

On the Barricades for Abortion Rights

**A selection of reprints reflecting
Radical Women's involvement in the
reproductive rights movement from
1984-1986**

Radical Women Publications

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INTRODUCTION

Radical Women has stood on the barricades for abortion rights since our formation in 1967 as the first socialist feminist women's group in the U.S.

Our earliest battles took place in Washington state during the late '60s and were organized in league with women of color from the anti-poverty programs. Our militant protests took the abortion issue off the obituary page and made it front page news. These early efforts led to the rise of a broad mass movement for legalized abortion, which won a state voter referendum legalizing abortion a full three years before the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision established abortion rights throughout the land in 1973!

When rightwing attacks on abortion rights escalated into fullscale war in the '80s, Radical Women was on the front lines again--in the press, in legislative hearings and above all in the streets and on picketlines in face-to-face confrontation with the ultraright.

We took up the issue in every U.S. city where Radical Women branches exist: New York City; Seattle and Tacoma, Washington; Portland, Oregon; the San Francisco Bay Area; and Los Angeles.

We found other feminists eager to collaborate with us. Seattle Radical Women also worked closely with abortion activists in nearby Everett, Washington, when that city's fledgling abortion clinic became the target of repeated physical attack.

In Australia, where the movement still fights to achieve legal abortion nationwide, the main obstacle is a rightwing movement closely aligned with the U.S. "Right to Life" movement. As in the U.S., Melbourne RW has confronted the anti-abortionists in Australia.

In 1985 and 1986 Radical Women orchestrated a successful pressure campaign on the Supreme Court in the United States. The phenomenal result was over 10,000 postcards to U.S. Supreme Court Justices urging them to uphold the Roe v. Wade decision.

This compilation of articles, press releases, testimony, leaflets and letters written by Radical Women and coalitions we worked with from 1984-86 illustrates our broad, multi-faceted approach to the fight for abortion rights. It is a combined organizer's tool on how to wage similar fights, a history of key battles and victories, and a presentation of the theoretical and tactical issues at the center of the reproductive rights movement.

A woman's right to control her own body is fundamental to her ability to achieve social, political and economic equality. Without reproductive rights--the right to choose whether or not to have children--women's options are limited to economic dependence on men or stark poverty, life-threatening illegal abortions, forced sterilizations, or forfeited jobs and educational opportunities.

The international right wing, with support from government and business, targets abortion rights in order to smash the gains made by the feminist and civil rights movements in the '60s and '70s. These moralistic bigots understand that feminism challenges the capitalist system: if women were truly freed from unpaid work in the home and rock-bottom wages in the job market, the entire private profit structure would be bankrupted.

The enemies of abortion are identical to the forces which seek to roll back labor's gains, attack the lesbian/gay movement, deny the rights of people of color, and wage war on revolutionary struggles around the world. For that reason, the battle for abortion is not just the key to women's equality, it is also a major test of rightwing strength against the forces of the left.

By knowing our enemy, we know what it will take to win. Radical Women calls for organizing militant, multi-issue, feminist united fronts which unify women's rights advocates and build bridges to all social movements in order to mount effective action against the ultraright.

Radical Women continues its organizing efforts to protect, extend and legalize reproductive rights. But we also know that under capitalism no reform can permanently safeguard our rights as women, people of color, lesbians and gays, workers, the disabled, elders and youth. Equality for all the oppressed can only be permanently secured when we replace capitalism with a socialist society, in which a foundation of economic equality will make possible real social equality and the fullest flowering of humanity.

This publication shows how Radical Women fights for women's day-to-day survival while at the same time demonstrating why socialism is necessary. It proposes solutions to the tough tactical questions which confront the movement: Should feminists cooperate with the FBI in tracking down attackers of abortion clinics? Should court injunctions against rightwing harassment be solicited and used by feminist clinics despite the historic use of injunctions to break strikes? Are rightwingers exercising their free speech or attempting political terrorism? When should the movement attempt to educate right-wingers, ignore them, or defeat them through organizing a mass, militant self-defense?

We hope the political lessons contained here will benefit other abortion rights campaigns. We welcome questions, responses, and requests for collaboration. And we look forward to increased national and international dialogue on how to conduct this crucial fight.

Debra O'Gara
Seattle, Washington
May, 1987

U.S. ABORTION RIGHTS MOVEMENT

THE RIGHT TO ABORTION

THE WAR THAT WON IT AND THE WAR TO SAVE IT

BY SANDY NELSON

The dearly-won freedom to choose a safe, legal, and inexpensive abortion may soon be disastrously reversed.

Not even ten years have passed since the feminist movement won back this precious and ancient practice. How swiftly has the unholy trinity of church, state, and Big Business retaliated with its regressive crusade to wipe out women's reproductive rights!

On the smoldering ashes of female emancipation, the right-to-lifers, supply-siders, and assorted reactionaries plan to dismantle *all* democratic and human liberties. They focus on the politically weakest and yet most profound link in the chain of workers' rights—legal abortion and protection from forced sterilization.

Already, federal funding for abortion is being gutted. And the right wing is hounding legislators at the national, state, and local levels for laws such as the Human Life Amendment that define conception as the beginning of human life and punish abortion as murder.

America's capitalist class is fiercely determined to restore the straight white male as king of the nuclear family castle and re-enslave women as breeding machines and seasonally available cheap labor for the profit system. The plutocracy has the president, Congress, the courts, and billions of dollars in its pockets, and is working full throttle to abort women's biological freedom—women's control of their own bodies for their own reasons.

Once women are knocked back into sexual slavery and economic hopelessness, male workers will get the ax also. *The abortion issue is clearly the launching pad for all the current attacks on the needs of working people.*

The sinister Family Protection Act, for example, is a sweeping assault on much more than reproductive rights. It singles out for persecution all female-headed households; shelters for battered women; childcare facilities; public education; social, health, and legal services for people of color and the poor; desegregated schools; progressive labor laws; and lesbian and gay rights!

To make matters worse, the petty bourgeois feminists, liberals, and other fair-weather friends of women and democracy are ducking for cover just when they should be gearing up for a united defense. Seeing only political blitzkrieg on the horizon, the erstwhile friends of feminism have lost all will to fight, and are sacrificing the needs of their multiply-oppressed sisters.

The liberals are incapable of a multi-issue, all-encompassing program that raises aloft the bold demands that won abortion in the first place,

Social revolution no longer entails the fun, glitz, and euphoria of the '60s and '70s. Today, it's a tough political swim against the current. Nonetheless, militant mass action is a *must*.

Those who ignore the lessons of history are doomed to repeat its mistakes—and do they ever! But those who respect history are privileged to reproduce and extend its victories.

Race, class, and sex morality

Under common law inherited from England, abortion and birth control were legal in the U.S. throughout much of the 19th century.

An estimated one out of every three pregnancies ended in abortion, and by the end of the century women had succeeded in cutting the birthrate in half.

It was not until the Civil War was over that the U.S. ruling class began in earnest to take control of reproduction away from women.

The American Medical Association led the campaign. It wanted all health care, and the profits derived therefrom, in the exclusive hands of doctors. And it derided as "dirty" and "unsafe" abortions by midwives, the salvation of women for centuries.

The tremendous post-war industrial boom and the colonization of the West had created the need for more workers. The capitalists wanted (white) women in the home to breed labor power for the factories.

The boom forced the U.S. to throw open its doors to millions of European and, later, Asian immigrants. And the powers-that-be feared that this sudden influx of non-WASPs would choke out the white Yankee stock.

Hence, in the last quarter of the 19th century, the effort to control women's reproduction through the state, church, and medical profession took on a *double-barreled sexist and racist character*. And anti-abortion laws became the paving stones for sinister methods of population control directed primarily against women of color.

In 1922, a national eugenics law to "control the breeding of undesirables" provided the means for thousands of forced sterilizations. During the Depression, federally-funded birth clinics were established in the South to reduce the Black birthrate.

A 1945 Congressional motion to sterilize all Japanese American women interned in concentration camps failed by only one vote!

Century of struggle

Who began the 20th century struggles for reproductive rights? The radicals, the socialists, the anarchists. Fearless women like Emma Goldman and countless others braved arrest and prison to publicize the plight of an entire sex shorn of its historic and in-

herent right to limit its own progeny.

Sixty years of battle eventually culminated in the legalization of contraception in most states, but abortion remained off limits.

It was precisely by exposing the *immorality* of the anti-abortionists that feminists and civil libertarians won vast public support for repeal of abortion laws in the '60s and early '70s.

Two mid-'60s horror stories helped pave the way. Thalidomide victim Sherri Finkbine, who had been denied an abortion in Colorado, made national headlines when she traveled to Sweden and aborted a horribly deformed fetus.

Next, an epidemic of rubella, which increases the danger of fetal deformity, hit thousands of U.S. women. Because they lacked money and influence, they were barred by hypocritical hospital committees from receiving abortions.

Pro-abortion activists like Lawrence Lader, author of *Abortion II*, and Patricia Maginnis began to agitate around the country for legalized abortion. And by 1967, a few physicians were willing to test abortion laws.

In 1969, Dr. Milan Vuitch, the first to challenge abortion laws on constitutional grounds, won before the District Court of the District of Columbia. Washington, D.C. became the first place in the U.S. to legalize abortion.

The civil disobedience of a few courageous doctors and individuals, however, would have been powerless to alter the laws had not the growing feminist movement leapt into the struggle.

Young women from the Civil Rights movement began to fight for women's rights as well, and they infused pro-abortion groups in San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Boston, and Seattle with the vigor and determination necessary to shake the nation out of a century of ignorance and complacency. Once again, as the liberals flinched, the radicals stormed into action.

Even NOW backed abortion law repeal in 1967, although the issue split

the organization. Other feminist groups lent their voices and pens to the defense of individuals prosecuted under the abortion laws, and they hit the streets and state capitols to pressure the courts and legislatures.

By 1969, pro-abortion strategies won reforms in ten states. These reforms, however, still left formidable barriers to women's access to abortion, and even *decreased* the total number of abortions performed in this country.

The polite lobbyists for abortion who tried to avoid provoking religious opposition were outgunned by the friends-of-the-fetus and right-to-life groups who decked their children in "I'm glad I was born" signs and paraded them around the statehouses.

But feminists were not about to be stopped on the doorsteps of the legislature.

In February 1969, women from NOW, the October 17 Movement, and Women's Liberation broke up a meeting of New York State's Legislative Committee. The committee's "experts" consisted of fourteen men and a nun. The women picketed, distributed leaflets, and demanded to speak. After they were ejected, they sat-in until three of them were allowed to speak.

Public furor deepened when feminist lawyers, including Flo Kennedy, invited the press to hear depositions in a New York test case from women who had suffered the degradation of illegal abortions. Not long afterward, in March 1970, the New York Legislature repealed the state abortion law.

Pioneer struggle in Washington

It has never been sufficiently recognized that it was Black women in the Civil Rights movement who initiated the fight for legal abortion in Washington State. These militants knew from ghetto life how women of color were butchered by back alley abortionists or consigned to coathanger surgery.

In 1968, when women were radicaliz-

ing the Civil Rights and anti-war movements, a small group of Black activists from the anti-poverty programs and members of Radical Women working in these agencies formed a coalition called Abortion Action Now and launched a powerful public campaign.

They hounded the media for publicity and agitated statewide for abortion on demand.

They pioneered the demand for an end to non-consensual sterilization of women of color, the mentally and physically "disabled," and poor whites. They denounced the racist double standard and sexism that prescribed genocide for women of color and "social undesirables" but mandated compulsory pregnancy for white women.

They linked reproductive rights to affirmative action and free, round-the-clock childcare—reforms enabling women to support themselves and raise the children they chose to bear.

Mass demonstrations (which included a donnybrook with capitol guards at the legislature), public education, petitions, and hearings catapulted the abortion issue from the obituary page to the front page. A bill to legalize abortion that lay moldering in the Senate Rules Committee was hastily resurrected.

After two years of bucking Catholic resistance in committee hearings, the bill was put to a popular referendum vote in 1970. It won by a landslide, a full three years before the U.S. Supreme Court made legalized abortion the law of the land in 1973.

Latter-day compromisers

Cushioned with privilege and concerned primarily with the needs of white middleclass women, most of today's "pro-choice" activists have divorced themselves from the pioneers who won abortion rights and from the militance decisive to keeping them.

The liberals, fancy feminists, social-democrats, Stalinists, and vaguely Maoist folks who dominate the pro-

choice and reproductive rights groups are bargaining away the right of all women to biological and sexual self-determination through their compromises, concessions, and soft-pedaling of feminism, radicalism, lesbian and gay rights, and the special needs of women of color.

The National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) is steeped in dangerously narrow single-issuism, bureaucratic traditions, and courting of opportunistic politicians. NARAL restricts itself to back room lobbying of Democrats and Republicans—those same pro-capitalists whose parties co-sponsored the Human Life Amendment and collaborated with Reagan to slash social services for women.

This blind worship of "quiet" lobbying led NOW president Eleanor Smeal to seek out Phyllis Schlafly and offer to *bargain away* abortion rights in exchange for a "cease-fire" on the ERA.

But abortion one-issuism will prove no more effective than ERA obsessionism. There are too many people whose lives do not allow the luxury of isolating single demands out of context of their own skin color, class, nation, or sexual orientation.

Compromise and capitulation also afflict the leftish wing of the abortion movement. These alleged radicals never acknowledge that laws against abortion serve the system by keeping women under the heel of the male-dominated nuclear family, state, church, and employer.

They shun or silence outspoken radicals who think that sexism is a cornerstone of capitalism, not a byproduct.

This evasion helps them acquiesce not only to their own sexism but to anti-feminist cultural nationalists in the people of color movements who spread the canard that abortion is "genocide," like forced sterilization, and is only a white women's issue.

