church’s prohibition against abortion, the Catholic Church responded with a reassertion of its long-standing condemnation of abortion, along with contraception, extramarital sex, and homosexuality. Throughout the 1960s, the leadership of the Catholic Church in the United States organized against birth control. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) was founded in 1966 to condemn government support of contraception.

#### The 1970s

In the 1970s, state-level abortion reform laws and the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision provoked intense anti-abortion organizing. The Catholic Church augmented its existing institutional infrastructure by using the Bishops’ organization to work directly against abortion. In 1973, NCCB’s Pro-Family Division formed the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC). Recognizing the great potential for organizing, the NRLC and its elaborate structure of state and local affiliates used parishes and pulpits to recruit members to their ranks and to influence legislation.

After the *Roe* decision, “pro-life” advocates saw that they were on the defensive and recognized the impossibility of overturning the decision with the then-current makeup of the US Supreme Court. And the Court would not change without a sufficiently conservative President. Other approaches were necessary. For the next nine years, the

NRLC focused on Congress in an unsuccessful attempt to re-criminalize abortion through a Human Life Amendment to the Constitution.

American Catholics were used to hearing their priests encouraging them to vote based on their religious principles, but it soon became clear that a mass anti-abortion movement could not be built with Catholics alone. For one thing, many American Catholics no longer agreed with their church leadership's positions on reproductive health issues. And the leadership wasn't about to budge in its dogmatic stance in order to win new recruits. The movement needed other sources of membership.

Evangelical Protestants began to emerge as a prominent social and political force in the 1970s. As church membership in evangelical and fundamentalist Christian congregations grew substantially in this decade, New Right strategists including Howard Phillips, Paul Weyrich and Richard Viguerie took careful notice. The New Right of the late 1970s was crafted by its strategists to carry its agenda in large part through a revitalization of the Republican Party. But it needed mass numbers of new voters willing to support its issues, and it needed a cause that could attract some former Democrats. Christian fundamentalists had largely retreated from the political arena after the embarrassment of the Scopes creationist trail and the failure of Prohibition. The strategists' challenge was to convince these individuals to vote again. The 1976 election of Jimmy Carter—the country's first born-again President—primed the pump.

Weyrich and Viguerie recruited Jerry Falwell, the successful Lynchburg, Virginia preacher who was busy building a national televangelist empire with adjunct services. Together, in 1979, they created the Moral Majority, a group designed to mobilize conservative Christians to become politically active. They sought and received support from Focus on the Family, another burgeoning organization founded in 1977 by Dr. James Dobson, a psychologist and Christian family counselor. Abortion proved to be a powerful lightning rod that attracted

members to these groups, which in turn formed the core of the Christian Right. The New Right thus mobilized an arm, the Christian Right, that was intended to lure both Protestants and Catholic voters away from their traditionally Democratic leanings.

An influential married team, J.C. and Barbara Willke, marriage counselors and Catholic sex educators, were recruited into the work by Catholic anti-abortion militant Father Paul Marx, the founder of Human Life International. The Willkes knew the power of visual aids from their sex education work, and their gruesome 1971 set of photos and illustrations of aborted fetuses circulate widely to this day. They are often used in clinic protests or in educational sessions to recruit new members. Originally designed as deterrents for women considering an abortion, these pictures also function as motivation for highly charged emotional reactions to abortion and appear to contribute to violent anti-abortion activity. John Salvi, the killer in the December 1994 Brookline, Massachusetts clinic shootings, was among those who distributed them.

### The 1980s

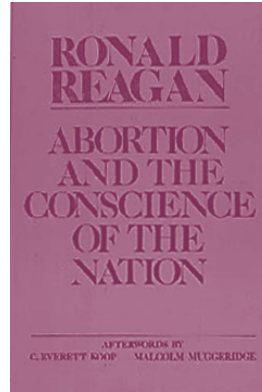
Ronald Reagan's election as President in 1980 was an enormous boon to the anti-abortion movement, but Reagan proved reluctant to be publicly wedded to anti-abortion forces because he saw the issue as too divisive and explosive to be politically wise. Though Reagan himself was a true believer, he did not prioritize abortion as uncompromisingly as his New Right supporters expected. He did, however, appoint avid anti-abortion activists to positions within his administrative bureaucracy and issued executive decisions hidden in his administration's bureaucracy. These anti-abortion appointments included the heads of the Federal Office of Personnel Management and the Centers for Disease Control, the Surgeon

General, and members of the White House Staff. The work of Reagan appointees sympathetic to the pro-life position and nested within the Executive branch resulted in setbacks to abortion rights such as removal of insurance coverage for abortion costs from federal employees' benefits and the elimination of Planned Parenthood from the payroll deduction plan for federal charitable giving.

New Right strategists recognized that the Reagan Administration presented an opportunity to change the political balance of the Supreme Court and other federal courts. Reagan moved Justice William Rehnquist up to the position of Chief Justice in 1986, and Antonin Scalia filled

his slot. Both are anti-abortion. Reagan's second nomination for a Supreme Court seat, anti-choice candidate Anthony Kennedy, was also approved. (His nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor, however, was more troublesome to anti-choice watchdogs, since her record as an Arizona state representative had been mildly pro-choice, despite her personal opposition to abortion.) Reagan's judicial appointments to the federal courts were consistently pro-life. Moreover, under him, the process for appointing federal judges changed, and powerful Republican leaders like Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC) helped control the flow of pro-life nominations. As Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Thurmond shortened the review periods, increased the number of hearings per day, making it more difficult for Democrats to challenge nominees.

But it was advisors close to Reagan, like Chief of Staff Patrick Buchanan, who inserted multiple anti-choice strategies into the everyday decision-making at the White House, from scrutiny of family planning programs in the US and abroad to strategizing ways to deny access to abortion. Bureaucratic moves such as these did more than appease pro-life forces in Washington.





## The Public Eye

It gave their members a sense of empowerment and helped to craft anti-choice positions as the New Right litmus test.

Blockbuster groups helped swell the ranks of the New Right. Christian Right organizations such as Focus on the Family grew enormously in the decade following *Roe*, thanks in part to the popularity of the “family-oriented” themes the New Right showcased. The frame of “traditional family values” was a wise choice because it described the challenge of modern life in terms that reassured many conservative Christians. The “ills befalling our culture” were reduced to a simple target—straying from God, or secular humanism.

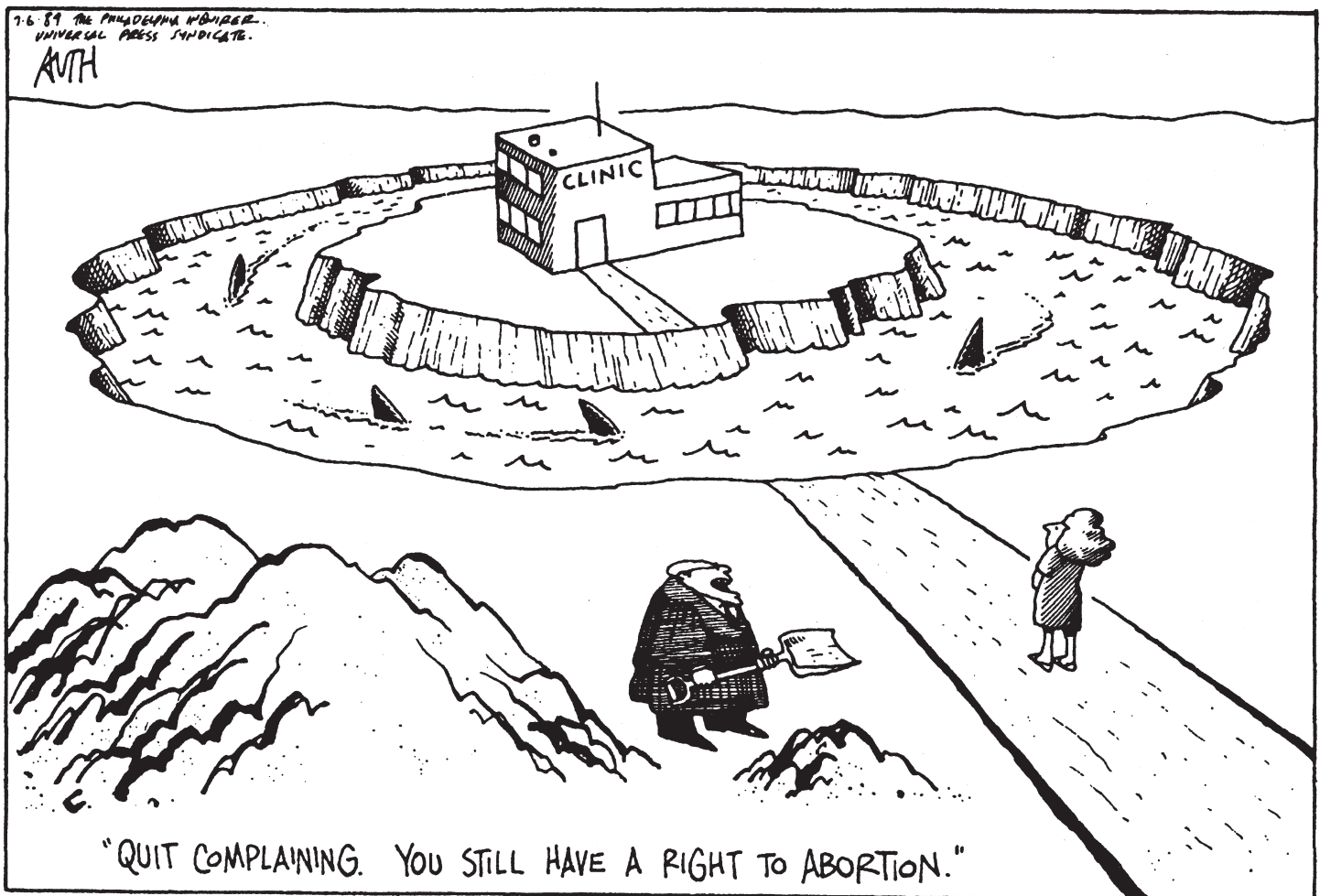
The New Right’s agenda was broader than abortion, but its web of issues was entirely compatible with an anti-choice world view. Conservative Christian defin-

itions of the family and its traditional values were fast becoming household topics. A strong heterosexual, nuclear family, according to conservative Christians, will protect its members from outside corruption. Tim LaHaye, a co-founder of the Moral Majority, explains that the purpose of such families is to “insulate the Christian home against all evil forces.”

