

Protests against the Corrie Amendment to the 1967 Abortion Act in the United Kingdom. Colour process prints, 1979-1980.

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ABORTION UNDER ATTACK

**Meeting against the
Corrie Amendment to the
1967 Abortion Act**

SPEAKERS:

- ① **Dr. Wendy Savage**
From the medical viewpoint

- ② **Victor Tunkel** — Barrister and Senior
Lecturer in Law — Queen Mary College
From the Politico-Legal point of view

- ③ **Dr. Berry Beaumont** — Lecturer in
Community Medicine — St. Mary's Hospital

Thursday October 25th. 5.45 p.m.
Edward Lewis Theatre
Windeyer Building
Middlesex Hospital Medical School



You don't read one of those do you dear, how careless of you - still you'll be home in time for tea

No, I'm going straight to the Reclaim the Night Demo!

Reclaim the what?
Whatever will you lose next?

THE POLITICS of ABORTION
a Forum on
A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE
FEB. 21st. 10am - 5.30pm.
Starcross School, Rising Hill St. N.1

National
RECLAIM THE NIGHT
DEMONSTRATION
Assemble 6.30pm. Temple Place, W.C.2.



And if I don't get arrested I'm going to bop at the women only disco

Arrested - women only disco - are you sure about those new friends of yours dear?



BENEFIT DISCO
8pm - late
Caxton House,
St John's Way, N.19.
Archway Tube Stn.



THE POLITICS OF ABORTION
A FORUM ON
A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Saturday 21st February 10 am. - 5.30pm.

Agenda

9.30am. Registration

10.15am. Introduction to the Day

10.45am Workshops; Techniques of Abortion

Why late abortions ?

The struggle in Parliament. Whose Parliament is it anyway ?

The ideology of the anti - abortionists - moral rearmament.

12.15pm Workshops;

Abortion; A question for socialists ?

Pros and cons of remaining a single issue campaign.

The feelings behind the slogans.

International solidarity - if you think its bad here - try Spain.

Abortion; An issue for men ?

1.30. - 2.30 Lunch

2.30pm. Workshops;

What was so great about the suffragettes ? What can we learn from their campaign ?

What kind of facilities do we want ?

Positive law or no law at all ?

Lesbians, abortion and sexuality.

Shocking Pink supports abortion rights. Young women and the struggle for fertility control.

3.45. - 4pm. Tea

4pm - 5.30pm. Plenary. Where do we go from here ?

WOMEN ONLY

Food, bookstalls, exhibition, video, creche (run by men)

£2 waged, £1 unwaged

6.30pm. RECLAIM THE NIGHT DEMONSTRATION.. Assemble Temple Place, W.C.2. (NUS)

8pm - late BENEFIT DISCO : Caxton House, St. John's Way, N.19. Archway Tube Station. Proceeds to NAC and defence fund for women arrested recently protesting against male violence.. WOMEN ONLY.

There is a possibility that a creche will be arranged at Caxton House for the demonstration but please check before the day.

Further details from NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN, 374, Grays Inn Road, W.C. 1.
01.278. 0153.

664631i/12



Off shopping dear?

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OUR BODIES OUR LIVES OUR RIGHT TO DECIDE !

NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN

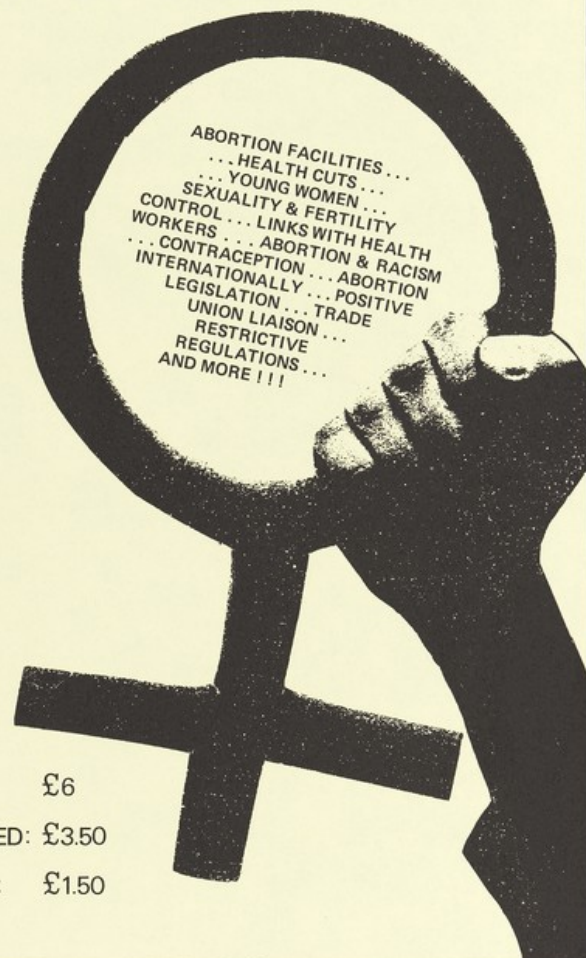
1981 CONFERENCE

JUNE 13-14

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER INSTITUTE OF
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

STUDENTS UNION
WHITWORTH STREET

MANCHESTER



ACCOMMODATION &
CRECHE:-

Please register in
advance

DETAILS & REGISTRATION :-

NAC
374 Grays Inn Road
London WC1
01-278-0153

WAGED: £6

LOW WAGED: £3.50

UNWAGED: £1.50

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**PREGNANT,
AND WANT HELP?**

**TOUGH LUCK
IF THE CORRIE
ANTI-ABORTION BILL
GOES THROUGH...**

THE CORRIE BILL WOULD

- drastically restrict the medical and social grounds for abortion. Two thirds of legal abortions performed today would become illegal.
- make it impossible for the charitable abortion organisations to exist. These helped 56,000 women last year.
- allow doctors and nurses to refuse to do abortions for any reason, without having to justify why.
- change the time limit from 28 to 20 weeks.

THE CORRIE BILL WOULD NOT STOP WOMEN SEEKING ABORTIONS

IT WILL DRIVE WOMEN TO THE BACKSTREETS

DEFEND THE 1967 ACT!

DEFEAT THE CORRIE BILL!



For further information, write or phone
**Campaign against the
Corrie Bill**

c/o 374 Grays Inn Road
London WC1 8BB
(01) 278 0153

March for Abortion Rights

*Sunday - October 28
Assemble 12:00 noon
Speakers Corner, Hyde Park
(proceeding on to
Trafalgar Square)*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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% 374 GRAYS INN ROAD, LONDON WC1X 8BB
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LSE'S WEEK OF ACTION TO GIVE HER THE CHOICE

MONDAY 21st JAN

CABARET EVENING. SONGS & SATIRE WITH
LYNDIE BRIMSTONE
MAGGIE STEED and ANDY DE LA TOUR (of the $\frac{1}{2}$ Moon Cabaret)
and others
Old Theatre 7.30pm. 50p

TUES. 22nd JAN

DEBATE ON ABORTION
Old Theatre 1pm

WEDS. 23rd JAN

VIDEO OF OCTOBER DEMO & ROWDY WOMEN PLAY
Room S 075. 1pm FREE

THURS. 24th JAN

FILM 'ALFIE'
(sixties view of sexual politics & its victims)
Old Theatre 7pm. 30p

FRI. 25th JAN

BENEFIT GIG WITH:
DELTA 5
THE PASSIONS
Comperes: BERYL'S PERILS plus DISCO
Haldene Room 7.30pm

All above events at London School of Economics·Houghton St·WC2
tubes: Holborn and Temple

FIGHT THE 8TH FEB. CORRIE BILL

WOMEN WILL DIE IF THIS BILL IS PASSED

The Campaign Against Corrie's (anti-abortion) Bill
and the
South-East
Regional
TUC are
organising ..

MASS LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT CENTRAL HALL WESTMINSTER TUESDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2.00 ONWARDS

Jo Richardson MP to chair
Speakers include:
Maureen Colquhoun
David Steel MP
Judith Hunt (AUEW TASS
TUC Womens Advisory
Committee)
and many others
Entertainment:
Creche provided

Write to your MP

Come to the lobby

NO RETURN TO BACKSTREET ABORTIONS

Campaign Against Corrie c/o 374 Grays Inn Road London EC1

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CORRIE NEWS

Paper of Tower Hamlets Campaign Against Corrie 95 Jubilee Street, E1

PRINTED BY EAST END (OFFSET) LTD. PO BOX 82, LONDON, E2.