Instead of building grassroots united fronts of mutual self-defense with other afflicted people, these not-so-radicals create dictatorial and disjointed com-

mittees that separate the abortion and forced sterilization issues, and perpetuate an artificial enmity between women and minorities.

Racist double standard

For minority and poor women, the right to an abortion is a life or death issue. And the male chauvinist cultural nationalists who label abortion for women of color as genocide have nothing in common with the male civil rights fighters who originally endorsed the struggle for abortion.

In 1969 alone, when abortion was illegal in all but a few states, 75% of the estimated 2-5,000 women who died in underground abortion mills were women of color. Thousands more were hospitalized with peritonitis, gangrene, air embolism (from pumping air into the uterus), and other deadly repercussions. In the meantime, 90% of all legal abortions went to white women in private clinics.

Before the 1973 Supreme Court decision, thousands of Black and Indian women, Chicanas and Puertorriqueñas were slaughtered by unskilled abortionists. Millions confront a similar fate today if they cannot afford a legal abortion.

This is genocide—the opposite of the right of minority women to control their reproductive destiny. Government refusal to give safe, legal, and free abortions to poor women amounts to a monstrous racist crime.

Sterilization—final solution

Withholding legal abortions to poor and minority women sets them up for government-funded sterilization programs. This is the establishment's final solution to the "race problem."

Legal force, medical deceit, and economic coercion are used to steal reproductive autonomy from the most oppressed women.

Today, *mandatory* sterilization of all female welfare recipients is being proposed. But lack of access to legal abortion drives women into the sterilization

clinics.

In Chicago, where 6,000 welfare abortions were recorded in 1980, the Hyde Amendment cut the number to 10 in the first half of 1981. Sterilizations, meanwhile, skyrocketed to 6,000!

When federal funding for abortion was cut in Puerto Rico, where 35% of the women of childbearing age were already sterilized, the rate of sterilization went up another 50%.

A full 24% of all Native American women have been sterilized.

Forced sterilization is population obliteration by racist, sexist rulers. It is the very opposite of women's right to *choose* their childbearing destinies. Forced sterilization is the genocidal program of capitalism, while abortion is a woman's defense against its ravages.

Dues to pay

The whip of counterrevolution always forces confused freedom fighters to face reality.

The inspiring history of the abortion movement is the key to its future and poses a bottom-line challenge to all feminists and radicals.

The reproductive rights organizations must turn left and embrace a multi-issue and anti-capitalist militancy, or they will turn right and play directly into the soiled hands of the enemy.

Loss of reproductive rights will grant an undeserved new lease on life to those institutions—Big Business, the nuclear family, the patriarchal church, racial segregation—that form the basis of this exploitative system. But victory for the pro-abortion movement will strike at the heart of capitalism.

Victory will spearhead the climb toward a socialist society that can finally free women to control their own futures, unhampered by financial destitution or the dictates of church, state, father, husband, or lover.

We must assume our rightful place in the war for abortion and against sterilization abuse. Our debt to our radical foremothers has come due. □

WomenWise

NEW HAMPSHIRE FEDERATION OF FEMINIST HEALTH CENTERS

Winter 1985/86 — Page 1

Abortion Challenges Provoke Feminist Organizing

Feminists across the country are stepping up their defense of abortion in the wake of heavy bombardment by right-wing groups which have now taken their crusade to the U.S. Supreme Court. Hanging in the balance is the 1973 Court decision on *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark decision which legalized abortion after decades of struggles by women's rights advocates.

"The right-wing is attacking on several fronts," declared Constance Scott, national organizer for Radical Women. "They practice terrorism at the clinics and now seek legalized terrorism through the courts and legislatures. Women are determined to beat back the attacks on every front."

Battle in the Courtroom

At issue in the Supreme Court are two anti-abortion state laws — the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act and the Illinois Abortion Law. The Reagan Administration has filed an amicus brief arguing in favor of these anti-abortion laws and calling for the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. An impressive range of reproductive rights and civil liberties organizations, including National Abortion Rights Action League, Planned Parenthood, and the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as 81 members of Congress, have responded with amicus briefs supporting *Roe v. Wade*.

Feminists are alarmed at the implications of the two state laws. The Illinois law would make felony criminals of doctors who fail to apply the same standards to fetal care during an abortion as they would during childbirth. The Pennsylvania statute would require physicians to select the abortion technique providing the best opportunity for the fetus to be aborted alive. Medical experts conclude that this would mandate using mini-cesarean surgery in many abortions, thus increasing the risk to the woman's health 1000% to 1500% over other procedures.

Clinic defenders mince no words on the danger of these laws. "Regard for the fetus is totally

elevated over safety for the woman undergoing abortion," asserted New Yorker Betty Maloney. "The anti-abortionists preach about pre-life and afterlife. Feminist are concerned about *this* life!"

The Illinois law defines a fetus as a human being from the moment of fertilization and requires physicians to inform their patients that most forms of birth control are considered abortions by this definition.

The American Life Lobby, for example, claims that "The . . . pill (and) the IUD . . . are not contraceptives — they perform abortions." San Francisco Clinic Defense Committee member Roanne Hindin commented, "What better proof could we have that the Moral Majority is not solely out to stop safe and legal abortions, but to halt all effective birth control?"

Radical Women Launches Pressure Campaign

The Supreme Court decision on the Pennsylvania and Illinois cases is expected in the Spring. To influence that decision, Radical Women is initiating a national postcard campaign, calling on the Court to uphold *Roe v. Wade* and overturn the two state anti-abortion laws. Postcards and more information can be obtained by writing Radical Women at 5018 Rainier Avenue South, Seattle, Washington 98118, or calling (206) 722-2453 or (415) 864-1278.

Seattle Radical Women spokesperson Luma Nichol urged public pressure on the Supreme Court Justices. "We will let them know that the majority of people in this country support abortion, and that this is a life or death issue, especially for poor women."

In 1969 alone, according to Nichol, when abortion was illegal in most states, 75% of the estimated 2000 to 5000 women who died in underground abortion mills were women of color. "Since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973," added Nichol,

"there hasn't been an increase in the number of abortions, only in the number of women who survive abortions!"

Withholding legal abortions from poor women and women of color also "sets them up for government sterilization programs," continued Nichol. "Yet the anti-abortion crusaders are not concerned with forced sterilization of women of color, or quality childcare for working women, or a decent income and health care for mother and their children."

Clinic Defenders Confront Gunmen and Arsonists

The front line of the war for abortion rights outside the courtroom is at family planning and abortion clinics across the country. A feminist and patient escort at Clinica Eva of El Monte in Southern California recently reported threats and goon tactics by right-wing picketers. On September 28th, one of them pulled a gun on patient escorts. The Defense Committee, armed with pictures and a license number, forced reluctant El Monte police to track down the gun-toting Rambo.

"The anti-abortionists have also threatened that 'Jesus will see that the Clinic burns down,'" said Sara Drucker, chair of the Clinic Defense Committee. "We won't be intimidated by this campaign of terrorism," she concluded angrily.

Members of Radical Women, National Organization for Women and independent feminists have been protecting the besieged El Monte clinic since September, 1984. According to the clinic manager, the low-cost facility which serves largely poor and Latina women, would have been shut down without the determined defense team of feminists and supporters.

Right-wing threats are carried out as the numerous fire-bombed clinics bear out. But abortion rights activists are not backing down. When the Everett, Washington Feminist Women's

Health Center was destroyed, organizers mounted extensive public pressure to convict confessed arsonist Curtis Beseda who was a regular anti-abortion picketer.

Feminists in Washington maintain that the stiff sentence imposed by the judge in the Beseda case was a direct result of their well-organized public protests and letters to the judge, which were solicited nationwide.

Feminists Redouble Offensive

Along with defending clinics and pressuring the Supreme Court, demonstrations, public forums and legislative action are being planned by feminists for the 13th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* on January 22nd. NOW has announced national marches for abortion rights in March of 1986.

Radical Women, long active in the civil rights, affirmative action and gay liberation movements, advocates broad support. National organizer Scott points to the fact that the Reagan Administration has also filed an anti-affirmative action brief with the Supreme Court this session. "If the right-wing succeeds in knocking women back into sexual slavery and economic helplessness, they will intensify their attacks on all levels. Their goal is to defeat *all* civil rights gains — for women, people of color, lesbians and gays, and working people."

"Clearly this campaign against women is a full-fledged assault on every progressive victory won over decades of hard struggle," said Scott. "The defense of women's right to control our own bodies," she concluded, "must be as broad-based as the threat."

Radical Women is a Socialist Feminist organization founded in 1967 in Seattle, Washington. They now have branches in several states. For information, you may write to them at 523-A Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110.

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January 30, 1985

Judy Goldsmith, President
National Organization for Women
425 Thirteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Ms. Goldsmith,

Radical Women supports NOW's call for a national campaign in defense of abortion rights. As the staccato of clinic fire-bombings accelerates weekly, it's clear that an aggressive feminist response to the terrorism is urgently needed. The violent enemies of women's right to abortion must be stopped before they incinerate all our constitutional rights.

We also applaud NOW's specific call for full-scale congressional hearings to publicly investigate the rise of terrorism against clinics, patients and staff. Hearings would provide an important forum for mobilizing broad public support to stop the clinic violence and for pressuring the government to uphold women's reproductive freedom.

However, without a mass movement organized around a broad list of demands, we will get nowhere. What is needed is a national united feminist front that advocates congressional hearings as one demand among many and mobilizes the public support that already exists for abortion rights. This united front could work out specific demands in defense of the clinics, such as $\frac{1}{4}$ mile buffer zones around clinics and stiff penalties for physical and verbal harassment of patients and staff, destruction of clinic property and trespassing. The attacks on clinics could also be connected to the underlying issue of women's total reproductive rights, including the right to abortion for all women, no forced sterilization, and quality childcare.

The defense of the Everett Feminist Women's Health Center in Washington state is a good example of what it will take to defeat the anti-abortionists. Initial harassment and weekly anti-abortion picketing were met with feminist counter-picketing. This resulted in the formation of a clinic defense committee in which Seattle Radical Women worked closely with Everett NOW and other groups to organize community support for the clinic.

Open to all and democratically organized, the defense committee held press conferences, organized letter-writing campaigns to the local press and politicians, maintained the weekly counter-picketing, and held rallies in order to gather and demonstrate public support for the clinic.

In this manner we succeeded in pressuring local officials to speak out against the violence, exposed the vicious nature of the "pro-life" forces, and kept the clinic open through two of three firebombings. We also secured the arrest, conviction, and 20-year prison sentence handed down to Curtis Beseda, firebomber of the Everett and Bellingham clinics in Washington and a regular anti-abortion picketer.

It is the recognition that the clinic firebombings are politically motivated and can only be stopped by feminists uniting against the rightwing movement which leads us to object strongly to your call for vigorous FBI investigations as the panacea for the violence.

Nothing could be more suicidal than to rely on Reagan's pro-rightwing police agencies to protect us.

The FBI is infamous for its sweeping infiltrations, harassment and persecution of movement activists. It has thick files on every feminist organization, including NOW, and has always opposed feminism as a challenge to the status quo in U.S. society. (See Ms., June 1977, "The FBI Was Watching You.")

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) is allied with the FBI in its attitude and actions toward the women's movement and other social activists. In the Everett clinic firebombing case, the BATF considered the pro-abortion movement a prime target of their investigation. More than once, the BATF as well as local police and fire officials hinted that clinic supporters set fire to the clinic to get support and sympathy!

BATF agents acted as Reagan's bodyguards during his visit to Washington state in the spring of '84. When an Everett clinic defender spoke on the radio criticizing Reagan's policies, Bureau agents tried to get the staff to silence her.

And while the clinic firebombing investigation was stalled, the Bureau brought charges against striking unionists in Everett!

After our experience with the Bureau, it does not surprise us that the BATF, while it had an undercover agent in the Greensboro, North Carolina chapters of the Ku Klux Klan and

Nazis, did nothing to prevent the Klan/Nazi assassinations of five Communist Workers Party members.

These police agencies are out to divide and destroy our organizations and movements, and to promote government policies which are clearly anti-abortion and pro-rightwing. They are no friends of feminists.

There is a tremendous difference between, on the one hand, calling for public congressional hearings and investigations into attacks on clinics in order to organize against these assaults, and on the other hand, advocating government investigations by agencies like the FBI and BATF. The latter invites witchhunts against the feminist movement, and gives women the mistaken notion that these agencies can be relied upon to protect our rights.

We strongly urge you to drop your call for secret, police agency investigations and to instead focus on building an open, united feminist campaign to save abortion rights. We would gladly join with you in such an effort.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Constance Scott
Constance Scott
National Organizer
Radical Women

encl: "The FBI Was Watching You," Ms., June 1977

The Abortion War: Feminists vs. the Right Wing

Presented to the NWSA Eighth Annual Convention,
"Reproductive Rights/Public Policy" Workshop
by Mary Ann Curtis, Los Angeles Radical Women

June 14, 1986

The question of women's control over our own bodies is the rock bottom, most fundamental issue of women's equal rights as human beings. That's why thousands of women demonstrate in support of legalized abortion every January 22; why tens of thousands marched in Washington D.C. and Los Angeles this year in the March for Women's Lives; and why hundreds of us across the nation defend abortion clinics with our hearts, souls and bodies against rightwing goons.

A war is raging in this country--an abortion rights war. The protagonists are feminists vs. rightwing terrorists. And this war has struck every sector of our society from women on high school and college campuses to patients and staff at family planning clinics.