In the decade after *Roe*, the Moral Majority, Focus on the Family, and other well-funded multi-issue national organizations joined single-issue groups like the National Right to Life Committee and its Life Amendment Political Action Committee (LAPAC) in their fight to eradicate abortion. LAPAC was created in 1977 to persuade Congress to pass a Human Life Amendment to the US Constitution. Because the work of these mainstream pro-

life organizations resulted in only tortuously slow progress toward their goal of banning all abortions, more extremist pro-life organizations grew bolder and began to advance a different sort of program. Their committed, charismatic leaders were impatient with failed attempts to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and were itching to try something else. Some of these leaders share with their less radical associates a fundamental agreement on the importance of pro-life activism.

Timothy and Beverly LaHaye came to pro-life work through their Baptist marriage counseling company, Family Life Seminars. Tim, another invitee at the founding of the Moral Majority with Jerry Falwell, had been prominent on the right since the 1970s through the authorship of best selling non-fiction Christian titles and in the 1990s gained new celebrity co-authoring



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apocalyptic novels. His wife Beverly was the founder in 1979 of Concerned Women for America, the premier Christian anti-feminist women's organization. They both are Christian theocrats, believing that the United States should be governed by biblical law.

Some individual leaders were dissatisfied with the strategies of the New Right's leadership. They struck out on their own, creating somewhat free-standing groups focussed exclusively on ending abortion. Chicago-based Joseph Scheidler founded the Pro-Life Action League in 1980 after being ousted from other pro-life groups for his resistance to compromise. A master of public relations and a former journalism professor, Scheidler knew how to draw mainstream media attention. In 1985, he published a provocative tract, *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion*, in which he suggested that civil disobedience, harassment, and militant direct action were justified interventions where abortion was concerned. Scheidler argued that because the act of abortion was murder, it must be prevented at all costs.

Perhaps more important, Scheidler influenced other confrontational pro-lifers like the founder of Operation Rescue, Randall Terry, and his successor, Flip Benham. Rochester-born Terry, "born-again" at seventeen and a graduate of Elim Bible Institute, began his abortion clinic protests alongside his wife in 1983 when he was in his early 20's. Twelve years older than Terry, Benham was a bar owner before his conversion in 1976. After a stint as an evangelical pastor, he founded Operation Rescue Dallas/Fort Worth in 1988 and succeeded Terry in the National Director's slot in 1994.

Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, founded in 1989, the same year the Moral Majority disbanded, also shared the right's vision. The Christian Coalition was to rise to prominence under its first executive director, the charis-

matic Ralph Reed, Jr. Robertson's explicit goal was to "give Christians a voice in government." These mass movement organizations were determined in their campaigns to send Christians to the polls. Robertson's campaign for the Republican presidential nomination in 1988 had given him national prominence and a platform for his erratic conservative Christian views.

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### Evidence exists linking individuals who commit arson, bombing and murder against abortion providers with the KKK, the Christian Patriot movement and other far right ideologies such as Christian Identity

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#### The 1990s

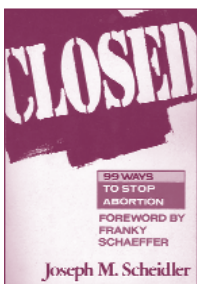
During the 1990s, the anti-choice movement continued its campaign to erode abortion rights for women. Frustrated in its larger goal of eliminating abortion, the movement became more militant and increasingly resorted to violence. Far right white supremacist and neo-Nazi individuals publicly joined forces with anti-choice militants. The far right's ideological agenda addresses women's reproductive rights in a variety of ways. White supremacist, white separatist, and neo-Nazi organizations attract members who may hold pro-life beliefs and attitudes. But central to their worldview is a belief in the absolute nature of race and the genetic superiority of a white race over its perceived enemies, Blacks, Jews, Latinos, Asians, and gays. Groups such as White

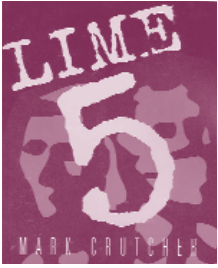
Aryan Resistance, Aryan Nations, and the Ku Klux Klan believe that the increased number of people of color in this country threatens to diminish the power of whites. So, they may oppose abortion among whites as a form of "racial genocide" while advocating the use of abortion as a way to control the birthrate of people of color.

However, public advocacy of abortion for women of color might alienate potential far right supporters who oppose all abortion. For many in the far right, selective abortion as a tool of eugenics might be acceptable on pragmatic grounds, but abortion should be discouraged as a practice, not only because it is immoral, but because it is politically unwise. For instance, David Duke—ex-KKK leader, anti-Semite, and white supremacist—has avoided openly advocating abortion for women of color by focusing more generally on the "taxpayer subsidy of massive welfare-financed illegitimate birthrates."

Other leaders emerged who were not far right but whose "pro-life" activism became more militant and hard core. Mark Crutcher is an example of an activist who turned to more extreme tactics. As president of the Texas-based Life Dynamics, Inc., Crutcher's focus has shifted from simple harassment strategies, such as encouraging his allies to call clinics and tie up their toll-free phone lines, to a more elaborate set of tactics, which he calls "a guerrilla strategy for a pro-life America." These more extreme activities attempt to limit the accessibility of abortions by decreasing the number of doctors who perform the procedure. His tactics are shameless attempts at disinformation. For instance, Crutcher uses crude jokes in direct mail campaigns to medical students and new doctors in order to convince them of the low status of "abortionists." He claims abortion providers engage in a black market trade of fetal body parts. But his most sophisticated activism is his traveling seminar, in which his staff trains lawyers in the details of successful medical malpractice suits against abortion providers.

Collaboration between far right groups and pro-life activists has apparently pro-





duced some of the more violent anti-abortion acts. Evidence exists linking individuals who commit arson, bombing and murder against abortion providers with the

KKK, the Christian Patriot movement and other far right ideologies such as Christian Identity, a loose configuration of theologically-oriented white supremacist groups.

### The Importance of the Political “Framing” of Abortion

Both leaders and strategists on the right skillfully manipulate their language and the images they use to create the context for their public education or framing of the debate. How activists who are anti-abortion frame the issue can affect whether or not people are attracted to their cause. But a frame that attracts some followers can simultaneously repel others. Some abortion-related concepts used by organizations on the right alternately unify, splinter or expand their ranks. It is useful to understand how the right constructs these ideas and uses them to attract and maintain members.

In the case of conservative Christians—especially conservative evangelical Protestants and conservative Catholics—a strict interpretation of the Bible or church dogma often drives their opposition to abortion. Many of these individuals have been influenced by the political messages of New Right strategists like Paul Weyrich, Richard Vigurie, Jerry Falwell, James Dobson and Beverly and Tim LaHaye, who frame the issue as one of morality. By using such a powerfully positive concept, anti-abortion strategists move people to act, whether through mainstream legislative work or more radical direct action. This device also places pro-choice activists—their opponents—outside the frame of morality, objectifying them as “other” in the eyes of anti-choice activists.

The more militant sectors of the anti-abortion movement, such as Flip Benham’s

Operation Rescue, Mark Crutcher’s Life Dynamics and Joseph Scheidler’s Pro-Life Action League, reflect the influence of the ultra-conservative Christian belief that the United States should be governed by “biblical law.” These theocratic Christians frame abortion as murder and justify civil disobedience and other law-breaking activities as answering to a higher moral code than the US judicial system. Their frame of the issue opens the door to a frightening range of demonizing and coercive actions in the name of saving lives.

Most single-issue anti-abortion organizations associated with the New Right address abortion as separate from other reproductive rights issues such as contraception, women’s health care, and access to sexuality education. Groups like the National Right to Life Committee, the Pro-Life Action League, and The American Life League resist making connections with other aspects of the right’s agenda for fear of losing members or diluting the potency of their own message. Evangelical Protestants will sometimes “stray” from a single-issue focus on abortion by repeatedly referring in their literature to infanticide, euthanasia, and murder. The list strategically moves abortion beyond the narrower debate over the “morality” of abortion to associate its practice with a violation of “the sanctity of human life.” It is no coincidence that this precise list consistently appears in various materials published by these groups and their supporters.

Language has always played a key role in the process of framing. Abortion opponents began to describe themselves as “pro-life,” to distinguish their position from what they described as abortion activists’ “culture of death.” This choice of language helps position the anti-abortion movement as a force for something positive, not simply as an opposition movement. In this frame, euthanasia and infanticide become symbols of the type of heinous acts that a pro-life worldview must reject.

Rather than use scientific descriptions such as fetus or embryo, many pro-life advocates consistently use “baby,” “unborn

baby,” “unborn child,” or even “pre-born child.” Such language makes it easier to claim that life begins at conception and reinforces the concept of the personhood of a fetus. It also makes the discussion more personal, especially to parents and women of childbearing age. And it can help an undecided pregnant woman to decide against abortion, since often women intending to bring a fetus to term refer to the fetus as a baby and feel conflict about destroying a child. In fact, much of the diction and rhetoric of abortion opponents blatantly exploit any moral ambiguity or conflicting emotions anyone may feel on the subject of abortion. Because the arguments are framed as absolute, they act as catalysts for self-doubt and uncertainty, with women as the primary target.

The frame of an anti-choice position is notable not just for what it includes but also for what is absent. Traditionally anti-abortion groups have avoided pitting the rights of the fetus against the rights of the mother, since to do so would acknowledge the validity of any argument for mother’s rights. By avoiding discussion about women’s rights altogether, this approach sidesteps the difficulties of resolving a competing rights struggle (between fetus and mother) and returns the ball of an untenable argument to the court of reproductive rights activists. Anti-abortion groups do this either by omitting references to the needs of the woman altogether or by trivializing the rights of pregnant women and women in general.

One of the most glaring, visual examples of this strategy is the 1984 pro-life documentary, “The Silent Scream,” which portrays an abortion through the subjective lens of ultrasound pictures of a dilation and curettage, a common abortion procedure. Although extremely disturbing to watch, the film (and its video, available on the Internet) is a skillful illustration of constructed anti-abortion rhetoric. Despite multiple references to the fetus and the abortion provider, there is no mention, and no image, of the woman undergoing the procedure. She is completely absent from the

scene. The focus of the camera remains on the fetus and the narrator, Bernard Nathanson, a “reformed abortionist” and anti-choice spokesman.