FIGHT CORRIE

DEFEND THE MILE END CLINIC

Join the demonstration Saturday
26th January 1pm at the London Hospital
followed by a rally at the Mile End Hospital

THIRD READING OF CORRIE BILL

$\frac{1}{2}$ day strike & lobby
2:00 pm Tuesday 5th February Central Hall
Westminster

ASSEMBLY OF WOMEN

Friday
8th February Central Hall Westminster 2:00 pm

FREE AND SAFE ABORTION ON DEMAND

EDITORIAL

Imagine what it will be like if the Corrie Bill gets passed. A lot of us can't really remember, or never knew, what it was like to have to choose between an unwanted pregnancy and possible injury or even death in an unsafe, illegal and expensive backstreet abortion. Although the 1967 Abortion Act is not perfect, it has given a lot more women access to safe legal abortions, either on the National Health Service or through the charities.

We've got less than a month left before the third and final reading of the Corrie Bill, if it passes this it will be LAW. Local and national activities have been planned between now and the third reading as a last effort to get the bill thrown out.

We've got to make it clear that we want women to have the right to choose for themselves whether to have an abortion. The best way to persuade MPs to change their minds and reject the Bill is to show them how many of those whose votes they depend on are against it. Support the activities against the Bill. If you are at work push for strike action on the 9th. Tell your workmates, your friends, your neighbours, what the Bill will mean to ordinary women. If we don't manage to get the Bill rejected, our control over our own lives will be that much smaller. And who knows what the Tory Government will try next?

Cuts Threaten Womens' Health

YES AGAIN, WOMEN'S HEALTH IS BEING PUT AT RISK BY NHS CUTBACKS.

Cervical smear tests are no longer to be done for women over 30, and limited to every 3 years for women over 30. Previously they have been available as a matter of routine to all women on the pill or attending family planning or ante-natal clinics. Any woman who wanted a smear test done was entitled to it.

Cancer of the cervix kills about 2,000 women every year in Britain. It affects mainly working class women, and the most striking thing about the disease is that, if detected early, it can be cured by relatively simple and untraumatic treatment. More and more young women are dying of cancer of the cervix; the reason is thought to be that we are sexually active at a younger age, and are more likely to have several sexual partners during our lives, unlike our mothers and grandmothers who tended to get married and stay with one man.

The death rate from cancer of the cervix has not decreased over the last few years in Britain despite the introduction of screening for it by cervical smears. This fact is used by some people as an argument against screening. However, only about 50% of women in Britain actually have smears taken every year, while in British Columbia where a massive programme of screening was undertaken, reaching 95% of the women in the province, it took 15 years before there was a significant fall in the death

rate. Instead of reducing the number of smears done, there ought to be a big effort to reach more women, especially younger women.

Nobody can say whether the present reduction in screening will mean that some women who have cancer of the cervix or certain 'pre-malignant' conditions (abnormalities which are thought to lead on to cancer if untreated) will not be detected. The argument is used that women attending the antenatal clinic rarely have abnormal smears, or that pregnancy itself can produce changes in the cells which lead to confusion. But for many women, especially in this area where general practices are often overworked and where family doctors may be unable or unwilling to provide screening, the family planning or antenatal clinic is their only contact with medical services.

The people who decide how and where to make the cuts are under tremendous pressure because the NHS is so drastically underfunded. Perhaps they feel that other areas of medical work are more important - but these decisions should not be necessary - we say for a national health service, for which are parents and grandparents fought, and which is our basic right, not a privilege handed to us from above. It's another example of how women's lives are threatened by NHS cuts - and it's working class women, the same women who will be unable to get safe, legal abortions if Corrie has his way.

What the Bill Does

The Corrie Abortion (Amendment) Bill was first introduced in June 1979. It seeks to reduce legal abortions by 3 through:

1. reducing the time limit which is currently 28 weeks
2. allowing the grounds for abortion
3. restricting the work of the charities which currently perform 40% of abortions
4. widening the conscience clause.