Radical Women, a socialist feminist organization which represents the left wing of the feminist movement, is speaking here and on other college campuses to counter the right wing. We think it is necessary to expose the treachery of the Susan Carpenter-McMillans of this country who call themselves "feminists." McMillan, founder of California Feminists for Life and media spokesperson for California Pro-Life, recently spoke on women's rights at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Proclaiming herself an avowed women's rights advocate, she said that "abortion is the worst thing that ever happened to the women's movement" and that being pro-abortion is anti-woman.

She and other rightwing anti-abortionists are wolves in sheep's clothing. They have been unable to eliminate abortion and reproductive rights by bombing abortion clinics, unsuccessful in harassing most women away from abortion clinics, and defeated in their attempts to overthrow the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. Now they are running around college campuses espousing sexual slavery and poverty-stricken motherhood as a new kind of "feminism." To call themselves feminists is like Hitler calling himself a socialist. It is a blatant, demagogic lie!

Our response to their degradation of women and elevation of the unborn over women's lives must continue to be adamant--we will not regress back to underground, coathanger abortions. We will not submit to forced sterilization. We will not be forced out of school and work and into the home to raise our children in utter poverty. We will win this war for reproductive freedom.

First, a Bit of History

The struggle for reproductive rights is not new by any means. It goes back to the beginning of this century. Sixty years of battle initiated by anarchists and socialists eventually culminated in the legalization of con-

traception in most states. Abortion, however, was off limits until feminists and civil libertarians won vast public support for repeal of abortion laws in the '60s and early '70s.

The fight for legal abortion in Washington state in the '60s and '70s is a model for our abortion rights organizing today. Women in Washington state won legalized abortion as early as 1970 because of their militant, multi-issue organizing. This was 3 years prior to 1973 when it became the law of the land.

The fight in Washington state was initiated by Black women in the civil rights movement who knew from ghetto life how women of color were butchered by back-alley abortionists. In 1968, a small group of Black activists from the anti-poverty program and members of Radical Women working in those agencies formed a coalition called Abortion Action Now and launched a powerful public campaign.

They hounded the media for publicity and agitated state wide for abortion on demand. They pioneered the demand for an end to forced sterilization, and linked reproductive rights to affirmative action and child-care -- reforms which would enable women to support themselves and raise the children they chose to bear. Mass demonstrations, public education, petitions and hearings catapulted the abortion issue from the obituary page to the front page. Their militant, multi-issue organizing was decisive to winning abortion rights for all.

Today, the Battle Rejoins

But as you know, reforms under capitalism are temporary, and we are once again engaged in a fight to defend a hard-won victory.

Today's campaign to maintain abortion rights has been most successful where it has been militant, multi-issue and multi-faceted. It has taken women and men standing up in front of the clinics and public pressure campaigns directed at city officials and the police to slow down the bombings of abortion clinics. (In 1984 these attacks occurred at the rate of one every two weeks,)

Curtis Beseda, a frequent picketer at the Everett Feminist Women's Health Center in Washington state and arsonist who gutted that clinic three times, would not be behind bars today if Radical Women, Everett National Organization for Women, and others on the Everett Feminist Women's Health Center Defense Committee had not gathered broad public support condemning the violence. It was only after evidence of growing public pressure that police made serious efforts to apprehend Beseda. He was arrested three months after having admitted to the police that he bombed the clinic for "the glory of god."

Militant feminists are defending abortion clinics across the country. Since the concerted rightwing attacks on abortion clinics in the early '80s, Radical Women has been involved in abortion rights organizing and clinic defense in Everett, Seattle and Tacoma, Washington; Portland, Oregon; New York City; San Francisco, Los Angeles, and El Monte, California. In each of these cities we have helped organize clinic defense committees, clinic defense lines and patient escort services. In Everett and Tacoma, Washington, we helped get court injunctions to limit the activities of the right wing in front of the clinics.

The war to defend abortion in the '80s and keep rightwing bigots from closing down a clinic has been an unparalleled success at Clinica Eva, a low-cost family planning clinic in El Monte, California, located about 30 miles east of Los Angeles. The way we and other members of the Clinica Eva Defense Committee have fought there can serve as a model for other clinic defenders and abortion rights organizers.

Anti-abortion picketing at Clinica Eva started nearly 2 years ago. During this time the right wing has invaded the clinic and photographed patients in post-surgery recovery; they have blocked the entrances to the clinic and parking lot, trapped patients in their cars, pushed, shoved and made death threats to patient escorts, verbally terrorized patients and escorts with shouts of "murderer" and "baby killer"; they have held rallies of 75 people in front of the clinic while patients are undergoing treatment; they have trespassed on clinic property time and time again, pulled a gun on clinic escorts, and threatened to burn down the clinic. Most recently, one of the anti-abortionists trespassed on clinic property, shoved a clinic escort, and called the police who handcuffed and hauled the escort off to jail. The anti-abortionist charged her with battery. She immediately counter-arrested him for battery and trespassing.

Radical Women, West Covina and Pomona, California NOW and other independent feminists formed the Clinica Eva Defense Committee to counter the rightwing assaults on the clinic, its patients and staff. We needed a committee to better organize our defense and that is just what we have done. Today, Eva, the clinic manager says, "The clinic would have been closed down by now if it weren't for the defense committee." And that's our victory. These months and months (nearly two years now!) have been a baptism by fire on how to go up against the right wing and win!

The Clinica Eva Defense Committee has organized a militant escort service and defense line. When necessary we link arms with each other to physically block anti-abortionists from coming on clinic property. We put ourselves between patients trying to get into the clinic and anti-abortion tormentors. We hand out leaflets to patients and passers-by explaining what the anti-abortionists are doing at Clinica Eva and across the nation, and how it is connected to a greater rightwing movement. And we solicit community support. At a Christmas holiday parade in El Monte, we collected hundreds of signatures condemning the harassment and violence of the anti-abortionists.

We have documented the illegal activities of the right wing with pictures and notes on every incident. We have called the police for protection from verbal and physical assaults and to establish a record of our demands that they enforce the law. The police have been no help -- and we have record of that too.

We have held defense guard vigils on Mother's Day and Father's Day to guard the clinic against firebombings. We organized a public rally last January 22 in support of Roe v. Wade where for the first time in years abortion rights activists in L.A. faced the right-to-lifers head on. We marched and picketed their rally where we interrupted Archbishop Mahony's pious speech against women. For the Catholics and ex-catholics among us, this was especially rewarding!

At each of our vigils, rallies, and demonstrations against the right wing, we organized for and got major TV, radio and newspaper coverage.

We have also marched as a defense committee in demonstrations for the rights of others -- such as South Africans, gays, union strikers, and Central American freedom fighters. The right wing is a multi-issue enemy and abortion rights activists belong on the frontlines in other struggles as well.

Lessons Learned

What we've learned by standing up to the right wing is that:

1) They are spineless bullies who back off if militantly confronted, at least when they are outnumbered and if not cheered on by the police. Being a pacifist just doesn't work when you're up against right wingers. They choose the tactics and their tactics are not friendly persuasion. Neither can ours be.

We know also that they are not isolated religious fanatics, but a well-organized and financed force who preach and practice the same goon tactics all over the country.

2) We've learned that the police and city officials are on the side of the anti-abortionists. They have refused to take any action against verbal and physical assaults on patients, violation of patients' right to privacy while seeking medical care and violation of rudimentary trespassing laws. In the past two months, the police have openly taken the side of the anti-abortionists by informing them that they have a right to trespass on clinic property and go into the waiting room of the clinic.

3) We have learned from our experience in Everett, Washington that to call on or accept assistance from the FBI or Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms is pure folly, because they are infamous for infiltrating and persecuting feminist and other activist groups. In Everett, these federal investigators focused their investigation of three clinic bombings on clinic defenders, patients and staff and downplayed the role of the anti-abortion terrorists.

Instead of secret investigations by the FBI, we urge public investigations through congressional hearings where clinics have been firebombed or where there is continual harassment by the right wing.

4) We've learned the importance of conducting a public fight in order to encourage others to join in and to expose the hypocrisy of the enemy. Getting to the press and distributing leaflets is critical to our defense. When you have no protection from the police or city officials to enforce the law, publicity is one of the best ways to stop the right wing. Each time we have exposed them in the media for their illegal activity, their numbers and militancy dwindle at the clinic.

The fight for abortion rights at Clinica Eva is inherently multi-issue. Women of color, especially Latinas, are primary users of the clinic. Many of them are undocumented workers without union protections and medical insurance. So race, anti-immigrant bigotry and working class poverty are all issues.

Some of the clinic defenders and patients are lesbians and gays, so freedom of sexuality is an issue. Other clinic defenders, including Radical Women members, are socialist feminists, so red-baiting and freedom of speech and association and political dissent are also issues.

Knowing thine Enemy

We know that the defense of one clinic or 500 clinics is not enough to hold the line on the right wing, for their fight to deny us our rights is militant and multi-issue as well. Though they ooze with talk of morality to justify their right to destroy medical facilities and endanger women's lives, the anti-abortionists are on more than a moral crusade. It's an economic crusade being waged by big business and the capitalist class which uses Christian zealots and their "morality" as a smokescreen to destroy women's rights. The issue is feminism, not tissue worship, and they are not only out to stop abortion, but all birth control in order to exercise total control over women's lives.

It is no accident that rightwing millionaires, including the likes of union busting Joseph Coors, fuel the coffers of the fetus fetishists. The right wing has a full agenda of rights rollbacks. Their ultimate aim is to wipe out all civil rights gains and relegate women, people of color, workers, lesbians and gays to slavery so that big business can have all the wealth of this land for themselves.

The anti-abortionists are the same people who are whipping up racism, anti-semitism and anti-gay hysteria. They are taking food from the mouths of the poor and homeless here to finance war in Central America. They are the same foes of Native American sovereignty who are ripping away their land and means of livelihood to steal minerals for nuclear warfare.

Radical Women abhors everything the right wing stands for. We are pro-union and against the wars of this ruling class against our brother and sister workers in other countries. We are for democracy and a woman's independent right to choose her sexuality, lifestyle and the right to bear or not to bear children.

This is why we take the offensive against the right wing and our defense of abortion rights so seriously. And why we are fighting this war on so many fronts.

Radical Women launched a massive petition drive for a congressional hearing on abortion clinic violence and joined others in powerful testimony at such a hearing in March 1985. At that hearing, Seattle Radical Women organizer Betty Maloney testified about the illegal activities of the right wing at the Everett Feminist Women's Health Center and the refusal of police and city officials to do anything about it. She called on Congress to use its powers to halt the violation of women's constitutional right to abortion. She asked that specific legislation for the protection of abortion clinics be enacted and enforced, including stiff penalties for physical, verbal, or telephone harassment of abortion clinic patients, staff and supporters, as well as for trespassing, vandalism or destruction of clinic property.

In addition to abortion clinic defense, we launched a national publicity and postcard campaign in support of Roe v. Wade. Ten thousand people signed cards which no doubt had an impact on the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision to dismiss an Illinois anti-abortion law.

Currently, Radical Women is seeking union resolutions to the U.S. Supreme Court in defense of Roe v. Wade because the court is scheduled to

review the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act -- another anti-abortion law -- in July. The Reagan administration Justice Department has filed an amicus brief supporting this anti-abortion law and is calling on the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade.

We should never underestimate the impact of gathering broad support through postcard, petition, letter writing and call-in campaigns. Many people who will not appear on a picket line will sign a petition or write a letter. All of these things are needed to battle the right wing's multi-faceted attack.

The violation of the legal right to abortion today parallels the violation of the legal rights of Blacks by the KKK. Foes of women's rights are no more reconciled to the advances made by women than the white supremacists were to those made by Blacks after the Civil War. Just as the KKK operated as the lawless shock troops of the white aristocracy, the clinic firebombers are the terrorist arm of the anti-feminist movement. The Klan succeeded in making Black legal civil rights worthless for many decades. This is why the right wing's four year terror campaign against family planning and abortion clinics, patients and staff must be stopped.

To beat the right wing, we must take to heart the lessons learned from the civil rights movement and coalitions like the Clinica Eva Defense Committee. We need to utilize them, build on them and teach them to others. Our job is to build a strong grass-roots united front with other afflicted people. Abortion and women's rights organizations must turn multi-issue, militant, and left in order to defeat the multi-issue, militant right. We must strike at the heart of the capitalist system which places destruction of human life for profit before human need for food, clothing, shelter and the right to control one's own destiny. Fundamental to controlling our destinies is controlling our bodies. The right wing understands this, and so must we if we are to confine these implacable enemies once and for all to the dustbins of history where they belong!

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RESOLUTION ON RIGHTWING VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORTION CLINICS

Prepared for: The 16th National Conference on Women and the Law
New York, New York, March 21-24, 1985
A resolution similar to this was passed at the
1984 NWSA Conference at Rutgers.