This strategy of removing women and their rights and needs from the debate pulls the abortion discussion away from the reality of women’s lives. It thereby “erases” or makes invisible the basis for much of the pro-choice feminist position. It contributes to the general public’s feeling that no real dialogue between pro-life and pro-choice proponents can take place. Further it opens the door for people—especially anti-abortion activists—to see pro-choice activists as selfish or insensitive to the life or death issues associated with “fetal rights.” As medical technology advances the practice of fetal surgery and premature infant intensive care, we are experiencing more debate about the “legal rights of the fetus.”

Anti-abortion activists find fetal rights arguments useful tools in constructing an analysis that eliminates a woman’s own right to choose. Abortion opponents who argue that fetuses have rights are attempting to blur the legal distinctions between a fetus and an already born baby. A fetus’s status as a person, they argue, allows for litigation on its behalf. At the same time, by representing the fetus as vulnerable, fragile and unable to defend itself, these activists reinforce the rightness of people other than the mother to act on the fetus’s behalf, if they see her as not acting in its best interests. One important strength of the argument is that it appears secular and legal rather than religious.

But such an argument also appeals to fundamentalist Christians who, interpreting the Bible literally, often discount secular arguments and usually will reject

scientific or legal arguments that are incompatible with their beliefs. Believing the fetus to have feelings and a personality—in essence to be a person—allows a spokesperson like James Dobson of Focus on the Family to condemn abortion as a sin, since it kills a creature of God.

### The Right’s Misogyny

Pro-lifers’ often over-simplify their arguments. While they ground their arguments in scriptural interpretation and legal language, they make no reference to the social, economic or historical context of

process of abortion (where the focus is on the fetus), pro-life advocates aggressively categorize women who seek abortions as “selfish” or sinful, because they do not place the value of the fetus above themselves.

“Traditional family values,” as defined by such spokespeople for the Christian Right as Gary Bauer or Jerry Falwell, rely on a willingness by both men and women to accept the sex roles inherent in a heterosexual, nuclear family. In this context, a woman must abstain from sex until marriage, marry, maintain a monogamous relationship with her husband, and willingly

bear him children. Any diversion from this track—such as pre-marital or extra-marital sex, deciding on her own how many children to have, or living as a lesbian—is not only alien to the principles of a conservative evangelical Christian family, it is self-indulgent and sinful. A woman who refuses to place the needs of others (the fetus, in particular) ahead of her own is not making the sacrifices required of family members to maintain these principles.

The Christian Right considers social, economic, or for that matter any other reasons that may influence a woman’s thinking about her pregnancy as secondary to this principle of maintaining strict family traditions. In this rigidly traditional vision of the family, a woman who describes her pregnancy as “unwanted” is refusing to accept her natural role as wife, mother, and childcare provider. And any woman who lives, acts, or even thinks outside that prescribed role threatens such a system. In this frame, it becomes legitimate to criticize, shame, and even demonize her. Such a worldview, which describes itself as “pro-family,” is more accurately anti-woman.

While the Christian Right has correctly

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**In this rigidly traditional vision of the family, a woman who describes her pregnancy as “unwanted” is refusing to accept her natural role as wife, mother, and childcare provider. . . and. . . [i]n this frame, it becomes legitimate to criticize, shame, and even demonize her. Such a worldview, which describes itself as “profamily,” is more accurately anti-woman**

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women’s lives that create the need for women’s reproductive freedom. This lack of context gives credibility to a debate about morality that ignores women’s reality. Many anti-abortion groups, both conservative Christian and secular, promote extremely traditional family structures and are explicitly anti-feminist. Most attribute women’s use of abortion to a so-called disintegration of traditional family values, the alleged promiscuity of poor women, permissiveness supposedly promoted by liberalism, and the secularization of American culture.

Mirroring a common practice by the right in general, anti-choice activists claim ownership of the debate on women’s issues. Although silent about women’s role in the



identified such “uppity women” and the feminist movement that supports them as threats to its traditional perspective, the more secular right also condemns women who renounce their traditional roles. In this case, it is not God who is being defied, but the needs of society for strong traditional families and adherence to sex roles as a necessary component of the family.

## Shifting Dominance

From the perspective of anti-abortion activists, the end of the 1980s saw only meager progress toward the goal of eliminating abortion, either within Congress or in the Supreme Court. The Human Life Amendment, intended to make abortion unconstitutional, had been defeated in 1983. In 1989 *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* technically upheld *Roe*, but it gave states the freedom to place restrictions on access to and choice about abortion. The decision demonstrated that while the Supreme Court had moved to the right,

there were not enough votes to overturn *Roe* fully. Anti-abortion groups were dissatisfied with bureaucratic victories, including the appointment by President Ronald Reagan of pro-life C. Everett Koop as the Surgeon General. Although in 1980 the Supreme Court finally declared the Hyde Amendment constitutional, and Reagan’s staff issued a pro-life tract under his name, the prospects for eliminating a woman’s right to abortion at the federal level looked bleak.

Mainstream anti-choice leaders were frustrated, as were many of their members. Impatience seemed to breed further hostility and resentment against the apparent ineffectiveness, not only of Reagan and Bush, but of the pro-life movement. In repeated moves that were to be mirrored throughout the rest of the century, individuals began to defect from anti-abortion groups or were asked to leave by the group leaders when they voiced their willingness to engage in more militant tactics, includ-

ing violence.

During the 1980s, non-violent groups headed by Catholic pacifists like John O’Keefe in Wahington, DC and Sam Lee in St. Louis started to lose members to fringe groups influenced by Scheidler’s *Closed, 99 Ways to Stop Abortion* and the *Army of God Manual*, an instruction book on how to use violence to end abortion. Occasional acts of violence, such as the kidnapping of Hector Zevallos, an abortion provider, outside of St. Louis in 1982, began a wave of violence directed at clinic staff that quickly escalated. Over 300 acts of violence occurred against clinics between January 1983 and March 1985. In his important book on the anti-abortion movement, researcher Dallas Blanchard documents the movement’s change “from polite to fiery protest.” He maintains that the movement’s disappointed expectations under the first Reagan/Bush Administration and members’ frustration with the lack of progress caused the shift in tone and action.

## Framing Abortion

The powerful anti-abortion frame of “protecting the sanctity of human life” was widely popularized by the writings of conservative theologian Francis Schaeffer beginning in the 1960s. Schaeffer translated Roman Catholic religious belief into language that was disassociated from the Catholic Church and more appealing to Protestant ears. He attempted a revision of European history that emphasized the impact of Protestant theologians and decried the development of the secular state. His *A Christian Manifesto* inspired many anti-abortion activists who attended Christian colleges, including Randall Terry and John Whitehead, the lawyer who founded the Rutherford Institute. Among its other Christian clients, Rutherford represents anti-abortion activists in court.

But it was Schaeffer’s collaboration with the as-yet-to-be US Surgeon General C. Everett Koop that shifted his focus to abortion. In 1979 they produced and marketed a film and study guide, “Whatever Happened to the Human Race?” The film skillfully spelled out the arguments against abortion, claiming it to be a form of murder and making connections between the Nazi Holocaust and the decline of contemporary values that now allow the killing of the unborn, the very young and the infirm. The five-part video repeatedly drilled its church basement audiences on Schaeffer’s connections between abortion, infanticide and euthanasia.

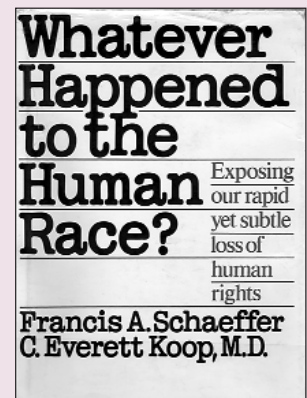
Schaeffer’s contribution to the anti-abortion movement illustrates how movement frames evolve. Many conservative groups now link these three

issues as evidence of the disintegration of modern society. Over time strategists have designed ways to talk about abortion that appeal to different sectors of the right, including Catholics, Protestants, people of other faith communities, individuals open only to a secular argument, and supporters of other conservative issues.

The Christian Right, arguing that abortion is murder, condemns women who have or seek abortions.

The secular right, arguing that women should adhere to a traditional role as wife and mother and stay home to raise children, condemns women who do not marry and raise children. In both cases, the right encourages women to have children (albeit within the context of the nuclear, heterosexual family) and to devote themselves to raising those children. The right’s leaders are clear and uncompromising in this position as it applies to middle-class women of all races.

—Pam Chamberlain



Not until Reagan spoke out against the clinic violence did it abate temporarily.

In 1987, Randall Terry founded Operation Rescue in a bid to replace Scheidler's Pro-Life Action League (PLAL) with a more strident voice. Operation Rescue enjoyed four years of notoriety, while its charismatic leader engineered hundreds of sit-ins and clinic blockades across the country, taunting police to arrest protesters and receiving massive publicity. Rev. Jerry Falwell demonstrated his

support for Operation Rescue's tactics at a press conference in front of an Atlanta clinic protest in 1987. The height of Operation Rescue's influence came in Wichita, Kansas when Pat Robertson spoke at a 1991 rally attended by 25,000 pro-life supporters at the culmination of Operation Rescue's "Summer of Mercy." As Terry began to sound more apocalyptic as well as more critical of other pro-life activists, he lost his hold on the organization. Operation Rescue declined as a force within the anti-abortion movement and, by Spring 1992, an Operation Rescue event in Buffalo attracted few protesters. Terry's less skilled, but equally boisterous lieutenant, Flip Benham, became Operation Rescue's head in 1994.

The anti-abortion movement was losing ground in public opinion as well. Approval of abortion rights grew substantially in the decade between the mid-60s to the mid-70s and then leveled off without significant overall change in either direction. Although pro-life advocates enlisted their own pollster (Richard Wirthlin who worked for Reagan as his adman and strategist at the White House) and elaborately distorted polling results, they could not increase their hard core support. Six to eight percent of respondents, a very small percentage of the US public, wanted to prohibit abortion under almost all circumstances. Hard core pro-choice advocates, on the other hand, who believed in a woman's right to an abor-

tion under almost all circumstances, hovered at about 32 percent. The remainder of Americans, about 60 percent, were willing to support abortion with some restrictions.