The second reading of this Bill was passed in July 1979 by a large majority of 5 to 2. The Bill now approaches its final reading and, following the report of the select committee which has been sitting for the past 3 months, it has now been re-drafted. Basically, however, the intentions are still the same. In the words of Professor John Scarisbrook, chairman of the anti-abortion

life organisation, it will still reduce abortion by 3.

The 4 principle aims of the Bill as it now stands are:-

1. Reduce the upper time limit from 28 to 20 weeks with the added proviso that the Secretary of State has the power to lower it yet again subject to the approval of both Houses of Parliament. This seems that it does not have to go through lengthy Parliamentary procedures.
2. The Minister of Health, Doctor Vaughan, has reported that the majority of medical organisations were in favour of a time limit of 14 weeks. They believe that this would prevent any possibility of a viable foetus being aborted and that a lower time limit would lead to no camp whatsoever that it would be difficult to impose.

3. Restrict the grounds for abortion. It states that an abortion could only be performed if the pregnancy involved 'risk to the life of the pregnant woman or serious injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or any existing children of her family.'
4. Widening the conscience clause. The burden of proof is removed from the person claiming objection. Whilst no one minds genuine objections this clause could lead to frivolous and last minute objects. At the very least this clause should lay a duty on the doctor claiming conscientious objections to inform the woman of the true reason for his refusal to help and require him/her to refer her to another doctor.
5. Restrict the charities. This clause is extremely complex but seeks to break all links between pregnancy counselling and those actually performing abortions. This will effectively cripple the work of the 2 main charities, the British Pregnancy Advisory Service and the Pregnancy Advisory Service. At present these charities carry out 9 of all abortions.

Why the 1967 Abortion Act Should Not be Restricted

The majority of the public and of their family doctors do not want to put the clock back to 1967 for the following reasons:

- Abortion deaths** Deaths from all abortions have fallen from 5 in 1969 (the year after the Abortion Act came into force) to 5 in 1978.
- Deaths after illegal abortion** Only 1 death was recorded in 1977 after an illegal (or induced but unclassified) abortion compared with 22 in 1966.
- Public opinion** The number of hospital discharges after induced or specific abortion, a common result of botched, illegal abortion, fell from 3,110 in 1968 to 610 in 1975.
- Medical objections** The number of cases where treatment was refused as following illegal abortion fell from 500 in 1968 to 180 in 1975.
- Clinical offences** Illegal abortion offences known to the police have dropped from 187 in 1969 to 7 in 1978.
- The number of persons found guilty of, or cautioned for, offences of procuring illegal abortion** dropped from 72 in 1969 to 3 in 1977.
- From these figures it would be fair to assume that fewer women resorted to self-induced or back-street abortion.**
- Stable abortion rate** The abortion rate - that is the number of abortions per 1000 fertile women - has remained remarkably stable over the last five years, at just under 12 per 1000 women.
- This is one of the lowest rates for legal abortion in the world. It indicates that women are using contraception more readily and effectively.**
- Legal abortions** The number of abortions carried out by the end of the 16th week of pregnancy rose from 645 in 1969 to 805 in 1977. More were carried out before this time if women faced none of the delays inherent in the NHS.
- (The figures quoted are the latest available)**
- Public opinion** A National Opinion Poll survey carried out in February this year showed that 95% of the public agreed that 'abortion should be made legally available for all who want it'. Marjane found in October this year that 48% of the public thought abortion should be 'legal on demand for all women'.
- These views are, of course, more liberal than the 1967 Abortion Act allows. It does, therefore, seem clear that a substantial majority of the public is in favour of current legislation.**
- Medical opinion** 64% of General Practitioners in 1978 thought the present law should be left as it is or changed to make abortion easier.
- The British Medical Association and the National Association of Family Planning Doctors support the 1967 Abortion Act in their evidence to the OMS on John Corrie's Abortion (Amendment) Bill.**
- After-effects of abortion** A study by Dr Colin Brewer of the University of Birmingham (British Medical Journal 19 Feb 1977) showed that psychological problems such as serious depression after abortion are extremely rare and occur considerably less often than after birth. During a 15 month study involving 21 consultant psychiatrists in the West Midlands, the incidence of post-abortion psychosis was 0.3 per 1000 legal abortions, whereas the incidence of postnatal (after childbirth) psychosis was 1.7 per 1000 deliveries. This study has strikingly similar results to one by Litzke and Leul in the US in 1972 (Studies in Family Planning, 1972, 3, 97).
- A recent American study by Susan Harlap et al (The New England Journal of Medicine 27 Sept 1978, Vol 301, No 12) shows that risk of miscarriage following abortion is virtually eliminated by the use of suction aspiration and gentle dilatation of the cervix. The study found that abortion does not increase the risk of early miscarriage although there was a minimal risk in the second trimester (13-6 months) among women who have never had a child but not among women with previous births.**
- This supports the widely held view that such risk is caused by cervical damage at the time of the abortion since dilatation is more difficult in women who have not experienced childbirth. This risk became negligible once methods were used which reduced the necessary amount of dilatation of the cervix and instrumental dilation was replaced by the more gentle technique (a water absorbing keip) which gradually swells, thus dilating the cervix over a period of hours.**
- A World Health Organisation (WHO) study in seven European countries (International Family Planning Perspectives and Digest, Vol 4, No 2 Summer 1975) showed that there is no evidence that early legal abortion by vacuum aspiration increases the likelihood of spontaneous abortion, shortened gestation or low birth weight infants in the subsequent pregnancy.**
- But the study did suggest that dilatation and curettage (D&C) may slightly increase the risk of these unfavourable outcomes, particularly where dilatation beyond 6mm was used to perform the operation. D&C appeared to pose no greater risk than vacuum aspiration in countries, such as the United Kingdom, where both methods were used.**