- WHEREAS: Well-organized rightwing forces have launched a massive, national campaign of violence, intimidation and threats against women's health and abortion clinic staff; and
- WHEREAS: Firebombings of abortion clinics occurred at the rate of one every two weeks during 1984, and only one of the arsonists has been convicted and sentenced; and
- WHEREAS: There has also been a dramatic increase in the incidents of clinic disruption, vandalism, death threats and harassment calls; and
- WHEREAS: Such attacks are a violation of women's constitutional right to abortion and of the civil rights of those who seek abortions from, work at or support the clinics by discriminating against them on the basis of sex, economic status and lifestyle; and
- WHEREAS: The defense of the Everett, Washington Feminist Women's Health Center was a model of feminist resistance to the right wing and the arrest, conviction and severe sentencing of the Everett arsonist demonstrates the power and necessity of a militant defense movement composed of a broad range of women's, people of color, lesbian/gay, labor, radical and civil rights groups; and
- WHEREAS: Local, state and federal authorities have often refused to provide extra protection to threatened clinics or to stop anti-abortion picketers from disrupting clinic operation and endangering patients' lives; and
- WHEREAS: Clinics are therefore often compelled to organize their own defense, and have, as in the case of Clinica Eva in El Monte, California, had to resort to citizen's arrests to protect themselves against rightwing trespassers and vandals; and
- WHEREAS: The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, which has conducted firebombing investigations, had an undercover agent in the Greensboro Ku Klux Klan and Nazi chapters when they murdered five members of the Communist Workers Party, and the agency did nothing to prevent the assassinations; and

WHEREAS: A federal grand jury was convened to investigate the Everett fires, but instead conducted a witchhunt of the pro-abortion movement in Washington State; and

WHEREAS: Other methods of investigation exist which do not violate the rights of pro-abortion activists; and

WHEREAS: Congressional Hearings have been held in Washington, D.C. by the House Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, but have received limited testimony and publicity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference call for a Congressional investigation of the nationwide campaign of rightwing violence against abortion clinics, including holding public hearings in each city where firebombings have occurred, in order to focus national attention on this deadly assault on women's legal right to abortion; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Conference call for and support the militant self-defense of clinics through setting up counter-pickets and patient escorts, forming defense committees, or whatever other steps are necessary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Conference affirm its unwavering support for a woman's right to control her own body and life, by denouncing all attacks on reproductive freedom, including violence and harassment aimed at women's health clinics, staff, clients and supporters.

Radical Women
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****PLEASE VISIT THE RADICAL WOMEN LITERATURE TABLE****

EVERETT, WASHINGTON

Everett, Washington

The Feminist Women's Health Center in Everett, Washington was the site of one of the most violent anti-abortion battles in the 1980s. To this date, the three arson attacks against it gave it the distinction of being the most frequently bombed clinic in the country. It was also the scene of one of the most resounding victories for abortion rights activists, whose courage and tenacity kept the clinic open through eight months of consistent rightwing harassment and brought about the arrest and conviction of arsonist Curtis Beseda, the first such conviction in the nation.

The credit for this success goes to the Everett Clinic Defense Committee, which recognized that the best defense is a good offense--a militant, broad-based, community mobilization willing and capable of confronting the rightwing face to face. Firmly grounded in a democratic structure, the defense committee was able to mobilize massive, diverse support at rallies, weekly counter pickets and clinic escort services, and press conferences. The group exposed the treachery and cowardice of elected officials and pressured them to defend women's constitutional rights.

In the end, the defense committee was dissolved through a bureaucratic maneuver by liberal and opportunist feminists within its ranks, primarily the clinic's owners, backed by the Johnny-come-lately Socialist Workers Party. These women red-baited Radical Women, called for cooperation with federal investigators (see RW's letter to NOW on the FBI, page 8), and went so far as to blame the defense committee for escalating the violence at the clinic. The lines were drawn between those who wanted to build a movement capable of securing and expanding abortion rights in Everett and beyond, and those who merely wanted to be movement stars, or who, like the clinic owners, were concerned with protecting their financial investment to the exclusion of all else.

The defense committee won the battle at the Everett Clinic. But more importantly it dealt a sharp blow to Northwest anti-abortionists through its legacy of an emboldened abortion rights movement. In the ensuing years, the right wing has been roused off the doorsteps of Seattle clinics and has met consistent defeat at the polls. For abortion rights activists across the U.S., the story of the Everett Clinic is an inspiring lesson in how to defend abortion rights.

RADICAL WOMEN — Seattle

3815-5th Ave. N.E.
Seattle, WA 98105
1-206-632-1815

Statement to the State-Wide
Abortion Rights Rally, Everett, WA

January 22, 1984

War has been declared by the right wing in the Pacific Northwest and the front lines are right here in Everett in front of the clinic. The days when feminists can feel secure because they live in one of the most progressive states of the union are over. Our rights are under attack.

These so-called pro-life zealots in Everett and around the state are more determined than ever to win victory for their "moral" crusade and to turn Washington into the most anti-woman state. But are we going to let that happen--NO!! Are women in Everett going to let it happen? Women in Seattle? Women in Yakima? Women in Tacoma? No, the women in Washington state and our supporters are not going to let that happen because we are the majority--a majority which is pro-choice, pro-ERA, and pro-women's rights. Look at the list of supporters who have endorsed this rally, organizations representing labor, civil rights, lesbians and gays, people of color, feminists, radicals, students, and the handicapped and disabled. And the endorsements are still streaming in.

The anti-abortionists cloak their violence and harassment in a "moral crusade." But what are they really after? They're out to strip us as women of all our rights, our dignity, the power to choose, and our very humanity. Such morals we can do without!

These same people have tried and failed before, back in 1977 at the Washington State Conference for Women in Ellensburg. Two thousand reactionary women, organized by the male executives of the Mormon and conserva-

tive Christian churches and led by none other than Everett's Dottie Roberts, descended upon the conference and unleashed an unremitting attack on lesbians, people of color, childcare, ERA and abortion. Yet they were exposed and resisted by determined feminists then, and here we are doing it again in Everett now.

The program of the New Right--which Dottie Roberts and her cohorts in the Knights of Columbus, Right-to-Life and the Christian Coalition are trying to cram down our throats--is not new at all. They want to reduce us to breeding machines, to keep us locked in the bedroom, the kitchen and the sweatshop. This is no different from what the Nazis called for with their slogan of "Kinder, Kirche, Küche" (children, church, kitchen).

The current anti-abortionist rhetoric stripped of its halo is no more than a vicious attack on women and children, reducing us to chattel, owned body and soul. But we refuse to be the private property of men--or to turn our uteruses over to the state! We're sick and tired of being unpaid domestic servants in the home and underpaid workers on the job!

So get back right wing. We're drawing the line right here in Everett. We're going to stop the attacks--not just on abortion rights but against all those being victimized by the right wing.

Everyone is talking about Reaganomics, cutbacks, givebacks and takebacks. But quiet as it's kept, many people are coming together and fighting back. Look at the strikers at Nord Door Co. and Greyhound; look at Paula Threestars who is fighting for her right to self defense here in Snohomish County; look at Perry Watkins who is fighting to be an open, gay Black soldier; look at women and people of color who are fighting discrimination at City Light; and we just won a big court victory for comparable worth!

And the Everett Clinic Defense Committee is a wonderful example of how people from different arenas can come together for mutual defense of

our rights. That's why we're all here today, fighting back, and the right wing has just scratched the surface of our anger. We have dug in for the duration of this attack. We're in it for the long haul, because it's our lives and our freedom they're trying to take away.

Our responses today will be heard across the state and across the country, and we've only begun to shout.

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Betty Maloney
for Radical Women
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Seattle Radical Women

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ACTION ALERT!

Call For the Maximum Penalty in
Arsonist Curtis Beseda's December 21 Sentencing

November 30, 1984

Dear Friend,

On November 9, anti-abortion crusader Curtis Beseda confessed in U.S. District Court to three successive firebombings that destroyed the Feminist Women's Health Center in Everett, Washington, and to torching a doctor's clinic in nearby Bellingham. Invoking heavenly sanction for his terrorist acts, Beseda proclaimed, "I did it for the glory of God." A rightwing, misogynist, life-hating God, to be sure.

Beseda will be sentenced on December 21, 1984. Both pro- and anti-abortionists are keeping a close eye on the outcome: a stiff sentence will be a resounding, encouraging victory for women and the feminist movement; a slap on the wrist will give the go-ahead to "pro-life" holy warriors everywhere.

"Pro-life" violence is escalating nationally

Firebombings are increasingly a major part of the ensemble of right-wing violence, harassment, and legislative action campaigns aimed at wiping out women's legal right to abortion in the U.S. The Everett clinic is but one of 24 abortion facilities nationwide that have been bombed so far in 1984. The latest attacks occurred November 19, when two Maryland clinics were gutted.

"Pro-lifers" deny that violence is a part of their agenda, but they lie. Firebug Beseda was for months a mainstay of the rightwing picketline at the Everett clinic and was a leader of the anti-abortionists who tried unsuccessfully to sandbag state funding for abortion via Washington State Initiative 471 this fall. Anti-abortionists use the law when it suits them--and life-threatening violence when it does not.

Community support and pressure for abortion rights is a must

Beseda's conviction alone is an important victory in the battle to maintain abortion rights (he is so far the only firebomber arrested and brought to trial in the recent spate of attacks). But this victory didn't come easily. For months, the Everett clinic staff and their supporters waged a determined battle--which drew national attention--against the picketing, harassment, threats, physical and verbal abuse, and the repeated arson attacks of the "pro-lifers." And only the public outcry that grew out of this defense finally pressured government officials to conduct the investigation that led to Beseda's arrest.

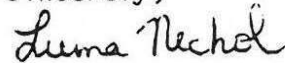
Official government inaction helps breed the climate for further and more violent anti-abortion attacks. And unless we in the community keep pressure on the authorities, they will not lift a finger. We have the opportunity now to pressure the government to take action in the Beseda case.

Please write U.S. District Court Judge John C. Coughenour and demand that Beseda be given the maximum allowable sentence. The courts and the right wing need to be served notice that we will no longer tolerate Nazi-like violence that threatens women's lives as well as their right to legal and safe abortion.

Judge John C. Coughenour
609 United States Courthouse
1010 5th Ave.
Seattle, WA 98104

Please send a copy of your letter to Radical Women, 3815 5th Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98105. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Luma Nichol
Local Organizer

Everett abortion clinic leading — in arson fires

by Elouise Schumacher
Times staff reporter

It's a mark of distinction the Feminist Women's Health Center is not eager to acknowledge.

According to the National Abortion Federation, the Snohomish County abortion clinic has had the highest number of arson fires of any such center in 1984.

"Everett's clinic is the only clinic we know of with three this year," said Lauren Fishbein, public-affairs coordinator for the Washington, D.C., group, which represents about half the abortion clinics nationwide and keeps tab on the recent increase in violence.

Some 109 incidents ranging from picketing to arson fires have been reported this year, compared with 124 for all of 1983.

Last weekend, two attempts were made to burn a Forest Grove, Ore., abortion clinic, causing about \$1,000 in damage, and two men used sledgehammers to cause substantial damage to a Birmingham, Ala., clinic.

The fire in Forest Grove was the first criminal activity at the clinic and did not disrupt business, owner Dr. Peter Bours said. The arson devices were attached to the outside of the building and burned themselves out before major damage was done.

"The charred wood is like a battle scar," Bours said.

The three fires at the downtown Everett clinic have caused at least \$100,000 in damage. The latest blaze, on April 19, shut the clinic down and probably will force a relocation because of insurance and leasing problems.

The clinic has met with opposition since its opening in the basement of an office building last August. Pickets were present nearly every day until a temporary injunction was obtained to limit their activities. The clinic reported harassing phone calls, sometimes up to 700 a day, and staff members said they received worrisome calls at home.

Both sides are waiting for a decision by Judge Gerald Knight on whether he will issue a permanent injunction at the clinic's request to limit picketing. The protesters say it is a matter of free speech; the clinic supporters say their actions have crossed the line to disruptiveness.

Pro-choice supporters and pro-life advocates have their own theories as to why this particular clinic has been singled out for harassment, though both deny any knowledge of who is responsible for the violence. Others wonder what it is about the Everett, as opposed to Seattle where five abortion clinics operate in relative obscurity, that has elicited such an emotional reaction.

"The sense of community and fabric is so strong up here," said Dottie Roberts, of Lake Stevens, one of four women named by the clinic in the injunction. "Maybe you don't care in Seattle, but up here in this smaller and more rural setting, we have the ability to make a difference and a change."

To Audrey Fine, clinic director, the violence reflects a division

between the new and old factions in the city of 56,000 residents.

"This is a schizophrenic community," she said, that is slowly changing from a conservative mill town to one with a number of professionals, and in the future, home to a 15-ship naval base that is expected employ 8,270 military personnel.

Pickets speak of the outsiders working inside the clinic: Most of the staff and doctors are not from the Everett area, and the nonprofit clinic, run by three directors, is affiliated with another in Yakima. The clinic says its doctors are from Seattle, while its staff lives in Snohomish and King counties.

"This is a highly political and mobilized chain," Roberts said, adding the business aspects of abortions have overshadowed the moral implications that are of paramount importance.

"They make it sound like a McDonald's chain, which it is not," said Teressa Grieco, a clinic worker who quit her job because she received threatening phone calls at home. "Abortions will occur no matter what; we want to make it

NATIONWIDE PICKETING AND VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORTION CLINICS

	1982	1983	1984 (as of May 3)
PICKETING (Lawful)	6	64	64
HARASSMENT (Bomb threats, trespassing)	6	17	11
VIOLENCE (Vandalism excluding arson)	19	39	27
ARSON	8	4	7
TOTALS	39	124	109

SOURCE: National Abortion Foundation

safe by providing low-cost abortions (\$130) and other health care."

While the clinic isn't the first to perform abortions in the county, it is the first center established to do so. The center's directors say seven out of eight women were leaving Snohomish County to obtain abortions before the clinic opened, although Everett General Hospital and some doctors did the procedure.

The word "feminist" in the clinic's name has been blamed for stirring up emotions.

"The title has hurt the clinic," Mayor Bill Moore said. "If the title had been women's health-care center, people would have an entirely different connotation. Some people still associate the word feminist with lesbians."

"The very word of feminist is threatening to some people," said Fine.

Ken Murray, Everett police spokesman, said, "Feminists seem to be stronger in Seattle to organize to protect clinics. Apparently here certain anti-abortion groups are well-organized and can go after clinics with picketers."

Betty Maloney of Radical Women of Seattle said women's-rights supporters would be quick to defend a Seattle clinic against the problems the Feminist's Health Care Center has experienced, such as they did when the clinic on Broadway was drawing pickets. "People here would come together to take a strong stand against this type of activity," she said.