After *Roe* and through most of the 1980s, anti-choice activity could not really budge these figures, and by 1990 support for the "pro-life" movement began to decline.

Despite this appearance of failure, the anti-abortion movement has seriously eroded the reproductive rights of US women. One of

the most significant losses resulted from the 1977 Hyde Amendment, which cut off federal Medicaid funding for abortions, leaving poor women relying on Medicaid with no health insurance for the procedure. In order to receive abortion coverage, such women needed to live in states that fully fund Medicaid abortions with state money.

Sixteen states currently use their own money to pay for all or most medically necessary abortions. This number has fluctuated over the years due both to state level court orders and to voluntary policy change. The Hyde Amendment, and its many incarnations, was the most visible of a series of successful anti-abortion initiatives in Congress. Despite prolonged debate over its constitutionality, it ultimately represented a major victory for anti-abortion forces. It is a painful reminder for poor women and their allies of the powerful impact that pro-life activity has unleashed at the federal level.

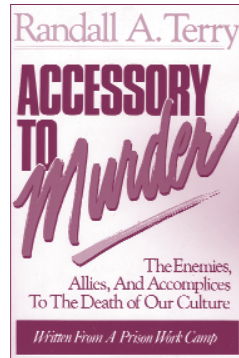
Restrictive anti-abortion laws passed by state legislatures across the country also

have slowly and steadily eroded a woman's right to abortion. One restriction, mandatory counseling for a pregnant woman seeking abortion, can create emotional trauma or intimidation. Waiting periods in which women are required to return to an abortion facility after waiting at least one day after their initial appointment place unfair emotional and financial burdens on rural and other women who must leave work and travel for treatment. Parental consent for minors, requiring one or both parents' permission or a judge's decision before an abortion on a minor can take place despite substantial pro-choice resources being spent on the defense of a women's right to choose.

As early as the late 1970s, the anti-abortion movement had created "counseling centers" that offered pregnancy tests, then showed women videos and offered "advice" designed to dissuade them from having abortions. Over time, the use of deceptive advertising became a standard feature at these "clinics." Women went to them expecting to receive health care and genuine counseling concerning their crisis pregnancy, only to find that they were

exposed to violent and distorted representations of the moral, psychological, and medical effects of abortion.

During the late 1980s and through the 1990s the right has tried to curtail sexuality education in American public schools.



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**The Hyde Amendment, and its many incarnations... is a painful reminder for poor women and their allies of the powerful impact that pro-life activity has unleashed at the federal level.**

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At a time of increased awareness and a need for accurate and thorough information about pregnancy, sexual development, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS, a well-funded campaign exists to replace comprehensive sexuality education with abstinence-only curricula in schools.

Any comprehensive sexuality education program stresses abstinence as a necessary part of pregnancy and disease prevention, but supporters of abstinence-only materials insist that their approach is the *only* effective method. Abstinence-only approaches to sexuality education have been criticized as religious-based and sternly moralistic. In addition, abstinence-only curricula omit essential information needed by young people and distort other material in an attempt to frighten them away from pre-marital sex and abortion. Multiple abstinence-only curricula are now marketed as part of a campaign by various sectors of the right to require their use in public schools. Congress has already earmarked \$50 million per year through 2002 for the use of abstinence-only curricula, and many state legislatures have taken up bills that help appropriate matching funds and highlight local debate.

This effort may appear to be a series of grassroots efforts in local communities or educational programs based at universities, but local groups are actually coordinated at the national level by large, well-funded groups such as Focus on the Family, Citizens for Excellence in Education, Concerned Women for America, and the Christian Coalition. This effort is entirely consistent with the right's larger crusade to control access to information and services related to reproductive rights. Because abstinence-only education focuses on adolescents and children, however, the

right has used it as a parental rights issue, thereby claiming the right to control access to information about reproduction, as well as requiring parental consent for contraceptive or abortion services. Proponents of abstinence-only curricula reflect the larger anti-choice movement's strategies: claim moral superiority to your opponents; misrepresent the truth behind your own claims and those of the opposition; and attempt to use legislation and public funds to codify the favored position in law and practice.

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### Stalemate

The 1990s saw a continuation of the anti-abortion violence of the 1980s. After a period of relative quiet at the end of the 1980s, the level of violent incidents escalated, including arson, bombings, butyric acid attacks, shootings, and murder. In the early 1990s, a series of shootings aimed at abortion providers shocked the country. Although the individuals who committed these actions appeared to be acting alone, they were familiar with the inflammatory rhetoric widely circulated among clinic protesters. Pamphlets such as the anonymously authored "Army of God Manual" and activist Michael Bray's 1994 book, *Time To Kill*, encouraged protesters to respond to the "violence" of abortion with "appropriate" action. For instance, Operation Rescue's motto became, "If you think

abortion is murder, act like it."

This apparent pattern of loners choosing violent tactics to express their anti-abortion sentiments reveals a familiar phenomenon in the development of hard right and far right activity. Individual zealots are driven by their beliefs to violence which they justify by direct or indirect reference to, and association with, movement theorists and leaders. But upon closer examination, those who appeared to have acted alone certainly had been involved in thinking, talking and reading with others.

After the murder of Dr. David Gunn in 1993 by Michael Griffin, Attorney General Janet Reno initiated a federal investigation against what Clinton called "domestic terrorism," and the Justice Department stepped into the fray. This was, however, nine years after the first clinic violence. Despite this investigation, a sniper killed another abortion provider, Dr. Bernard Slepian, in his Buffalo, New York home in October 1998 in what appeared to be part of a wave of anti-abortion violence in or near Canada. In January 1997, Neal Horsley created the infamous Nuremberg Files, an online list of abortion providers and information on their residences and families. Within hours of Slepian's murder, his name had been crossed off Nuremberg Files list. Such clear incitement has not just created a debate about freedom of speech on the Internet; it has highlighted a switch from previous self-images of anti-choice murderers as martyrs to what Mark Crutcher has rightly identified as "guerrillas."

Other forms of harassment have developed as well. In addition to his focus on the medical community, Mark Crutcher has developed a malpractice lawsuit support program, which offers free help to lawyers and women interested in pursuing malpractice claims against abortion providers.

Claiming to involve over 700 attorneys in their network, Life Dynamics actively encourages litigation that intentionally ties up the financial resources and time of abortion providers and provides its service free of charge. Its ultimate goal is to decrease access to abortion services as “the key to pro-life victory.”

During this period, the pro-choice women of the Republican Party were consistently silenced by the Party’s right wing,

vices other than abortion, such as sterilization and contraception.

Another approach to recruiting new pro-life footsoldiers has been to form constituency groups and offer them a reason to organize around pro-life issues. For instance, anti-choice forces have cultivated new supporters among young people, including young women. A rash of youth-oriented web sites capitalizes on the ability of youth to navigate cyberspace and to absorb infor-

dents, faculty, and local residents with a wide diversity of backgrounds and opinions unite to educate our peers about the tragedies of abortion, euthanasia, and infanticide in the Cornell community and in society at large.

While Mark Crutcher’s campaign to stigmatize abortion with medical students and young doctors may seem extreme and crude to some, there are other attempts to organize medical professionals. These groups include Christian Medical and Dental Society, the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity, the Catholic Medical Association, National Association of Pro-Life Nurses, Physicians Ad Hoc Coalition for Truth (PHACT), the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons and Pharmacists for Life. Each has its own website and is linked to other pro-life sites.

The anti-abortion movement has found itself with some seemingly liberal or progressive groups in coalition. The Seamless Garment Network, a coalition of 140 member groups, incorporates opposition to war, racism, capital punishment, euthanasia and abortion under “a consistent ethic of life” as a way to bear witness to “protecting the unprotected” and welcomes anyone willing to work on “all or some of these issues.” Member groups range from the Catholic Workers to Feminists for Life. This network attracts not only people from communities of faith, but secular social conservatives and libertarians land here as well.

Abortion opponents have both used and discredited medicine and science in their discussion of abortion, depending on what arguments best suit their purposes at the time. For instance, some groups have accused pro-choice activists of sanitizing the abortion procedure by using medical and scientific terms, which they say, obscured what was really happening. In their view, “terminating a pregnancy” is actually “baby killing.” More recently others have used scientific or pseudo-scientific terminology to add to their credibility, warning that abor-

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**For pro-life advocates who work only to prohibit abortion, the issue is the chance to regulate women’s lives in order to maintain a social system consistent with religious principles. . . . For others, the goal is control of the political system with the power to implement a full agenda of conservative issues. For these activists, abortion has been the key issue to mobilize large numbers of people for broader goals.**

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which increasingly controlled the content of Republican Party platforms at each Republican convention from the late 1970s on. As a result, uncompromising Republican platforms on abortion rights appeared to reflect the attitudes of all Republicans, but actually reflected the right’s agenda.

### Recent Trends

In the late 1990s, elements of the anti-abortion movement began to cultivate coalitions by linking issues with other segments of the right—a strategy with the potential to re-expand the movement’s ranks. They established new organizational associations with right-wing groups involved in immigration and environmental work, welfare “reform” advocates, population control, and reproductive ser-

mation directed at them. Since many of these sites, like other right-wing sites, are filled with misinformation and phony “research,” they mold public opinion without the check of being held to any standard of accuracy.

College pro-life groups appear on many campuses these days, not just at conservative Christian campuses. Even when their approach appears to be secular, inclusive and open-minded, they often are heavily influenced by Christian Right rhetoric. The Cornell Coalition for Life, for example, describes itself by using the three standard issues linked by anti-abortion groups—abortion, euthanasia, and infanticide:

The Cornell Coalition for Life stresses an inclusive, non-partisan, and non-religious approach in advancing the pro-life cause. Stu-



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### Removing late-term abortion from its medical and social context and misrepresenting and sensationalizing its purpose and need are examples of how the right has used late-term abortion and abortion in general for its own political ends.

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tion is hazardous to a woman's health and linking it to infections, breast cancer and psychological trauma. These allegations, while impressive in their quantity, have no basis in fact.