ACTIVITY

As well as fighting the Corrie Bill on a national level we feel it important to also concentrate on a more local issue i.e. the Mile End Clinic. The Mile End Hospital has the most progressive out patient abortion

clinic in the country which is under attack from both the Bill and public service cuts. If the Bill is passed it is almost certain to result in the closure of this clinic. Join us in the fight

to keep this clinic open. A march to Mile End Hospital for a rally. On - January 26th At - 1.00 pm Meet - London Hospital Whitechapel

The Corrie Bill is coming up for its third and final reading on February 8th FEBRUARY 5th A lobby of the House of Commons has been organised jointly by the National Abortion Campaign and the South East region of the TUC.

Join the rally to be held at Central Hall Westminster at 2.00pm from which the lobby will be organised. Local groups will be gathering first at the University of London, Malet St. at 12.00am. and will then move on to

FEBRUARY 8th This the day of the third reading. Again at Central Hall, Westminster at 2.00pm there will be a rally. This time for women only however as a symbol of the effect this Bill have on them.

Join the rally to be held at Central Hall Westminster at 2.00pm from which the lobby will be organised. Local groups will be gathering first at the University of London, Malet St. at 12.00am. and will then move on to

Fighting Corrie in the Unions

In 1978, the Trades Union Congress passed the following resolution on abortion:

"Congress reaffirms its opposition to any move to amend the 1967 abortion legislation in such a way as to make abortion more inaccessible to women.

"Further, Congress believes that to implement fully the 1967 legislation throughout all regions of Britain, out-patient abortion clinics should be set up in each AHA in line with DHSS guidelines.

"Congress therefore calls on the TUC General Council to put pressure on the Government to implement these proposals speedily and calls on all member unions to press for this at local and national level.

"Congress endorses the TUC Women's Conference resolution calling for a TUC demonstration before the final parliamentary vote on any future abortion legislation."

So...what has the TUC done to implement this policy? - it certainly did call for that demonstration, in response to the Corrie Bill. On 28 October the TUC together with the National Abortion Campaign

mobilised over 60,000 people to march under the slogan "Keep It Legal: Keep It Safe".

This unprecedented step was the first move against this Tory government.

The fight against Thatcher is inextricable from the campaign to defend abortion rights.

The Corrie Bill is just the first of a whole series of attacks on women's rights.

The trade union movement has grown considerably over the past few years and this has largely been due to the increase in recruitment of women workers.

Women now make up nearly 30% of the trade union movement and 40% of the labour force.

The radicalisation of women workers influenced by the growth of the Women's Liberation Movement has forced male trade unionists and the trade union leadership to take a stand on issues affecting women's lives, such as abortion, in the same way as they would fight around pay and conditions.

How has this affected the rank and file membership?