The Everett chapter of the National Organization for Women said it has been active in showing

support for the clinic, including counter-picketing, escorting patients to their appointments, forming a defense committee and raising money.

"This is just part of the nationwide campaign organized by Joseph Scheidler," said Marcia Livingston, president of NOW's Everett chapter.

Scheidler, director of the Chicago-based Pro-Life Action League, has written a book entitled "Ninety-Nine Ways to Close the Abortion Clinics." Late last year he announced his intention to close 12 abortion-clinics within the next 18 months, and reiterated that goal this year in a television interview and in a letter to The Herald newspaper in Everett.

Scheidler said today that the Everett clinic was not on his target list for closures, but that he "deplored the assumption that proliferators are involved in the fires."

"I don't feel Everett people are against the clinic," Livingston said. "The clinic protesters are from Lake Stevens, and are bused in from Seattle and elsewhere."

Nationwide, incidents of vandalism and violence against abortion centers are escalating at an alarming rate, say officials from the abortion federation and the National Organization for Women.

"What could possibly explain this upsurge in violence?" asks Judy Goldsmith, NOW president, in a letter to members appealing for funds for a newly established "Campaign to End Clinic Violence."

"There already have been seven fire-bombings of abortion clinics

in various parts of the country since mid-January" plus other violent incidents in 10 states and in Canada, Goldsmith said.

"The incidents have increased because of the rhetoric from our conservative administration," Fishbein said. "They are willing to address international terrorism but not fire-bombings."

She attributes the rise to frustration by the anti-abortionists over legal and legislative setbacks, including failed challenges to the 1973 Supreme Court decision giving women the legal right to an abortion.

"The less rational element of the anti-abortion movement then strikes out and hammers away at the clinics," Fishbein said.

Dan Donehey, public-relations director for the Washington-based National Right to Life Committee, said the pro-life movement has been wrongly accused of participating in the disruptive acts.

"We abhor violence," Donehey said. "We exist because we are against violence, especially against the unborn child. Anyone who does violence can't in good conscience be a member of our movement."

NOW's appeals to the federal government for help in investigating the incidents have met with "half-hearted and inadequate" responses, Goldsmith said.

The Justice Department has said it will investigate fire-bombings of clinics, but harassment and picketing do not fall under its jurisdiction.

Two agents from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms have been working with Everett police since the second arson fire, Murray said.

Radical Women National Office

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January 1984

RADICAL WOMEN JOINS LAWYERS GUILD BRIEF FOR PROTECTIVE INJUNCTION

Radical Women, the nation's oldest socialist feminist women's organization, was founded in 1967. It has branches in Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York City and Melbourne, Australia. Radical Women members are women of all races, ages and sexual orientations working together in a structured democratic organization which is dedicated to eliminating the inequities of women's lives.

Radical Women believes that fundamental to the liberation of women is our inalienable right as free individuals to exercise control over our own bodies on the basis of our own judgment. Throughout its history, Radical Women has been active in state and national efforts to secure for all women the right for full reproductive freedom of choice, including the right to an abortion.

Radical Women has been an active member of the clinic defense committee since its inception. We have worked with Everett's labor and feminist communities to build widespread support for the clinic staff and patients.

Radical Women joins as amicus on behalf of the Everett Feminist Women's Health Center because we believe that the defendants are violating the rights of the clinic to offer health services, including abortion, and the right of the women of the Everett and Snohomish County area to utilize the clinic services. The harassment and brutality inflicted by defendants on the clinic staff, patients and supporters constitutes illegal discrimination on the basis of sex, economic status and lifestyle. Further, the defendants' attacks on the political ideologies and lifestyles of clinic supporters constitutes an unconstitutional infringement of the rights of free speech and association. Allowing the defendants and their allies to continue their illegal activities will not only condone their breaking of the law but will have a profound and chilling effect on the exercise of legal and constitutional rights by clinic staff, patients, potential patients and members of the public.

Submitted by:

Luma P Nichol

Luma Nichol
Seattle Organizer
for National Radical Women

Testimony to the
House Civil and Constitutional Rights Subcommittee
on the Subject of
Abortion Clinic Violence
March 20, 1985

I, Betty Maloney, commend the Honorable Don Edwards and members of the House Civil and Constitutional Rights Subcommittee for calling these hearings on abortion clinic violence. A state of siege on abortion clinics has continued unabated for three years. It is time that the scope and nature of these attacks be exposed and the public be informed about the harassment and violence against clinic patients and staff, feminists and community activists who defend the constitutional right to abortion.

I submit this statement as an abortion rights activist who was one of the main coordinators of the Defense Committee of the Everett, Washington Feminist Women's Health Center. This clinic was firebombed three times in five months.

Anti-Abortion Violence at the Everett Clinic

The Everett Feminist Women's Health Clinic was openly feminist and was the only place in Snohomish County, Washington that provided abortions. For these reasons, it was targeted by the right wing from the day it opened in August, 1983, until it was gutted and finally closed by the third fire-bombing on April 9, 1984.

I first became involved in the defense of the Everett clinic in September 1983. Anti-abortionists had moved in on Everett like an army in their huge trucks with placards attached showing so-called dead fetuses.

Faced with this assault, the clinic staff called for support. Feminists and community activists responded, including myself, representing Radical Women, and members from the National Organization for Women (NOW). We set up weekly counter-pickets to defend the clinic.

At the time, intimidation tactics included taunting, video-taping and recording license plate numbers of patients and pro-abortion supporters. Anti-abortion picketers formed a gauntlet up to 35 feet long, on both sides of the walkway in front of the clinic. They blocked the parking lot entrance and, on one occasion, interfered with an emergency ambulance transport to a hospital.

The clinic was plagued with hate calls and bomb threats. Clinic defenders were called names and racist and anti-Semitic insults were hurled at Native American and Jewish women. The abuse also included physical assaults. More than once, I was pushed and shoved while trying to maintain open access to the clinic.

During October the harassment increased. One of the tactics used by the right wing in Everett was to jam clinic phone lines with up to 700 "hang-up" and threatening calls a day. This tactic both hampered clinic operation and endangered women's lives by blocking emergency calls.

Though the calls were immediately reported, the police ignored the complaints and kept no record of them. General Telephone claimed that the delay in tracing the calls was because their system did not have adequate equipment. Months passed before the police pinpointed a right-to-lifer's home phone number as the origin.

Even after the Everett police learned where the calls came from,

they still did not apprehend the perpetrator, despite the fact that he was very visible on the picket line every Saturday. He was well known for videotaping women walking into the clinic. The police failed to act, although it is both a state and federal crime for anyone to make obscene or harassing phone calls, as every phone book clearly states.

In November, the anti-abortionists stepped up their campaign. They began spying on clinic staff members and their families, sending death threats to their homes and attempting to get pro-abortion clinic defenders fired from their jobs.

Response of Everett City Officials

During the Fall of 1983, clinic supporters appealed several times to the City Council for help, asking it to condemn the harassment and take action.

As a result of our repeated phone calls, the Everett City Council had full knowledge of the types of harassment the clinic faced during its first twelve weeks of operation. Yet the all-male Council unanimously approved a permit for the Knights of Columbus to hold a November 19, 1983 demonstration blocking the street in front of the clinic during operating hours, thus endangering the lives and safety of women patients. The City Council approved the Knights of Columbus' request even though it did not meet Council requirements. The request had an unreadable signature and no contact name, address or phone number.

This act showed the City Council members' sympathy with the anti-feminist, rightwing politics of the right-to-lifers. This was abundantly clear at the time, not just to the Defense Committee, but to the general public as well. A Seattle Times columnist asked, "Would the City Council deal in the same way with, say, a vigil for the Communist Party?"

To protect the clinic during the Knights of Columbus demonstration, the Defense Committee organized a counter-rally of over 250 abortion rights supporters representing a wide range of community groups from Everett and the surrounding area, showing overwhelming support for women's right to abortion.

The city officials' tacit complicity in the harassment of the clinic signaled the anti-abortionists that it was open season on the Everett Feminist Women's Health Center. The clinic was firebombed for the first time on December 3, 1983, shortly after the Knights of Columbus rally. This attack did considerable physical damage but succeeded in closing the clinic only temporarily.

The Police Chief and the Fire Chief responded to this first firebombing by publicly suggesting that the clinic staff may have torched their own clinic to get publicity or collect insurance money. Implying the bombing was really a case of insurance fraud, the police pressured clinic staff members to submit to lie detector tests and scrutinized their personal finances. At this point, SAFECO cancelled the clinic's insurance policy.

Meanwhile, anti-abortion forces, the ones with the motive for the firebombing, remained free to harass and picket the clinic. The police failed to investigate the right-to-lifers despite being aware of their connection to the Posse Comitatus, a rightwing group known for its violent vigilante activities.

When clinic defenders took our case to Everett's Mayor William Moore, we were told that the protection of the clinic was not a high priority for him. He said he didn't have any control over the situation. It was a police matter.

A few days later, the City Attorney (on the Mayor's orders) instructed the Police Chief not to allow off-duty officers to be hired for

clinic protection, claiming the police had to remain neutral. This policy of "neutrality" left the door wide open to further physical attacks on the clinic and undermined women's legal rights by not guaranteeing access to abortion.

With no help in sight from the Mayor, Police Department or City Council, the clinic staff took our cause to court. A temporary restraining order was issued in January, 1984, against the leadership of the right-to-life picketers. Despite escalation of violence, intimidation, and death threats against staff and patients, the police would not enforce the court's restraining order. The onus was put on clinic supporters to photograph violators and try to get case-by-case enforcement through the court.

Despite a lack of support from the Everett city officials, our determined Defense Committee continued to build state and national support for the beleaguered clinic. We were determined to keep it open and functioning.

The right-to-lifers, however, would stop at nothing to keep women "in their place" by eliminating our right to control our own reproduction. The clinic was bombed for the second time on March 26, 1984.

Again clinic supporters appealed to the City Council. At a council meeting where I spoke for the Defense Committee, we called for 24-hour protection, public hearings on the violence, denunciation of the attacks, and a stepped-up investigation leading to apprehension of the arsonist. The City Council still refused to take action.

Once again, we called on the Mayor for help. He responded that he was against violence but charged that there were "extreme elements" on both sides. This statement totally ignored the fact that the supporters of the clinic had committed no acts of violence. Defense Committee members organized openly and straightforwardly to build broad community support to defend the clinic's legal right to exist. In contrast, the anti-abortion groups operated secretly, never publicly acknowledging their organizational affiliations, and engaged in violent and illegal actions.

After the second firebombing, the Everett police once again pointed the finger of suspicion at the victim. They accused the clinic staff of tampering with the electronic security system, which was turned off at the time of the arson fire.

When it became obvious that terrorist intimidation would not dissuade women from seeking abortions, the right-to-lifers increased pressure on community doctors and clinic staff members. This succeeded in getting one clinic worker to quit her job after she received repeated threats of violence against her children and herself.

Federal Investigation

In April, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) became more actively involved in the case. I observed that the immediate effect was a new wave of harassment of clinic staff and supporters. The clinic directors were again asked to turn over business and personal financial records. The BATF agents subpoenaed the Everett clinic lawyers to present files which included the names and addresses of clinic defenders.

While law enforcement agencies investigated pro-abortionists, the clinic was firebombed for a third time on April 9, 1984. It was completely gutted and shut down permanently. And still, the official investigators seemed determined to underplay the role of the anti-abortionists and focused their attention on clinic defenders instead. A city fire inspector questioned me about other members of the Defense Committee and tried to implicate one of us in the arson attack.

In addition there were attempts to dampen public support for the clinic. For example, one BATF agent pressured the Everett clinic director to silence a supporter who was heard defending the clinic on a Seattle radio station.

Only after the third firebombing did the Everett police identify the correct suspect. On April 27, according to police statements, Curtis A. Beseda, a persistent clinic picketer, told them, "I did it [the firebombing] for the glory of God." Incredibly, no charges were filed. Even in June, after damaging evidence was found in Beseda's home (including a gas can identical to the one found at the clinic after the third fire), Beseda was allowed to flee to Canada.

Despite Beseda's confession, a Grand Jury was convened in early June supposedly to do further investigation leading to an indictment. However, the Grand Jury proceeded to extensively quiz anti-abortionists on the politics and activities of groups defending the clinic, particularly Seattle Radical Women and the Everett Chapter of NOW. I can only conclude the Grand Jury's primary function was to conduct a fishing expedition. In doing so, they followed the established practice of the FBI, which has gathered detailed files on women's involvement in such "subversive" issues as childcare, abortion, civil rights and free speech.

At the end of June, 1984, the Defense Committee gathered the support of 90 Everett community leaders who signed a public statement condemning the violence. It was only after this evidence of growing public pressure that the police made serious efforts to apprehend Beseda. He was finally arrested in July, 1984, when he attempted to re-enter the U.S.

During his subsequent trial, Beseda confessed to setting four fires--three at the Everett clinic and one in a Bellingham, Washington doctor's office where abortions were performed. There was considerable local and national pressure for a stiff penalty for Beseda as an example to other rightwing firebugs that their crimes will not be tolerated. Beseda was convicted in Federal Court on four counts of malicious arson and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Anatomy of the Anti-Abortion Forces

Beseda claimed he carried out the firebombings alone but his close ties to other anti-abortionists are well known. He headed the Snohomish County campaign to pass Initiative 471 which would have restricted abortion funding in Washington state. The Committee to Repeal State Funding of Abortions, headed by Michael Undseth, initially offered a \$1000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the Everett arsonist. Yet after Beseda was arrested, the same committee raised his bail money.