Several anti-abortion organizations were created in the early 1990s to exploit the fear that abortion is traumatic. These groups appeal to women who are either conflicted about their own past abortions or are denied access to accurate information about abortion procedures. This anti-choice activism is sympathetic to women while it reinforces an image of women as victims of an uncaring medical establishment.

Organizations such as the Catholic Church's Project Rachel, David Reardon's Elliott Institute and the National Right to Life Committee function as points of entry for many women into the anti-abortion movement and eventually into related political movements. They highlight the difference between single-issue, pro-life forces and the larger right. For pro-life advocates who work only to prohibit abortion, the issue is the chance to regulate women's lives in order to maintain a social system consistent with religious principles. In this

framework, because abortion is the corrupting influence that erodes "family values," it is their primary enemy. For others, the goal is control of the political system with the power to implement a full agenda of conservative issues. For these activists, abortion has been the key issue to mobilize large numbers of people for broader goals.

Although his early activism focused on abortion, Operation Rescue's Randall Terry's broader strategy is revealed in a quote from the 1996 PBS Series on the Religious Right, "With God on Our Side."

From the beginning when I founded Operation Rescue, the vision was not solely to end child-killing; the vision was to recapture the power bases of America, for child-killing to be the first domino, if you will, to fall in a series of dominoes. My feeling was, and still is, once we mobilize the momentum, the manpower, the money, and all that goes with that to make child-killing illegal, we will have sufficient moral authority and moral force and momentum to get the homosexual movement back in the closet, to get the condom pushers in our schools to be back on the fringes of society where they belong where

women are treated with dignity, not as Playboy bunnies, etc., etc. We want to recapture the country, because right now the country's power bases are in the hands of a very determined, very evil elite who are selling us a bill of goods. They call it good but it truly is evil. They say, "Here, it's sweet," but in reality it's bitter. It's wormwood and gall.

Although Catholic teachings and Protestant fundamentalist beliefs are the ideological bedrock of the anti-abortion movement's arguments, certain groups like the National Right to Life Committee avoid using language that is too specifically religious as a way to broaden their appeal. The NRLC, for instance, now uses primarily legal terminology, which coordinates well with their mostly legislative agenda. Originally a Catholic organization, the NRLC chose a mainstream pro-life niche for itself early on in the abortion debates, and today few remember its history.

The controversy surrounding efforts to outlaw "partial-birth abortion," as it is called by its opponents, is an example of how the right uses an issue to its advantage. Late-term abortion emerged as a widely



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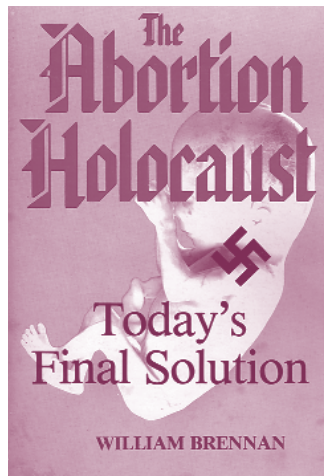
debated topic in the mid 1990s, and the right has successfully kept it active on state and federal legislative agendas ever since. At first, the right's activism appeared to be focused on opposition to a particular procedure, known medically as Dilation and Extraction (D&X). But as the debates have worn on, it has become clear that the focus on late-term abortion is part of the overall strategy to abolish all legal abortions.

Late-term abortion is an uncommon medical procedure done in the third trimester. When the right uses the carefully chosen term "partial-birth abortion," it plays to the ardent emotions of both the pro- and anti-choice forces as well as to the substantial group of Americans in the "middle" who support a woman's right to choose but are vulnerable to arguments that would justify certain restrictions. The phrase "partial-birth abortion" is a political, not a medical, description of the procedure, and so it has been necessary to define it when creating legislation. Although the meaning and intent of the term have been the focus of much debate, the widespread use of the term "partial-birth abortion" in the media and by the public is an indication of the success of the right in controlling how the topic is discussed.

Legislation was first introduced in Congress in 1995 as a bill to ban "partial-birth abortions." Congress has considered and even passed similar laws that so far have been blocked by Presidential vetoes based on the lack of an exception for the health of the woman. Reviewing the language of the bills helped legal analysts see that the wording of these bills and their many state counterparts was vague enough to outlaw virtually all abortions. In addition to D&X, the more common procedure, D&E, or Dilation and Evacuation, often done in the second trimester of pregnancy, would be outlawed as well. Nevertheless, laws banning "partial-birth abortions" have been passed in over 30 states. Pro-choice advocates have been kept busy challenging the constitutionality of these laws. In fact, requiring pro-choice organizations to tie up their resources on litigation has become a stan-

dard tactic of the right. Because federal appeals courts have delivered conflicting decisions about these state laws, the US Supreme Court will rule on the Nebraska "partial-birth abortion" law in *Carhart v. Stenberg* at the 2000 session. This will be the first major abortion ruling since 1992. It is evidence of the speed and effectiveness of the right's infrastructure that propelled the issue to prominence in such a short time.

Early on in the debates, anti-abortion strategists claimed moral superiority in



opposing late term abortions. In a 1995 radio show, James Dobson referred to the procedure as a "Nazi era experimentation," where doctors "suck the brain matter out of a living, viable baby for use in medical experiments," eliciting images of eugenics and demented physicians. Anti-abortion organizations such as NRLC began publishing drawings of the procedure that were intended to shock viewers into outrage while insisting that the images were medically accurate. Sen. Rick Santorum (R-PA), another early opponent, described D & E as, "infanticide." This claim to moral superiority was further aided by the 1997 admission by Ron Fitzsimmons, Executive Director of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, that he had publicly underestimated the number of late-term abortions performed in this country.

By focusing on abortion providers' guilt, anti-choice forces omit any reference to the women who undergo the procedure—

their circumstances or their needs. In addition to women who are at high health risk in their pregnancies, and older women for whom potential birth defects are a pressing issue, the women who choose late-term abortion are overwhelmingly less educated about their health needs, more often impoverished and more often women of color. Removing late-term abortion from its medical and social context and misrepresenting and sensationalizing its purpose and need are examples of how the right has used late-term abortion and abortion in general for its own political ends.

### Race, Poverty, and Reproductive Rights

In the case of abortion, the various sectors of the anti-abortion movement treat all women equally. No matter what race or class, women should not have abortions. But in the larger sphere of reproductive rights—the rights to conceive, bear, and raise children—pro-life strategists apply a double standard. Middle and upper class white women should bear children and stay at home to raise them. Single, low-income women (especially low-income women of color), and immigrant women should limit their childbearing and should work outside the home to support their children.

Even a cursory examination of the right's policy agenda demonstrates that, when the focus is changed from abortion to broader reproductive freedom, the right applies race and class criteria that distinguish between the rights of white, middle-class women and low-income women of color. The right has viciously attacked welfare mothers for their "sexuality" and immigrant women for bearing "too many" children. In its worldview, "excessive" childbearing by low-income, single women causes poverty. To eliminate poverty, it is necessary to prevent that childbearing.

Right-wing activists reserve their most vicious attacks for these groups of women, promoting negative stereotypes of low-income women of all races as dependent, irresponsible, prone to addictions, and inadequate mothers. They use these stereo-

types to inflame public opinion against all sexual behavior that lies outside the narrow parameters of right-wing ideology.

The right advocates policies that discourage childbearing by depriving low-income women of the means to support a child. In the 1990s, using stereotypes such as the “welfare queen,” the right successfully promoted the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, the “welfare reform” bill. As part of that policy initiative, the right has sought to discourage women on welfare from becoming pregnant by punishing them when they bear children. This form of punishment known euphemistically as a “family cap,” which is increasingly popular with state legislatures, denies any increase in payments to women who become pregnant or give birth to a child while on welfare. Another right-wing policy that discourages or prevents childbearing by low-income women mandates or encourages women to use Norplant, Depo-Provera, or the newest form of contraception, contraceptive vaccines such as quinacrine.

These policies designed to control the child-bearing of poor women are but the latest in a series of practices that date back to the eugenics movement of the 19th century, which promoted, racial theories of “fitness” and “unfitness.” During this time of a significantly declining birth rate within the white population, politicians and eugenicists raised the specter of white “race suicide.” The eugenics movement, which was adopted briefly by the birth control movement in the early 20th century, advocated a higher birthrate for white, middle class, “fit” women and a lower birthrate (aided by birth control) for poor women, especially poor “unfit” women of color and immigrant women.

The best-known method of denying a woman her right to have children is sterilization abuse. Sterilization is a medical

procedure that, like abortion, often is experienced differently in low-income communities of color and in middle-class white communities. Historically, doctors have made it difficult for white women, especially middle-class white women, to choose to be sterilized: insisting, for example, that they come back a second time after they have taken time to “think about it.” The attitude of the same medical professionals toward women of color and poor white women has been dramatically

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**... when the focus is changed from abortion to broader reproductive freedom, the right applies race and class criteria that distinguish between the rights of white, middle-class women and low-income women of color.**

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different. In these instances, many doctors have long encouraged the procedure, sometimes sterilizing these women without their consent through manipulation or actual deceit. By 1968, for example, a campaign by private agencies and the Puerto Rican government resulted in the sterilization of one-third of Puerto Rican women of childbearing age. A similar campaign in the 1970s resulted in the sterilization of 25 percent of Indian women living on reservations.

Such a history of sterilization abuse (which is still practiced in other countries, with US public and private complicity) shapes the consciousness of many women of color. Especially among Native-American and African-American communities and in Puerto Rico, the history of sterilization abuse represents a major legally-sanctioned human rights violation. Some doctors still encourage sterilization for women in low-income rural areas, especially on Indian reservations and in pockets of rural poverty across the US mainland and

in Puerto Rico, despite rules issued in 1978 by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare restricting sterilizations performed under programs receiving federal funds. The committed efforts of Helen Rodriguez-Trias of the New York City-based Committee to End Sterilization Abuse (CESA) and other activists have not been successful in convincing the larger women’s movement to expand its concern with reproductive rights much beyond the issue of abortion.