The effects of the call by the

TUC for a demonstration last October have had repercussions on an INTERNATIONAL scale.

It has given many pro-abortion campaigns abroad encouragement and incentive to make this a trade union issue in other countries.

In Britain, "women's liberation" has become a household term. Although the working class are poorly educated on political questions relating to women, campaigns around the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts have put male trade unionists on the line and they have often publically supported these struggles.

It is, therefore, crucial that we maintain and strengthen our links with the trade union movement, building the campaign in the workplace as well as challenging the trade union leadership to fight around this issue.

On Friday 8 February the Corrie Bill will receive its final reading in the House of Commons. Calling a demonstration is not enough. We must continue to fight this bill on the streets. We must engage in debate with our sisters and brothers in the labour movement to join us on 5 February to take strike action

to support the mass lobby of Parliament and rally called by the South East Region TUC and the Campaign Against Corrie.

After 8 February, regardless of whether the bill is passed or not, the fight for women to have the right to free, safe, legal abortions will continue, as will the fight against cuts in the NHS and for the extension of abortion day-care facilities.

8 March is International Women's Day. There will be a demonstration Against the Tories and For Abortion Rights.

More importantly, we need to call regional trade union conferences now to discuss what form of positive legislation we want and how to fight for it. A national labour movement conference in the autumn could then draw together the proposals from the localities and draw up a plan of action. These conferences need to be based on continuing the fight for free, safe, legal abortion and for it to be a woman's right to choose.

TO DEFEAT THE CORRIE BILL :
STRIKE AGAINST CORRIE

For speakers and further information call Trina Shane 801 8341 (home) or 515 7717 (work)

Answering Back

Anti-abortionists put forward a lot of arguments against abortion. Here are a few of the commonest - and some answers.

ISN'T ABORTION KILLING BABIES?

The foetus that is aborted is not capable of surviving on its own. None of the scare stories about aborted foetuses crying or living for a few hours have been proved. Having an abortion is totally different from killing a fully developed baby that has started a life independent of its mother. Before it has reached that state it is up to the woman herself whether to go ahead with the pregnancy.

WHY CAN'T ALL THESE UNWANTED BABIES BE ADOPTED?

Why should a woman go through 9 months of pregnancy and the birth to have a baby she will not keep? It is often very upsetting for a woman to have to give up her baby - even when, realistically, she cannot keep it. There are children who could be adopted anyway, its just that most people want a healthy, white baby, not an older child who may be handicapped or black. It is these children who are in homes because they cannot be adopted or fostered.

LEGALISING ABORTION HASN'T REALLY REDUCED THE BACKSTREET TRADE, HAS IT?

In 1968 22 women died from backstreet abortions and 520 were admitted to hospital (this was a year after abortion became legal but was still very hard to get). In 1977 only 1 woman died. In 1975 180 were admitted to hospital. Its still not good, but its improved a lot. If abortion were freely available to any woman who wanted one, there would be no custom for the backstreets.

WHY DON'T ALL THESE WOMEN USE CONTRACEPTION RATHER THAN ABORTION AS A METHOD OF BIRTH CONTROL?

Of course contraception is better all round than abortion but its not that easy. No method of birth control is 100% effective. The pill, which is considered the safest of all, is still only 98% effective. For various medical reasons many women are unable or unwilling to use this method. Using all the other methods there is a higher risk of pregnancy.

Many women are still ignorant about contraception and until such a time as education is able to reach all women of childbearing age, so that all babies are wanted babies, abortion will continue to be necessary.

CAN'T ABORTION AFFECT A WOMAN'S FUTURE CHANCES OF HAVING A BABY?

A septic abortion (usually the result of an unhygienic backstreet abortion) can lead to sterility. This is very unlikely to happen with an abortion properly performed in a hospital or clinic.

AREN'T WOMEN WHO HAVE ABORTIONS IRRESPONSIBLE BECAUSE THEY WON'T ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR OWN ACTIONS?

It is possible to become pregnant even when using contraception, so its hardly a woman's fault if she becomes pregnant. Once pregnant, which is more responsible: to have a baby she does not want, maybe cannot afford or look after properly, or to have an abortion?.

A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

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THE POLITICS OF ABORTION

A FORUM ON A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

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