In our defense work, we found out that the rightwing anti-abortion forces of Snohomish County are united in a group called the Christian Coalition, which includes Women Exploited by Abortion, Concerned Citizens, Choose Life, the Knights of Columbus and the Posse Comitatus, a paramilitary organization known to conduct illegal activities.

Both in Washington state and across the country, the media and government officials have depicted these pro-life zealots as religious people on a moral crusade. But this is far from the truth. Anti-abortionists are a highly organized and well-financed political force. Their assault on reproductive freedom is one facet of a multi-issue attack on working people, women, people of color, political radicals, and lesbians and gays. In addition to their supporting Initiative 471, the leaders of the Washington State "pro-life" organizations have been active in opposing the Washington State ERA and tenure for teachers. They have also supported the banning of books, anti-social

service "tax freeze" measures, and an initiative to wipe out Native American fishing rights.

The story of the Everett clinic is not an isolated one. Abortion clinics are under attack across the country and face many of the same problems in getting law enforcement agencies to defend their legal right to exist.

Clinica Eva in El Monte, California has been picketed for nine months. Instead of arresting and charging trespassers, local police gave clinic staff members instructions on the procedure for making citizens' arrests. Recently, a "pro-lifer" forced her way into the clinic recovery room. She photographed patients, thereby violating their privacy and jeopardizing their post-operative care. The staff had to make a citizens' arrest and hold the trespasser before the police would respond to their call for help. Despite letters from clinic staff and supporters urging prosecution, the District Attorney has refused to press charges against the anti-abortionist.

Summary and Proposals

My experience with the Everett clinic makes it clear that many local, state and federal officials refuse to enforce women's constitutional right to abortion. In addition, Reagan's outspoken anti-abortion, anti-ERA position has given a green light to FBI and BATF surveillance and harassment of the feminist movement, which they see as a threat to the status quo.

In 1984, terrorist attacks on abortion clinics occurred at the rate of one every two weeks.

If General Motors or Chrysler Corporation were being bombed at the same rate, we would see arrests and stiff penalties. Because women's lives and right to abortion, not corporate property, are at stake, the firebombings are seen as isolated incidents and not taken seriously. Official investigators refuse to accept the evidence that the firebombings are the result of a coordinated and organized assault.

Foes of women's rights are no more reconciled to the advances women have made than were white supremacists to those made by Southern Blacks during Reconstruction. Just as the Ku Klux Klan operated as the lawless shock troops of the white aristocracy, clinic firebombers are the terrorist arm of the anti-feminist movement. For decades the Klan succeeded in making Black legal rights, guaranteed on paper, worthless in practice. Today, the same can happen to women unless we mobilize nationally in defense of abortion and put an end to rightwing violence.

This Congressional hearing must convey a clear message to the whole country that women's right to abortion will be guaranteed in reality as well as in print. The harassment and brutality inflicted by right-to-lifers on clinic staff, patients and supporters constitutes illegal discrimination on the basis of sex, economic status and lifestyle. Allowing the anti-abortionists to continue their illegal activities not only condones their breaking the law, but also has a profound and chilling effect on the exercise of everyone's legal and constitutional rights.

I call on Congress and this committee to use its authority to defend reproductive freedom. Congressional representatives must oppose any move toward a constitutional amendment that would outlaw abortion.

Federal funds must be made available to guarantee every woman's right and access to abortion.

Specific legislation for the protection of abortion clinics must be enacted and enforced. There should be stiff penalties for physical, verbal, or telephone harassment of abortion clinic patients, staff and supporters, as well as for trespassing, vandalism or destruction of clinic property.

Congress should pass legislation establishing a ¼-mile buffer zone around clinics. Within this zone, all anti-abortion demonstrations, "pro-life" activities and patient harassment would be prohibited.

Federal laws, similar to those in operation in many states since 1968 under the Fair Access Law, must be enacted to guarantee availability of insurance coverage for all clinics.

Finally, I urge congressional delegations to visit the cities where clinics have been firebombed, hold public hearings and take testimony from those most directly involved--clinic staff, patients and defenders. This testimony will be convincing evidence of the urgent need for special federal legislation to bar anti-clinic violence and uphold women's constitutional right to abortion.

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Submitted by:

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20 Years For Beseda

Both sides in the national war over abortion rights turned out in force for the December 20 sentencing of convicted firebomber Curtis A. Beseda, held in a standing room-only courtroom at the Federal Courthouse in Seattle, Washington. U.S. District Judge John C. Coughenour consigned Beseda to 20 years in prison and five years on probation for setting four fires at abortion clinics in Everett and Bellingham, Washington, during 1984. The sentencing followed a two-day jury trial in which Beseda confessed on the stand to torching the clinics for the "greater glory of God."

Charging that Beseda "risked the lives of innocent bystanders," Judge Coughenour told him that "such conduct will not and cannot be tolerated," and ordered him to pay \$298,000 in restitution to clinic operators. The judge also turned down a defense request to allow Beseda to remain free over the Christmas holidays, saying "the public would not understand." He referred to the many letters he had received calling for a maximum sentence.

As jubilant feminists streamed out of the courtroom, Everett-area anti-abortion organizer Dottie Roberts led her followers in prayer at Beseda's side. He was then handcuffed and taken to jail by federal marshals.

Michael Undseth, a frequent picketer at the Everett Feminist Women's Health Center and statewide organizer of an unsuccessful initiative campaign to repeal state funding of abortion in Washington, vowed to "shut down all death chambers." His organization, Committee to Repeal State Funding of Abortions, initially offered a \$1000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the Everett arsonist, but later raised bail money for Beseda.

Luma Nichol, organizer for Seattle Radical Women, said, "It's up to us, as feminists, to defeat these vigilantes. The anti-abortionists have declared war on us and unless we organize in self-defense, as we did in Everett, we will lose everything we've fought for."

The bombings would continue, Nichol predicted, unless "we put enough pressure on public officials nationwide to stop the harassment campaigns before they result in fires which incinerate our constitutional rights." She credited Beseda's conviction to "the tremendous public pressure put on the Everett city council and mayor" by supporters of the Everett clinic.

Nichol pointed out that Beseda was a regular picketer at the clinic and that the fires were a culmination of eight months of prayer vigils, mail threats, disruptive phone calls, and mass rallies. "These self-proclaimed Christians profess to abhor violence, but we know who Beseda's supporters are. They are every bit as guilty as he is," she charged.

Joseph Scheidler, an acknowledged leader in the national anti-abortion movement, is author of a direct action manual, *99 Ways To Close The Clinics*, which instructs readers on methods for disrupting clinics, including bomb threats and invasions.

Susan Docekal, a Seattle abortion rights advocate, credited the mobilization of Everett and Seattle abortion rights activists with enabling the Everett clinic to remain open through two fires. The clinic closed in April of 1984, after the third bombing.

Immediately following Beseda's sentencing, Beverly Whipple, a staff member of the Everett clinic, notified the media of plans to reopen the center, possibly on its second anniversary. Her surprise announcement was met with cheers from many on the courthouse steps.

Marcy Bloom, a representative of the Seattle Reproductive Rights Alliance, said, "It's very exciting to learn that Beseda will spend a long time behind bars. Anyone who has committed the crimes against women that he has deserves to."

As the crowd in front of the courthouse dwindled, the only thing both sides seemed to agree on was that the battle over abortion would continue.

As if to underscore this point, Beseda told a *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reporter, in a jailhouse interview published 1/4/85, that the four persons arrested in the Christmas day torching of three Pensacola, Florida, clinics "had the courage and the character, the competence to act on what they know is right."

On the other side, Seattle feminists commemorated the 12th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion by holding a picket line and rally in front of the Women's Health Care Center on January 19. The clinic has been the recent target of anti-abortion picketeers. The rally was sponsored by Seattle Radical Women, Casa Cultural Celia Sanchez, Seattle Gay News and University of Washington Feminist Men's Support Group.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Seattle, Washington

The 1984-86 period brought intense conflict between pro-abortionists and the right wing in the Seattle area. Assaults on women's health clinics by the right wing increased and legislation was drafted that would have cut abortion funding for poor women. Seattle Radical Women was active in the Everett Clinic Defense Committee which defended the Everett Women's Health Center from extreme harassment and repeated firebombing by the "pro-lifers" during late 1983 to mid-1984. In the fall of 1984 Seattle Radical Women campaigned against anti-abortion Initiative 471, as well as anti-Indian fishing rights Initiative 456, drawing the connections between the two issues. Both initiatives had similar ultraright supporters and were aimed at taking away fundamental rights from the most oppressed.

Late in 1984 and early in 1985 after the Everett clinic was completely destroyed, the same rightwing group responsible for the assaults in Everett then focused their efforts on Seattle clinics. Knowing that the police would not protect abortion providers, Seattle RW led in organizing the community to defend them while publicly exposing the leaders of the anti-abortionists. The Seattle Abortion Rights Defense Committee was the result of this organizing. This group, though small, was militant, providing escort service for clinic patients and defense of the Women's Healthcare Center in Seattle against greater numbers of Right to Lifers. Important lessons were learned on how to conduct a disciplined counter-picket as well as other tactics for clinic defense.

Later in 1985 the branch worked with National Abortion Rights Action League and Group Health Women's Caucus to defeat an attempt to stop Group Health Cooperative Hospital from performing abortions. The anti-abortionists now know they will meet stiff opposition whenever they challenge women's reproductive rights in Seattle.

PROTEST the terrorism against
abortion clinics and women's rights



STOP rightwing
harassment at the
Women's Healthcare Center

DEFEND the Supreme Court
decision legalizing abortion

ABORTION CLINIC DEFENSE PICKET LINE & RALLY

Saturday, Jan. 19, 8:00am-noon
Rally at noon

Women's Healthcare Center
726 Broadway, Seattle, WA
Corner of Broadway & Columbia

SPONSORS: Casa Cultural Celia Sanchez, Seattle Gay News, Seattle Radical Women
and UW Men's Feminist Support Group

For information call: Seattle 632-1815, Tacoma 759-5382, Everett 353-6400.

Clinics Under Attack!

The right wing has declared a holy war on women's reproductive rights. Last year in the U.S., firebombers set abortion clinics ablaze on an average of once every two weeks. Picketing, threats and harassment against clinic patrons and staff are skyrocketing from coast to coast.

In Seattle, anti-abortion picketers at the Women's Healthcare Center intensified their campaign following the sentencing of Everett firebombor Curtis Beseda. Recent bomb threats and physical invasions of the clinic presage their intention to close down the clinic--by any means necessary. They must be stopped.

FIREBOMBERS: TERRORIST ARM OF THE RIGHT WING

The right wing has a full agenda of rights rollbacks. But they have made women's right to abortion their primary target--for now. Their ultimate aim is to wipe out civil rights gains and relegate women, people of color, and lesbians and gays to slavery.

Foes of women's rights are no more reconciled to the advances women have made than white supremacists were to those made by southern Blacks during Reconstruction. Just as the Ku Klux Klan operated as the lawless shock troops of the white aristocracy, the clinic firebombers are the terrorist arm of the anti-feminist movement. The Klan succeeded in making Black legal rights worthless for many decades. It can happen again to women unless we mobilize nationally to put an end to the terror.

We demand that congressional delegations visit the cities where clinics have been bombed and hold public hearings to take testimony from clinic staff, patients and defenders. Our story must be told in order to secure the introduction of special federal legislation barring clinic harassment. Unless we make elected officials feel the heat of our wrath as keenly as we feel the effects of the bombings, they will not lift a finger in our defense.

WE CAN DEFEND OURSELVES!

A united front of feminists and minority activists, led by women of color, won the right to abortion in Washington State in 1970. Feminists and community groups have since successfully defended that right time and again. We chased picketers away from the Women's Healthcare Center two years ago, campaigned for Beseda's arrest and stiff sentencing, and defeated Initiative 471, an attempt to cut state funding for abortion.

Community defense of clinics is the front line of the battle to protect reproductive rights. We must make a militant stand wherever the rightwing bombardment is launched, and put an end to the terrorism!

What you can do:

• Sign the petition calling for a Congressional Hearing on clinic violence. • Write or call your state and national legislators and urge them to speak out against clinic violence, and to retain or restore funding for abortions. • Stand with feminists on clinic defense picket lines until the right wing has been sent packing!

Picketline/Rally Endorsers

Tom Allmon, M.D., feminist activist, Portland, OR • Bob Barnes, Secretary Treasurer of Ship Scalpers, Local 541* • Therese Flynn-Bell, Program Coordinator, A.S.U.W. Women's Commission* • Beverly Burke, R.N., feminist activist, Portland, OR • Kenneth Clatterbaugh, Associate Professor, U.W. • Gladys Contreras • Stephanie Coontz, Puget Sound Socialist Action, author in women's history • Leslie Cossitt, Director of Seattle Central Community College Women's Programs* • Employee Committee for Equal Rights at City Light (CERCL) • Everett NOW • Evergreen State College Women's Center • Feminist Coalition at U.W. • Feminist Women's Health Center, Yakima, WA • Diana Fowler, 9 to 5 Seattle Working Women* • Clara Fraser • Freedom Socialist Party • Kathy Gordon, Counselor, Women's Healthcare Center, Seattle, WA* • Janet Hews, Washington Federation of State Employees* • International Socialist Organization • It's About Time Bookstore • Bernice Jones, AFSCME, Local 1488* • Santiago Juarez, Attorney at Law • Just Out newspaper, Portland, OR • Louis Keith • Prithy Korathu, Director, A.S.U.W. Women's Commission* • Lesbian Resource Center • Jackie McClure, U.W. Women's Studies Staff* • Metro Medical and Women's Center, Wheaton, MD • Metropolitan Family Planning Institute, Suitland and College Park, MD • Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA) • Henry Noble, Delegate to the King County Labor Council* • Northwest Socialists • Northwest Women's Law Center • Out and About • Puget Sound Socialist Action • The Seal Press • Seattle AIDS Action Committee • Seattle Nonviolent Action Group • Seattle Rape Relief • Seattle Reproductive Rights Alliance • Sojourner Truth Theatre, Portland, OR • Stonewall Committee for Lesbian/Gay Rights • Jim Street, Seattle City Council • Alan Sugiyama, Asian Family Affair* • Tacoma Radical Women • U.W. Socialist Discussion Group • A Woman's Place Bookstore, Portland, OR • Women for Reproductive Freedom • Anna Williams, Director, U.W. Black Student Commission* • Elliot Willman, Executive Vice-President of United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1001* • Workshop Printers.