Aware of the history of sterilization abuse and racial repression in the United States and in other countries, many people of color are suspicious of the contemporary pro-choice movement. Some see abortion as a vehicle for genocide within their communities. The right has taken full advantage of the wedge that such a history of sterilization abuse (and the overall failure of white

feminists and other progressives to confront it) has driven between the pro-choice movement and many people of color. The right’s leaders and politicians sometimes court people of color by appealing to their perceived opposition to abortion. They claim to be the allies of these communities by pointing to “shared values” on abortion and other social issues. The right has used this recruitment strategy repeatedly over the last two decades. Just two examples are the Christian Coalition’s courtship of African Americans in the mid-1990s with its now-defunct Samaritan Project and, more recently, the predominantly white conservative evangelical men’s organization, the Promise Keepers’ outreach to men of color under the theme of “racial reconciliation.”

While low-income women have argued that they are denied the right to bear children and the means to raise them, their cause has not been near the center of the pro-choice movement. Further exacerbating the tension between the pro-choice movement and poor women is the occasional



appearance within the movement of the right-wing argument that abortion is beneficial to society because it will limit the number of women and children on welfare. This argument attempts to win support for abortion rights by portraying welfare recipients as undesirable. Although pro-choice advocates rarely use such arguments any longer, such positions have left a heightened level of distrust of the pro-choice movement among some women of color.

In the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, reproductive rights activists—predominantly from communities of color—attempted to expand the scope of the pro-choice movement to include the right to have children, a right to quality reproductive health care and access to authentic economic opportunities that would enable women to raise and support children. Other activists, such as the Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment (CWPE), drew attention to the threat posed by the population control movement to the reproductive rights of women of color, especially those living in Third World countries. Others, such as Byllye Avery of the National Black Women's Health Project, Marlene Fried and her colleagues at the Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program at Hampshire College, and the women of the Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2), have called for the predominantly white women's movement to resist more actively the elimination of access to abortion by the Hyde Amendment and other factors affecting low-income women. But too often the pro-choice movement has used the lens of middle-class white women—those most likely to have access to other reproductive rights—to defend abortion rights as if they represented all reproductive rights.

The right has been extremely successful in keeping the primarily white and middle-class women of the pro-choice movement and their male allies pre-occupied with responding to the escalating strategies of the pro-life movement. These have included legal challenges in state and federal courts, feverish activity in state legislatures, a pro-

liferation of “crisis pregnancy centers,” and the increase of clinic violence. The right has successfully created a “box” for low-income women: they must renounce their sexuality altogether by neither bearing children nor having an abortion. Abstinence, the opposite of their perceived promiscuity, is the approved right-wing choice. Because the right, with the acquiescence of the voting public, has successfully shredded the social safety net, it is increasingly unlikely that women of color and poor women will be guaranteed the means to bear and raise

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**Low-income women of all races have a right to bear and raise children without legal sanctions that make it impossible or dangerous.**

**In other words, they have a right to reproductive freedom.**

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children. Without that means—in other words, without control of their reproductive lives—even the preservation of legal abortion does not guarantee all women's reproductive rights and reproductive freedom.

### **Conclusion**

Since its earliest activism, the goal of the anti-abortion movement has been to ban abortion completely. Each of its sectors has pursued that goal with different strategies. The Roman Catholic Church, the original force behind the anti-abortion movement, has been joined by several other sectors, including conservative evangelical Christians and the more violence-prone activists of the far right. Independent organizations such as Operation Rescue have

drawn from each of the sectors. As the struggle over abortion has persisted through several decades and the anti-abortion movement has been unable to achieve its goal of eliminating legal abortion altogether, the more militant and zealous sectors of the movement have gained power. As a result, violence against abortion providers and clinics has become more acceptable and common within the movement. Lawsuits and other forms of harassment have also been gaining in popularity. At the same time, other sectors of the movement that work in the legislative arena, at the state level and in Washington, pursue incremental strategies to chip away at women's access to abortion, such as parental consent and waiting periods. Still others have worked at the grassroots level, providing support for the work of both angry demonstrators and suited legislators. When combined with financial barriers, such as the denial of coverage of abortion for Medicaid recipients, and the scarcity of abortion services in rural areas, the anti-abortion movement can claim a number of victories.

Many low income women, including many women of color, increasingly do not have access to a number of the forms of reproductive rights available to more affluent women—insurance or funds to pay for abortions, adequate reproductive health care, sexuality education, safer methods of contraception, or access to high tech fertility procedures. In some cases, they have lost control of their reproduction altogether, as in the case of forced sterilization or sterilization without consent. Low-income women of all races have a right to bear and raise children without legal sanctions that make it impossible or dangerous. In other words, they have a right to reproductive freedom. When the pro-choice movement defends abortion rights alone, as if they represented all reproductive rights, they are using the lens of middle-class women, and they are risking the loss of more than just legal abortion.

Opponents of abortion use the tactics of the larger right: claim moral superiority to your opponent; misrepresent the truth



behind your own claims; and, while stereotyping and demonizing your opponents, use legislation and public funds to usurp the democratic process. The right will continue its campaign to limit and control women's reproductive practices. The key to its future success may well rest with the

women, whom it will need to mobilize if the law continues to weaken the wall of privacy between government and women's reproductive practices.

Pro-choice activists are often absorbed with one area of the struggle to maintain and advance reproductive rights. But the right

back and see each piece of the struggle as part of a whole.

The right's larger reactionary agenda prioritizes the rollback of the gains of the women's movement of the 1970s. Its leadership targets a wide range of women's rights. While abortion is a central target, it does not stand alone as the sole focus of the right's wrath. When we understand the nature of the right's ideas, strategies and tactics, we can see how the right has targeted nothing less than women's autonomy. The traditional, "family values" analysis of the proper role of women does not honor women's reproductive rights. We must defend the right of women to self-determination in the control of their reproductive lives across the board. Every specific area of pro-choice activity in the service of this larger goal is crucial to the success of the pro-choice movement in resisting the right's attack.

*Pam Chamberlain is a consultant to Political Research Associates (PRA) working on PRA's Reproductive Rights Activist Kit. Jean Hardisty is Executive Director of Political Research Associates.*

The authors would like to thank Elly Bulkin for her excellent editorial pen.

**When the pro-choice movement defends abortion rights alone, as if they represented all reproductive rights, they are using the lens of middle-class women, and they are risking the loss of more than just legal abortion.**

make-up of the Supreme Court, as its current members retire and are replaced by new Justices. Another factor is the vitality of the pro-choice movement, as it loses its grassroots character and becomes increasingly a movement of large and well-funded organizations. It is important that pro-choice organizations stay in close touch with grassroots constituencies, especially younger

has mounted a broad attack on reproductive rights that reaches across many areas. As a result, the pro-choice movement is spread thin, working on many fronts, from defending access to abortion to challenging the latest unconstitutional legislation. Under these circumstances it is difficult to remember the larger picture in which specific work occurs. It can be helpful to step

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# Resources

Resources continued from page 24

Non-profit legal and policy advocacy organization dedicated to promoting women's reproductive rights through programs that engage in litigation, policy analysis, legal research, and public education. Promotes women's reproductive health and rights both domestically and internationally. Produces reports, organizing packets, and educational materials.

## Center for Women Policy Studies

1211 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 312, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 872-1770, cwtsx@aol.com, www.centerwomenpolicy.org

A national nonprofit, multiethnic, and multicultural feminist policy research and advocacy institution. Seeks to incorporate the perspectives of women into the formulation of public policy. Publishes various materials, including an *Affiliates Quarterly Report*.

## Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program (CLPP)

Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 01002-5001, (413) 582-5645, clpp@hamp.hampshire.edu, http://hamp.hampshire.edu/~clpp/naf

Works to bridge the gap between the academic world and reproductive rights activism.

## International Women's Health Coalition

24 East 21st Street, New York, NY 10010, (212) 979-8500, iwhc@igc.org, www.iwhc.org

Works with individuals and groups in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to promote women's reproductive and sexual health rights. Provides technical, managerial, moral, and financial support to reproductive health providers, advocacy groups, and women's organizations in Southern countries. Publishes books and position papers and maintains a global communications network of 6,000 individuals and organizations in 143 countries.

## Medical Students for Choice

2041 Bancroft Way suite 20, Berkeley, CA 94704, (510) 540-1195, msfc@ms4c.org, www.ms4c.org

Medical students concerned about the shortage of abortion practitioners, the lack of abortion education in medical schools, and the escalating violence against abortion providers. Publishes a quarterly newsletter and produces "A Medical Student's Guide to Improving Reproductive Health Curricula."

## National Abortion Federation

1755 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 667-5881, naf@prochoice.org, www.prochoice.org  
Hotline (800) 772-9100 (M-F, 9:30-5:30 EST)

An association of abortion providers, individuals, and organizations working in reproductive health and abortion rights. NAF's toll-free hotline gives referrals for abortion services and funding. NAF's goal is to ensure abortion access by reversing the shortage of trained providers, assisting providers with clinic defense, disseminating clear, accurate information about abortion, and promoting the voices of providers and patients in the public debate over abortion. Guides, fact sheets, books, activist guides, and other publications for clinical and legal professionals are available.

## National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL)

1156 15th Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 973-3000, naral@naral.org, www.naral.org

Works to develop and sustain a constituency that uses the political process to guarantee every woman the right to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing legal abortion. Produces several publications, including voting records by members of Congress

and state-by-state analysis of legislation on reproductive rights.

## National Asian Women's Health Organization

1850 M Street NW, Suite 230, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 331-4790, nawho@nawho.org, www.nawho.org

NAWHO's core program is the Asian Women's Reproductive and Sexual Health Empowerment Project (RSHP). Produces surveys, press releases and other public statements about the state of Asian American women's reproductive health.

## National Black Women's Health Project

600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20003, (202) 543-9311, nbwhp@nbwhp.org, www.blackfamilies.com/community/groups/WomensHealth

A health advocacy organization addressing health issues faced by black women and their families. Seeks to enable Black women to become aware of the nature of physical and mental health and the relationship between the two, and to enable Black women to take control and become active participants in their health maintenance.

## National Center for the ProChoice Majority

P.O. Box 1315, Hightstown, NJ 08520, (609) 443-8780

As an independent research organization that monitors and analyzes the anti-abortion crusade, NCPCM has provided well-researched information to abortion providers, grassroots activists, the media and law enforcement about the activities of anti-abortion militants. NCPCM develops resources and motivational materials that enhance the ability of abortion providers and grassroots pro-choice organizations working to protect reproductive choice for future generations.