*for identification only

Seattle Radical Women

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NEWS RELEASE

February 4, 1985

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For Release: Immediately

FEMINIST RALLY DOUSES "PRO-LIFERS"

Spirits soared and chants rang through the streets of Seattle on January 19th, when 400 pro-abortion activists picketed and rallied in defense of the beleaguered Women's Healthcare Center, target of repeated rightwing harassment and threats. For eight hours feminists marched and sang in front of the clinic, while vastly outnumbered anti-abortionists were relegated to an isolated street corner.

The action was called to commemorate the 12th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, and to defend clinic staff and patients from threatened anti-abortion violence on that date. The Women's Healthcare Center has suffered escalating attempts at intimidation by religious "pro-life" groups since the December sentencing of Curtis Beseda, convicted of three arson attacks on an abortion clinic in nearby Everett, and one firebombing in Bellingham, Washington.

Many pro-choice picketers noted the presence among the anti-abortionists of Michael Undseth, whose Family Action Coalition regularly pickets the clinic. Undseth is an associate and staunch defender of "pro-life" arsonist Curtis Beseda, and was the main backer of an unsuccessful state

initiative to cut funding of abortions for women on welfare. Pro-abortion picketers responded to Undseth's presence with shouts of "Hey Undseth, got a match?" and chants of "We put Curtis Beseda in jail--abortion rights will not fail!"

The noon rally was kicked off by clinic director Kathy Gordon, who thanked the community for their support on behalf of the clinic and its patients. She was followed by speakers representing a wide range of organizations and interests.

Speaking for Seattle Radical Women, one of the organizers of the day's events, Karrie Peterson exhorted abortion rights supporters to "stay on the barricades" to defend clinics against attacks. "We fought long and hard to win this right--to control our own lives--to stop the deaths caused by illegal abortions. We will not stand meekly by and watch our gains burned to ashes." Criticizing the silence of elected officials in the face of a national onslaught of anti-abortion violence, she demanded federal legislation barring harassment at clinics and stiff sentences for those who violate women's rights. However, she warned against the call, raised by some feminists, for federal investigation of bombings. "The FBI is infamous for its harassment and persecution of activists. We don't want a witchhunt of the feminist movement. We want our constitutional rights defended."

Jim Sobredo, representing another group responsible for the rally, the University of Washington Men's Feminist Support Group, described how clinic bombers have justified their actions as done "for the glory of God." "But we know that these organized bombings are done by fascists whose intent is to oppress women, especially poor and minority women."

Expanding on that theme, Vanessa Gilder, a Black anti-discrimination activist and member of Seattle's Ad Hoc Committee for Fair Employment and Open Housing, blasted "religious zealots who seek to control women's lives." She identified abortion rights as a discrimination issue of high priority:

"Before legal abortion, the poor in general and ethnic minorities

in particular had to experience abortions performed by hacks, the coat-hanger, the motel room method, concocted remedies, infections, sterilization, and mutilation. We're not going backward to that!"

Selma Waldman, a feminist artist and organizer in the movement against South African apartheid, roused wild cheering when she turned, microphone in hand, to face the anti-abortionists and demanded: "What have you done to stop the dropping of U.S. supplied phosphorus bombs on El Salvadoran babies? Where were you when napalm set children on fire in Vietnam? And when minority women were sterilized here and in Puerto Rico? What are you doing now to ensure decent childcare for the millions of working mothers? And to protest cutbacks in health care for poor and minority children? And to stop the racism of apartheid, which kills?" Clinic supporters roared as Waldman concluded vehemently, "How dare you call yourselves 'pro-life'?"

"There is a special urgency in defending women's rights," said Chris Smith of the Stonewall Committee for Lesbian/Gay Rights, "because the stepped-up attacks on abortion clinics are directly related to increasing discrimination and violence against lesbians and gay men, and people of color. But even the right wing's terrorist acts can't make us retreat into the closet or force women into the back alleys to have abortions."

A speaker for the Freedom Socialist Party, Jonathan Foe, described the connection between the right wing and big business. "The heterosexist nuclear family is the cornerstone of capitalism, keeping women barefoot and pregnant, working at low wages or unemployed--for the benefit of Wall Street." Vowing that feminist men would be steadfast defenders of abortion rights, he exclaimed, "The right wing is going to have to face all of us together--and do they have a battle on their hands!"

Rally organizers read solidarity statements from national endorsers, including New York abortion rights activist Bill Baird and Washington state

Congressman Mike Lowry. The rally was endorsed by over 50 national, state-wide, community, labor, and feminist organizations and activists, including Frances Kissling, director of Catholics for Free Choice and co-author of Rosie: The Investigation of a Wrongful Death, an exposé of the death of Rosie Jimenez, the first woman to die of an illegal abortion as a result of passage of the Hyde Amendment.

Clinic defenders returned to the picketline following the rally, determined to send the anti-abortion picketers home first. At their departure, the abortion rights activists celebrated their victory with enthusiastic cheers and shouts, promising to maintain their vigilance and ensure that no woman would ever again be forced to choose between an unwanted child and a life-threatening illegal abortion.

For more information call Radical Women in Seattle at 1-206-632-1815.

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TACOMA, WASHINGTON

Tacoma, Washington

Tacoma was the hub of much anti-abortion activity in Washington state between 1984 and 1986, with picketing at two local clinics and the threatened boycott of a hospital where abortions are performed. But it was also the center of feminist resistance, with Tacoma Radical Women in the lead.

After a Tacoma RW forum, "The Abortion Wars," in March 1985, our members worked with a group called People for Individual Choice (PIC), an ad-hoc collection of health care workers, feminists and birth control careerists. The branch persuaded PIC to commemorate Women's Rights Day 1985 with a celebration of abortion rights, a tremendous event despite attempts by rightwing pickets to crash the party. PIC collapsed because of a lack of democracy and structure, and as a result of red-baiting attacks on Radical Women by its more conservative members.

The Pierce County Abortion Rights Rally Committee was subsequently formed to organize the 1986 statewide celebration on the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision. In October 1986, again taking the offensive against the Right to Lifers, Tacoma RW called a spirited rally to protest the annual nationwide "Pastor's Protest Against Abortion" at a local hospital.

the mooring mast

Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington 98447

Vol. 62, No. 18

Page 2

The Mooring Mast

March 8, 1985

Tacoma abortion forum promotes women's rights issues

By SONJA VANDER MAAS

Approximately forty men and women from the Seattle and Tacoma areas attended a reproductive rights forum entitled, "The Abortion Wars: Frontline in the Fight for Women's Rights," last Friday night.

As the forum opened, Doreen McGrath welcomed those present and invited them to "stick around for the scrumptious Greek dinner and attend the abortion rights picket in Seattle," slated for last Saturday at the Broadway Women's Health Care Center. The organization protests each Saturday morning at the clinic for the right to have abortions.

"Feminists and their supporters have defended the Women's Health Care Center from right wingers who've harassed patients on their way into the clinic and who are trying to close the clinic down," McGrath said. "We've been escorting patients in and maintaining a very spirited picket line."

"Last year there were thirty-two fire bombings of abortion clinics across the country," McGrath said. She asked the audience to ponder why this type of violence over free choice has increased at this time.

Connie McCloud, an eleven-year member and three-year councilwoman for the Puyallup Indian Tribe and health care specialist, addressed the importance of health and educational issues among her tribe.

"I am directly involved in helping these people find accessibility to health services," she said. "Abortion is an issue that all of our lives we are confronted with and we as health care providers and we as Indian women and leaders in the community should provide counseling and referral services."

She feels that the fact that she is a woman and an Indian has helped her to earn the trust of those she counsels on abortion.

"In some ways it's a lot of responsibility to counsel women on themselves and their bodily functions," she said. She said she felt the "need for women to be educated," and this is why she took on the role of councilwoman.

For the Indian women she aids, McCloud feels her contributions "allow them to make decisions and

choices based on sound information." Previous dilemmas were created because of inaccessibility to proper care and information and others' value systems being impressed upon these women, she said.

Geoff Pfander was the second of the three keynote speakers. Pfander moved to Seattle one and a half years ago to attend the University of Washington. He advocates male support of the women's freedom movement and the Radical Women organization.

He began by quoting a girl from his ninth grade speech class who said, "I don't understand why men think they have the right to decide for women whether or not they can have an abortion. I mean whose body is it anyway?" Pfander said, "I very strongly agree with that."

Formed last spring, the Men's Feminist Support Group consists of eight men from the University of Washington. It has no specific leader, said Pfander, but is run by consensus. He was enrolled in an "Introduction to Women's Studies" course at the University when he first became interested in the movement.

Currently, the group's major support issues deal with the woman's right to birth control and contraceptive information and the right to an abortion during her first trimester. Pfander calls these "the woman's right to reproductive freedom."

Some of the response from other males has been confusion (they connected the word "feminine," not "feminist," to the group), but the group hopes to have a forum at the University of Washington sometime in early April to increase public and male awareness.

Along with increasing public awareness, the men's support group hopes to educate themselves. Pfander and the other male students joined forces with Radical Women for this reason as well as support of the Radical Women's initiatives.

"The right wing is always talking about life ... their rhetoric," he said, "but what I've learned on that picket line is that they don't give a damn about human life!" Pfander said this right wing advocates, "that the only

rights a woman has is to know how to love her man."

He referred to discrimination back to the 1880s and the illegality of white women to have an abortion, but the state and federally funded law which made it legal for a colored woman to have an abortion.

A future concern of this group is also that of rape. "Rape is a prime concern which men must start addressing," Pfander said. He said that, "standing up on that picket line is part of the solution to this problem."

The third speaker was Karrie Peterson, former member of the Everett Feminist Women's Health Center Defense Committee and a socialist feminist. She recalled talking with a policeman at the Broadway Health Care Clinic in Seattle during one of their Saturday morning pickets.

She said that the women who had been coming into the clinic were being openly harassed and assaulted by right wing members. The policeman replied that it was a very emotional issue and that the police could not get involved, Peterson said.

"The government movement is angry that we are organized and that we are determined," she said. She said she would like to see a national investigation in terms of a congressional hearing on the unlawful actions which the right wing has been using against women who want abortions and the Radical Women groups.

"We can put pressure on government officials," she said, "and get the law and majority on our side."

She also encouraged those who came to go out and join the movement for women. "It is our movement," she said.

A question and discussion period followed Peterson's remarks.

The forum was hosted by the Tacoma chapter of Radical Women as a benefit for the *Freedom Socialist* newspaper.

The purpose of the Radical Women organization is to "win full equality for women by making radical changes in the economic, social and political structure" of our present-day capitalist society, according to the *Radical Women Manifesto*.

The forum was held at the Tacoma IBEW hall.

The Abortion Wars

Frontline in the fight for women's rights

- The unholy methods and motives of 'pro-life' zealots
- What's at stake for working women, women of color, and lesbians
- How feminists and their allies can defeat the rightwing terrorists



Speakers

Connle McCloud Indian health specialist and Puyallup Tribal Councilwoman

Geoff Pfander Member of Men's Feminist Support Group and organizer of Seattle clinic defense

Juanita Langford Black community organizer for welfare reform and legalized abortion in Washington State

Karrie Peterson Everett Feminist Women's Health Center Defense Committee and Radical Women member

Friday, March 1, 7:30pm
Greek Supper & Social 9:30pm

IBEW Hall 3049 S. 36th St., Tacoma
(Corner of 36th and Pine Streets)
Door donation \$2.00, Low income \$1.00 Supper donation \$4.00

Auspices: Tacoma Radical Women and Freedom Socialist Newspaper
Call three days in advance for childcare or rides: 759-5382



PORTLAND, OREGON

Portland, Oregon

Portland Radical Women's militant confrontation with the right wing sparked the formation of the Portland Community Clinic Defense Coalition in July 1985. Abortion rights organizing intensified as this coalition joined with other community organizations eager to fight back after more than two years of increasing rightwing harassment and abuse.

The public was simmering with outrage against the anti-abortionists and flocked enthusiastically to CCDC's forums and demonstrations. The battle for abortion rights increased dramatically, demonstrating the power groups can have when they work together.

However, Portland RW has fought those elements within CCDC which underestimate community militancy, avoid necessary mobilizations toe-to-toe against the organized right, and seek to silence radicals. This reluctance to show collective strength will lead to derailment of the movement. CCDC remains a vital organization, engaging in healthy debate, while working together to vigorously defend abortion rights for all women.

Radical Women

2114 N.E. 13

Portland, Oregon 97212

(503) 249-8067

PRESS STATEMENT December 5, 1985

From: Portland Radical Women
2114 N.E. 13th
Portland, OR 97212
(503) 249-8067

Contact: Adrienne Weller
Home: 249-1710

For release: Immediately

Radical Women condemns the rightwing attempt to bomb four Portland area abortion and contraception service providers. The anti-life intentions of the "pro-life" movement became chillingly explicit Monday, December 2, 1985 with the mailing of bombs to the Portland Feminist Women's Health Center (PFWHC), Beaverton Planned Parenthood, Lovejoy Surgicenter and the Forest Grove Bours Clinic. The vigilance of the PFWHC staff and the quick response of postal authorities and police prevented wholesale murder and maiming of clinic staff and clients, but the contempt for women's lives that propels the "right-to-life" movement is fuel for further assaults.