# Resources

## **National Council for Research on Women**

11 Hanover Square, New York, NY 10005 (212) 785-7335, ncrw@ncrw.org, www.ncrw.org

The National Council for Research on Women is a working alliance of 84 women's research and policy centers, more than 3,000 affiliates and a network of over 200 international centers. NCRW's mission is to enhance the connections among research, policy analysis, advocacy, and innovative programming on behalf of women and girls.

## **National Council of Negro Women**

633 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20004, (202) 737-0120, info@ncnw.com, www.ncnw.com

NCNW is a multi-faceted, non-profit organization that works at the national, state, local and international levels in pursuit of the goal to improve quality of life for women, children and families. NCNW consists of 38 affiliated national organizations, 250 community-based Sections chartered in 42 states, 20 college-based Sections and 60,000 individual members. NCNW has an outreach to over four million women. With a national headquarters in Washington, DC since 1942, NCNW currently maintains offices, in Atlanta, Brooklyn, New York, and New Orleans, and three international field offices -- Dakar (Senegal), Harare (Zimbabwe), and Cairo (Egypt). NCNW has also sponsored the incorporation of two community-based agencies, NCNW of Greater New Orleans, and NCNW of Greater New York in Jamaica, New York.

## **National Latina Health Organization**

P.O. Box 7567, Oakland, CA 94601 (510) 534-1362, http://clnet.ucr.edu/women/nlho

Works towards the goal of bi-lingual access to quality health care and the self-empowerment of Latinas through culturally respectful educational programs, health advocacy, outreach, research, and public policy. Publishes position papers.

## **National Network of Abortion Funds**

c/o Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 01002-5001, (413) 559-5645 clpp@hamp.hampshire.edu, http://hamp.hampshire.edu/~clpp/nnaf

An organization of grassroots abortion funds across the country. Produces two free publications, "Legal but Out of Reach: Experiences from the National Network of Abortion Funds" and "Building an Abortion Fund." Please call only for this information or about membership in the Network. For referrals to abortion funds, please call the National Abortion Federation hotline.

## **National Women's Health Network**

514 10th Street, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 347-1140,

The National Women's Health Network works to ensure that women have access to quality, affordable health care and serves as a clearinghouse of information on women's health issues. The Network lobbies the Federal Government to increase support for women's health care issues. Through meetings and conferences, the Network encourages consumers to become actively interested in the health care needs of women, and distributes educational materials on women's health topics.

## **Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center**

P.O. Box 572, Lake Andes, SD 57356, (605) 487-7072, nativewomen@igc.apc.org, www.nativeshop.org

A project of the Native American Community Board dedicated to addressing issues of Native American women's health through education, counseling, scholarships, and other programs. Publishes the Wicozanni Wowapi Newsletter. Programs include the Domestic Violence Program, AIDS Prevention Program, Environmental Awareness and Action Project, Cancer Prevention, and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Awareness Program in addition to Reproductive Health and Rights.

## **ProChoice Resource Center**

16 Willett Avenue, Port Chester, NY 10573-4326, (914) 690-0938, info@prochoiceresource.org, www.prochoiceresource.org

Helps the grass roots educate, energize, and mobilize pro-choice, pro-freedom supporters as a way to counter extremist attacks and promote reproductive freedom. Provides trainings, coalition-building programs, and publications by the Center and other progressive organizations. Produces *ProChoice IDEA*, a newsletter, and other strategizing resources. Administers the Pro-Choice Public Education Project.

## **Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice**

*(National organization. Please check for regional branches in your area.)*

1025 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 1130, Washington, DC 20002, (202) 628-7700, info@rcrc.org; www.rcrc.org

A coalition of forty national Christian, Jewish, and other religious organizations that support a woman's right to choose. Promotes a woman's right to make decisions about when to have children according to her own conscience and religious beliefs. Produces information guides and publishes position papers by theologians and religious scholars. Programs include the Women of Color Partnership Program.

## **Women of Color Partnership Program**

c/o Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (see above for information)

Seeks to identify and address reproductive health care concerns from the unique perspectives of women of color. Works to ensure the participation of women of color in the pro-choice movement by fostering, supporting and promoting the unique voices and perspectives of women of color from religious and secular organizations.

# Selected Reading

## *An Annotated Bibliography*

*The following selected bibliography is a useful source of information for those wanting to learn more about the right's assault on reproductive rights.*

*Francis J. Beckwith*

### **Politically Correct Death: Answering the Arguments for Abortion Rights.**

(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993)

A conservative's set of responses to pro-choice arguments.



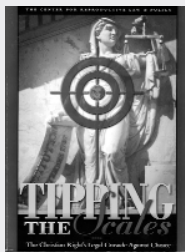
*Dallas A. Blanchard*

### **The Anti-Abortion Movement and the Rise of the Religious Right**

(New York, NY: Twayne Publishers, 1994)

This book chronicles how and why the anti-abortion movement arose and what its philosophies and inner workings consist of today.

### **The Center for Reproductive Law and Policy**



### **Tipping the Scales: The Christian Right's Legal Crusade Against Choice**

(New York, NY: Center for Reproductive Law and Policy, 1998)

This useful report describes a dozen right-wing legal advocacy organizations that support anti-choice activities.



*Pamela Johnston Conover and Virginia Gray*

### **Feminism and the New Right: Conflict over the American Family**

(New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 1983)

This book focuses on the feminist and New Right social movements, particularly on the abortion and ERA conflict, as well as the debate over women and the family.



*Mark Crutcher*

### **Access: The Key to Pro-life Victory**

(Denton, TX: Life Dynamics Publications, n.d)

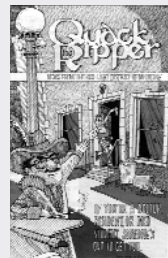
A Life Dynamics, Inc. pamphlet that suggests that limited access to abortion services will be the single most effective way to end abortion in the US.



*Mark Crutcher*

### **Quack the Ripper: News from the Red Light District of Medicine**

(Denton, TX: Life Dynamics Publications, n.d)



This is the latest format of a cartoon book that is part of a direct mail campaign to medical students that vilifies abortion providers and pro-choice activists.



*Zillah R. Eisenstein*

### **Feminism and Sexual Equality: Crisis in Liberal America.**

(New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1984)

This book strives to help women come to a consciousness of themselves as a social class, to take advantage of the gender gap in 1984, and to continue to struggle for a radically feminist future.

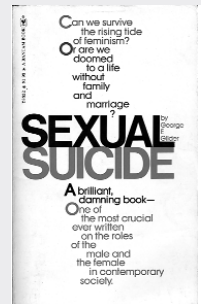


*George F. Gilder*

### **Sexual Suicide**

(New York, NY: Bantam, 1975)

The author explains traditional family and sex role differences among men and women as a necessary balance between aggressive "maleness" and the civilizing force of "femaleness."



*Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders*

### **Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals**

(Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1996)

Explores the terrain of current American racial politics by examining public opinion toward policies on race.



*Kerry N. Jacoby*

**Souls, Bodies, Spirits: The Drive to Abolish Abortion Since 1973**

(Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998)

This book seeks to present an accurate picture of not only the extreme edges of the abortion debate; but also of the vast majority “in the middle”.



*Norma McCorvey with Gary Thomas*

**Won by Love**

(Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997)

Second book by the Jane Roe of *Roe v. Wade* describing her born again process at the hands of Operation Rescue leader Flip Benham. Exposes the successful infiltration tactics of Operation Rescue.



*Tanya Melich*

**The Republican War Against Women: An Insider's Report From Behind the Lines**

(New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1996)

This book discusses the changes in Republican agenda during the Reagan and Bush administrations which sought to dismantle the gains made by women.



*Andrew H. Merton*

**Enemies of Choice: The Right to Life Movement and its Threat to Abortion**

(Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1981)

A very readable, early expose of the anti-choice movement from a liberal journalist's perspective.

*James C. Mohr*

**Abortion in America: The Origins and Evolution of National Policy, 1800-1900**

(New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1978)

An attempt to understand how the dramatic shift in abortion social policy came about in the United States during the 19th century.



*Lynn M. Morgan and Merideth W. Michaels (Eds.). (1999)*

**Fetal Subjects, Feminist Positions.**

(Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999)

A variety of articles exploring the increased focus of the anti-abortion movement on fetuses. Especially useful are Carol Mason's exploration of racist subtexts, and Lynn M. Morgan's study of how images and ideas of fetuses have changed over time.



*Dale O'Leary*

**The Gender Agenda: Redefining Equality**

(Lafayette, LA: Vital Issues Press, 1997)

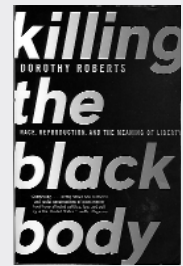
A conservative journalist's analysis of the hidden agenda of feminism as an attempt to ruin traditional sex roles by creating absolute equity between men and women.

*Dorothy Roberts*

**Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty**

(New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1999)

A compelling presentation of how institutionalized racism controls the reproductive freedom of Black women in the US. Addresses eugenics, birth control, abortion and “welfare reform” with thorough documentation.



*Francis A. Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, M.D.*

**Whatever Happened to the Human Race?**

(Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1979)

Schaeffer the “prophet” who led Protestants into active opposition to abortion. Koop's early radical roots.

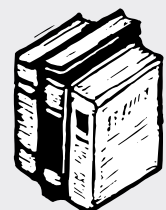


*Rickie Solinger*

**Abortion Wars: A Half Century of Struggle, 1950-2000.**

(Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998)

A collection of essays which looks at the abortion controversy in the US over the last fifty years.



# Eyes RIGHT

## CALLING ALL CHRISTIAN VOTERS

Jerry Falwell has announced the formation of a seven-month campaign “to reclaim America as one nation under God.” Falwell is calling “this movement” People of Faith 2000 with which he intends to “bring ten million people of faith—people who have never before voted—to the polls on November 7, 2000.” Falwell explains his motivation in an email dated March 9, 2000, “As I have watched with deep concern the orchestrated plans of liberals and civil libertarians to demonize and marginalize people of faith, I have arrived at the same conclusion I reached over 20 years ago when I formed the Moral Majority. Over 100,000 pastors, priests and rabbis, plus seven million religious conservative grassroots laypeople, joined forces more than two decades ago. Between 1979 and 1984, we registered over 8.5 million new voters through the churches and religious organizations and re-activated millions more back into the political arena!” Falwell says he will devote all of his time until November 2000 to energizing, informing and mobilizing the 70 million religious conservatives in America in such a way that “the November 7, 2000 election results will be historic.”

## WEB SITE OFFERS \$1.5 MILLION TO KILL “ABORTIONIST”

According to *Anti-Abortion Violence Watch* newsletter, a web site offered a \$1.5 million reward for “aborting a child killer.” It goes on to declare that “aborting abortionists is a commodity,” and the author makes clear that he is “personally opposed to killing abortionists, but [*he doesn't*] want to impose [*his*] morality on others” (emphasis added). The site was

brought to the attention of the Department of Justice by pro-choice groups, and was taken off the Internet pending investigation.

## EX-GAYS SCHEDULE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

An international Exodus conference will be held in London on August 28 through September 1. The theme of this conference is “Until the Whole World Knows” and will feature Alan Medinger, Alemu Beeftu, Melvin Wong, Patricia Allan, and Susan De Bruine. Several workshops will be “taught by various Exodus ministry leaders worldwide who will travel to London for this special event, held every three years,” notes the January 2000 *Exodus Update*. And the 25th annual North American Exodus conference featuring Andy Comiskey, Frank Worthen, Kathy Koch, and Steve Arterburn will be held in San Diego on July 24-28.

A series of other ex-gay conferences have already taken place. Living Waters conducted a training in Auckland, New Zealand from March 5-10. Exodus Latin America held a conference March 30-April 2 in Quito, Ecuador. A “Healing Homosexuality” seminar featuring Richard Cohen was held on March 18 in Baltimore, MD. Courage, the Roman Catholic arm of the ex-gay movement, held a conference in Holyoke, MA from April 24-27. Exodus International held its Mid-Atlantic Regional conference, “The Father’s Healing Love,” featuring Jack Frost on April 28-30 in Harrisonburg, VA. Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (P-FOX) held its annual conference featuring Joe Dallas, Richard Cohen and Robert Knight in Old Town, VA on April 28-30.

## DR. LAURA GOES TO CINCINNATI

Dr. Laura Schlessinger, controversial host of the “Dr. Laura” radio show and a favorite of Christian Right leaders, was the keynote speaker at the Citizens for Community Values (CCV) annual fundraising spring banquet on April 13, 2000. Dr. Laura is heard on more than 450 radio stations in North America and has been widely criticized for her rightist views on homosexuality and feminism among other issues. CCV’s mission is “to promote Judeo-Christian moral

## Eye LASHES

“American abortionists have killed three times as many American children as the Nazis killed Jews.

Abortion is commercialized mass murder.”

—Syndicated columnist Charley Reese in the February 4, 1998 issue of the Conservative Chronicle.

## HAIKU

God’s will claims the man.  
Reproduction born of woman.  
Control the issue.

values and to reduce destructive behaviors contrary to those values through education, active community partnering, and empowering individuals at the local and national level." CCV has a \$1.5 million budget for 2000 according to its Winter 2000 newsletter, *Citizens' Courier*.

### HATE IT

David Horowitz, a self-identified former 60s radical turned conservative and now president of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, feels hated. "[W]hen the scales fell from my eyes, and I saw the New Left for the insidious evil it represents, I did the inexcusable. I spoke out against it and when I did, I became hated," writes Horowitz in his January 31, 2000 fundraising appeal. "You see the Left isn't forgiving or civil. Instead, they're violently, fervently committed to their unholy war to tear down American democracy and replace it with their version—an Americanized version—of communism," continues Horowitz. So Horowitz is doing his part to "halt the Left" with his "Conservative Challenge 2000" initiative. According to Horowitz, Conservative 2000 is: "Putting Marxist promoters on American campuses on the defensive as I take the truth about our democracy straight into their lecture halls with our Challenge Debates; bringing conservative leaders face-to-face with Hollywood celebrities, writers, producers, and directors to challenge their stereotyped images, ideas and attitudes about conservative principles, policies and visions for America's future; and opening the direct lines of communication with conservative leaders across America to teach about the left-wing forces they're fighting and how to combat their guerilla-like tactics."

### PROMISE KEEPERS BACK TO CHARGING FOR CONFERENCES IN 2000

This year men will have to pay to attend a PK event. Promise Keepers has scrapped its donation only policy to boost income for new projects including non-conference efforts, its global ministry to men, outreach to local churches, pastors' events and two national daily radio broadcasts. Fees of \$69 per adult and \$49 per youth will be charged. Income dropped significantly after PK

dropped registration fees in 1998 when the organization downsized. Earlier this year PK closed its eight regional offices. PK has scheduled 15 conferences for 2000 with a theme titled "Go the Distance." Conferences will be held in Lynchburg, VA; Pittsburgh, PA; Portland, OR; Louisville, KY; Milwaukee, WI; Albuquerque, NM; Worcester, MA; Denver, CO; Oklahoma City, OK; Sacramento, CA; Minneapolis, MN; Los Angeles, CA; Orlando, FL; and Atlanta, GA. (For conference dates or more information see [www.promisekeepers.org](http://www.promisekeepers.org))

### ANTI-ABORTION VIDEO MAGAZINE

Started in 1992 by anti-abortion activist Mark Crutcher, *LifeTalk Video Magazine* is a monthly video provided by Life Dynamics Incorporated. "The Abortion Industry's Worst Nightmare Just Came True!" screams the brochure. *LifeTalk* provides "news, commentary and insights from America's most effective pro-life organization; interviews with spies who work for Life Dynamics inside the abortion industry; information about powerful new pro-life strategies and services; and discussions with the movement's leaders, hidden heroes, and grass-roots activists." *LifeTalk* comes monthly in the form of a VHS tape. (For more information see [www.ldi.org](http://www.ldi.org)).

### JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY APOLOGISTS FOR JOERG HAIDER

In the March 13, 2000 issue of *The New American*, John McManus, president of the

John Birch Society, plays apologist for Austria's Joerg Haider claiming that Haider's comments regarding Hitler's positive impact on the German economy was "unfairly characterized by Haider's detractors as a defense of everything Hitler ever did." McManus calls the Freedom Party's rise unsurprising in light of the "tight-fisted two party rule" in Austria over the past 50 years. McManus does concede that there may be legitimate reasons to have reservations regarding Haider, but not because of his racist and anti-semitic views, rather because of his private meetings with globalists Newt Gingrich and Alan Greenspan (tennis with the latter, no less). McManus concludes on the one hand, that European Union globalists benefit from their attacks on Haider since it keeps them from having an "authentic Competitor," while maintaining, on the other hand, that Haider is now their ally.

### HARNESSING HUMAN DEPRAVITY

*The Schwarz Report* (Vol. 40, No. 2), a publication of the Christian Anti-Communist League, included the following in its monthly harangue against Marxism: "Marxism cannot succeed because it has no way to harness human depravity for the service of others. Instead it depends on altruism where little or none exists, and it supplies no incentive for that altruism to be cultivated."

### *PRA Staff Transitions*

In February 2000 Peter Snoad left his position as Deputy Director at PRA to become the program officer at a private family foundation in the Boston area. At that time, Jesse Putnam joined the staff in the re-titled position of Director of Development and Communications. Jesse comes to us from his former job as Director at the Homeless Empowerment Project, publisher of the street newspaper *Spare Change*.

In May, our Associate Research Analyst, Surina Khan, left PRA to become the Executive Director at the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) in San Francisco. That same month, Mitra Rastegar, formerly a research assistant and paralegal at Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) in Boston, joined the PRA staff in a newly-created position of Researcher. Mitra will work on the PRA Activist Resource Kits.

We are simultaneously sad to say goodbye to our old colleagues and excited at the arrival of new faces. To Peter and Surina—our hearts go with you. To Jesse and Mitra—a heartfelt and embracing welcome.

# Resources

## SELECTED LIST OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

### Alan Gutmacher Institute

120 Wall Street, New York, NY 10005, (212) 248-1111, fax (212) 248-1951  
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 460, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 296-4012, info@agi-usa.org, www.agi-usa.org

A nonprofit research and policy institute that studies reproductive health issues, including abortion, contraception, teen pregnancy, and STD's. Publishes reports, articles, and fact sheets. An excellent source of information and statistics on all aspects of reproductive health, particularly abortion and contraception.

### Americans for Religious Liberty

P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20916, (301) 598-2447, arlinc@erols.com

Americans for Religious Liberty (ARL) is a nonprofit public interest education organization dedicated to preserving the separation of church and state. Watchdogs the right on a number of issues, including abortion politics. Publishes *The Voice of Reason* newsletter.

### Americans United for Separation of Church and State

1816 Jefferson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 466-3234, www.au.org

Publishes detailed reports on religious right. Executive Director Barry Lynn and *Church and State* editor Rob Boston regularly produce reports, speeches and other materials that expose attempts of conservative Christian organizations to control public policy.

### Asian and Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health

310 8th Street, Suite 100, Oakland, CA 94607, (510) 268-8988, apirh@igc.org

Collaborates with clinics, organizations and individuals to promote safe and viable options for the reproductive health and sexual well-being of Asian and Pacific Islander women and girls. Conducts outreach and education projects, promotes community-based research, advocates, and organizes with low-income and refugee communities in California.

### Body Politic

P.O. Box 2363, Binghamton, NY 13902-2363, (607) 648-2760, www.bodypolitic.org

A monthly publication that monitors attacks on reproductive rights, especially

from right-wing organizations. Interviews with pro-choice activists, updates on clinic attacks and anti-choice activities, and an annual pro-choice directory.

### Catholics for Free Choice

1436 U Street, NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC 20009 (202) 986-6093, www.cath4choice.org

Through discourse, education, and advocacy, CFFC advances sexual and reproductive ethics that are based on justice and a commitment to women's well-being, and respect and affirm the moral capacity of women and men to make responsible decisions about their lives.

### Center for Democratic Renewal

P.O. Box 50469, Atlanta, GA 30302, (404) 221-0025, www.thecdr.org

Monitors, exposes, and counters hate groups, particularly white supremacists. Assists communities in organizing against hate groups in their areas. Publishes three annual magazines, plus pamphlets and reports, including "Women's Watch: Violence in the Anti-Abortion Movement."

### Center for Reproductive Law and Policy

1146 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 530-2975, fax (202) 530-2976, www.crlp.org

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## The Public Eye

NEWSLETTER

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