To protect the lives and facilities of Portland area reproductive rights providers, of clients and of the postal service, Radical Women calls on the anti-abortion movement to vigorously condemn this attempted massacre and to stop their abusive and harassing picketing of the clients and staff of abortion facilities.

The gauntlet of shoving, screaming anti-lifers that women seeking abortions are forced to endure demonstrates an immoral disdain for the right of women to control their lives that motivates and emboldens would-be clinic bombers.

The prevention of a repeat attack must be the top priority of the Police Department by the swift apprehension of the terrorist(s) who mailed the four "anti-personnel devices." Portlanders must know that their constitutional rights cannot be bombed away by anti-woman zealots.

Support for the besieged clinics and for women's right to abortion is urgently needed. All who value their constitutional rights have a stake in protesting this violence and in defending its intended victims. If the right wing succeeds in bombing women back into forced pregnancies and poverty, who will be next? People of color, lesbians and gays, working people have all been threatened by the right wing. The rightwing goal is to defeat all civil rights gains, and their method is vilification, intimidation and violence. They must be stopped by a broad community defense, encompassing all whose rights and lives are at stake, and who see the need for women's right to control their own bodies.

#

Radical Women

2114 N.E. 13

Portland, Oregon 97212

(503) 249-8067

STATEMENT PREPARED FOR ANTI-JOSEPH SCHEIDLER DEMONSTRATION

October 27, 1985

I'm Adrienne Weller, speaking for Radical Women. We are all here today to let Joseph Scheidler and the anti-abortionists know we fought hard to win the right to control our bodies and our lives, to stop the deaths and mutilations caused by illegal abortions, to stop the cycle of poverty caused by women being forced to bear children.

We will not stand by and watch our rights burned to ashes by anti-women terrorists hiding behind the mask of religion. Lift the right wing's phony reverence for the life of the fetus and you see their true face--contempt for the lives of women.

They aim to stop contraception, sex education, childcare--everything that allows women to choose our own kind of life.

The right to life of women, and especially of women of color, and lesbians and gays are the first targets on the right wing hit list. If they defeat us, everyone else's rights will be next.

We are out here to stop the anti-abortionists with our determination to not ever be forced back into the alleys of illegal abortionists, and out of the schools and the workforce.

We demand our rightful place in this society. We will participate as working women, artists, radicals, and as mothers, if we choose to.

By fighting together, like we are today, there is no way we can lose.

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SAN FRANCISCO/OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

San Francisco/Oakland, California

San Francisco Bay Area Radical Women has united with clinics and coalitions to challenge the right wing, forcing the Bay Area battle for abortion rights off the back burner.

The branch helped organize a rousing rally and picket against national anti-abortion leader Joseph Scheidler's appearance at San Francisco State University in April, 1985. Also in 1985, SFRW initiated a militant march with anti-apartheid students sitting in at the University of California, Berkeley, to jointly protest campus screening of the anti-abortion movie, "The Silent Scream."

In January 1985 SF Radical Women co-founded the Bay Area Clinic Defense Committee, which also includes Oakland Feminist Women's Health Center representatives and unaffiliated activists. The CDC has called rallies and picket lines for reproductive rights, and garnered a wide range of community support. The CDC has also prodded liberal feminist groups to actively confront the right wing. In January 1986, the CDC led a militant counter-picket on the steps of the state Capitol in Sacramento, where anti-abortionists would otherwise have been unopposed at their "pro-life" rally. NOW members, invigorated by the CDC's bold stance, enthusiastically joined the picket.

The CDC's methodical campaign netted an end to anti-abortion picketing at the Women's Choice Clinic in Richmond, California.

SF RW has hosted several community forums on abortion rights and has helped a number of clinics with patient escort services and counter-picketing against anti-abortionists. Our insistent call for feminists and radicals to take up defense of besieged clinics has resulted in increased participation by a variety of people in the movement for reproductive rights.

Community Rally

Protect Reproductive Rights!

Fight back!

- Defend the Women's Choice Clinic of Richmond against right wing harassment.
- Safeguard state funding for abortion; stop Reagan's attempt to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion.
- End forced sterilization of women of color and poor women; demand equal health care to end infant mortality.

Celebrate women's choice with:

**Community activists • Sistah Boom • Pat Parker
Pro-choice open mike • Freedom Song Network
Swingshift • Merle Woo • Food • More!**

Sunday, Sept. 29
Noon - 5:00pm

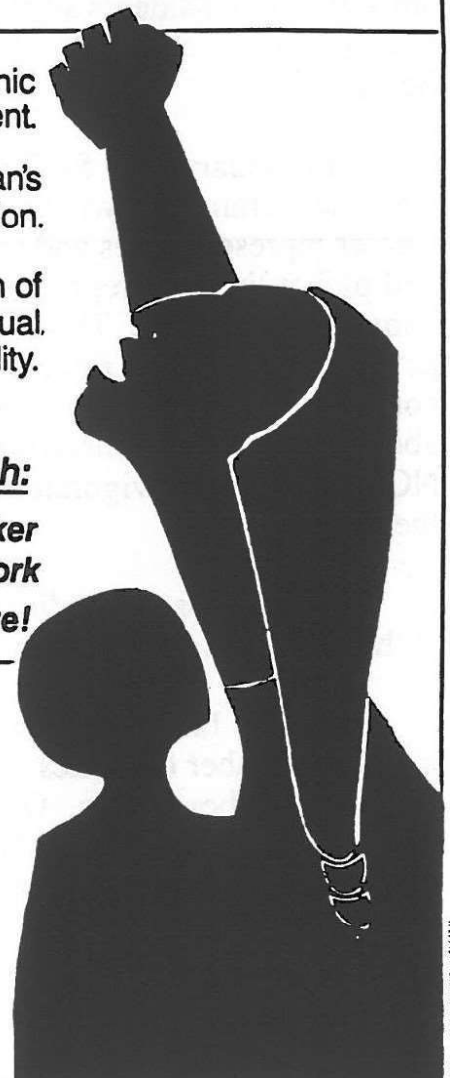
Nicholl Park, Richmond, CA

(Directions. From San Francisco and East Bay: Take Highway 80 North to the McDonald Avenue exit. Follow McDonald Avenue to 31st St. From Pinole: Take Highway 80 South to San Pablo Avenue/Central Richmond exit (past San Pablo Dam exit). Follow signs to San Pablo Avenue. Turn left on San Pablo Avenue then right on McDonald Avenue. Follow McDonald Avenue to 31st St.)

Sponsored by: Clinic Defense Committee

Endorsers: Women's Choice Clinic of Richmond • Action Committee for Abortion Rights • California Abortion Rights Action League • Committee to Defend Reproductive Rights • Contra Costa Pro-Choice Activists • Democratic Socialists of America • East Bay Lesbian/Gay Democratic Club • East Bay National Organization for Women • Everywoman's Clinic, Pleasant Hill • Freedom Socialist Party • Earl Gilman, SEIU Local 450* • John Brown Anti-Klan Coalition • Earl Johnson, Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights • Lesbians and Gays Against Apartheid • Los Angeles Feminist Women's Health Center • National Conference of Black Lawyers, Bay Area Chapter • Oakland Feminist Women's Health Center • Oakland Progressive People's Association • Peace and Freedom Party • Pro-Choice Coalition • Radical Women • Revolutionary Communist Party • Revolutionary Socialist League • Revolutionary Workers League • San Francisco Chapter, National Lawyers Guild • San Francisco National Organization for Women • San Francisco State Women's Center • Santa Rosa Women's Choice Clinic • Jim Swan, AFSCME* • Women Against Imperialism • East Bay CISPES.

*organizations listed for identification purposes only



labor council 9 85

Full Reproductive Rights Now!

Today's rally in support of the Women's Choice Clinic of Richmond, target of right wing harassment and picketing, sends a clear message to anti-abortionists that women in the Bay Area are determined to defend and maintain quality health care and the right to choose to have an abortion. Full reproductive freedom means that we must have total control of our bodies! Any lesser demand places women's lives in constant jeopardy as shifts occur in the political climate of this country.

The Right Wing's Agenda

Nationally, the right wing's continued violent assault on abortion rights through clinic bombings, harassment, vandalism and legal challenges is part of a calculated effort to control women and to reduce us to breeders -- forced out of the labor market and condemned to unpaid slavery in the home. When women cannot choose when and if to have children, we cannot keep a job, support our families or choose to be economically independent from men.

The anti-abortion movement, with its multiplicity of lies, has one aim: to destroy human rights in the interest of preserving the status quo. Organized against abortion on one hand, they are also opposed to birth control. They block funds for federal and state-funded abortions for poor women, but gladly open their pocketbooks for forced sterilization of women of color, investment in apartheid and support of Central American contras. Their "pro-life" agenda includes leaving AIDS victims to die, instead of funding research and support services.

They seek to overturn legalized abortion, one of the safest medical procedures a woman can undergo. In the name of "life," the right wing would leave women to die on the chopping blocks of illegal, back-alley abortionists.

Women's Freedom: Threat to the U.S. Economy

During economic crises, the right wing, financed by big business, is the most visible and vocal representative of the private profit system. The fight for abortion and full reproductive freedom is so explosive because women's equality--socially, politically and economically--threatens the foundation of capitalism. Women's unpaid domestic labor and low wages in the workplace sustain the capitalist system and mean huge profits for the bosses. Every gain we make--from union organizing to reproductive rights--erodes the power of the bosses, the state and the church to control our lives in the interest of their profits. The only lasting protection for reproductive rights and other freedoms will be a socialist society organized around human needs instead of private profits.

Strategy for Victory--Build a United Feminist Front!

It is imperative that our strategy to keep control of our bodies be militant and multi-issue. Through this approach, the feminist movement won the Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion. Single-issue attempts focused only on abortion ignore our allies in the labor, people of color, anti-war, anti-apartheid and lesbian/gay movements.

Today's demonstration is a united front in which dozens of endorsers rallied around uncompromising demands to win reproductive freedom. It is a big step towards building the alliances that will bring victory in the fight for abortion rights. We must continue the work we have begun today by uniting behind a feminist, democratic, anti-racist and radical program in which the demands of the most oppressed women must be met.

Back-room deals and trading away issues like poker chips have dealt disastrous blows to the women's movement. Maneuvering among politicians by single-issue liberal feminists, instead of organizing among our allies, has left us on the defensive in the fight for abortion. We can regain our advantage through mass public pressure and the consistent and militant demands of feminists demonstrating in the streets. We must be visible in pro-abortion demonstrations and in community defense of our clinics.

The multi-pronged attack by the right on women, immigrants, gays and lesbians, people of color, Jews, unionists, and the Central American and South African revolutions affects us all. Together we can inspire the abortion rights movement--and every other movement under rightwing fire--to unity and victory.

FEMINISTS HAVE NO TIME TO LOSE. WE MUST...

- JOIN COALITIONS TO FIGHT FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS. Help build a multi-issue defense of reproductive rights for all women with no compromises on the rights of women of color, poor women, women workers, lesbians and radicals.
- BUILD COMMUNITY DEFENSE OF ABORTION CLINICS. Feminists must join together with other movements to confront the anti-abortionists on the steps of our clinics. Relying on the police or the FBI for clinic defense will be suicidal to our movement. U.S. police agencies are out to divide and destroy our movements, and to promote government policies that are clearly anti-abortion and pro-right wing.
- DEFEND ROE v. WADE. Militant feminists won Roe v. Wade through mass demonstrations, public education and by linking the fight for reproductive rights to affirmative action, round-the-clock, quality childcare and the civil rights struggle. We must fight Reagan's attack on Roe v. Wade by using the same tactics.

Issued by: RADICAL WOMEN
523-A Valencia St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 864-1278

labor donated

9/29/85

Clinic Defense Committee

2930 McClure St., Oakland, CA 94609 (415)444-5676

August 6, 1985

Dear Friends:

The Clinic Defense Committee invites you to participate in the planning of a rally to be held September 29th at Nicholl Park in Richmond.

WHO WE ARE

The CDC was formed in January of 1985 in response to the increasing attacks on women's reproductive rights. These attacks have ranged from verbal and physical abuse of clients and staff to the bombing of women's health clinics. Nominally, these attacks have been directed at a woman's right to choose an abortion. However, their effect has been to deny women access to low-cost pre-natal care, birth control and gynecological services as well as abortion. We of the CDC are outraged by these attacks and have banded together to form an organization dedicated to the protection of women's health clinics and to the promotion of reproductive rights in general.

OUR GOALS FOR THE RALLY

We believe it is important to heighten the awareness in the Bay Area of the issues of reproductive rights and their connection with other issues of progressive social change. We are therefore inviting a broad range of forward thinking groups to participate in this rally. Additionally, we believe it is important politically to broaden the scope of the progressive community beyond the borders of San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley and, as such, we are seeking to include groups based throughout the Bay Area. Thus, we envision the September 29th rally to be a starting point for a Bay Area-wide, broad-based coalition of support for reproductive rights.

WHY RICHMOND

In addition to the larger goals mentioned above, we have specifically chosen Richmond as a sight for this rally in order to build local support for the recently opened Women's Choice Clinic of Richmond. This clinic has been the site of daily pickets by right-wingers and small church groups. Consequently, a rally in Richmond will allow us to establish a wider community base, a larger clientele, and an escort service to ensure the safety of patrons. By holding an action in Richmond we also intend to increase the visibility of the resistance to the reactionary right in an area where such resistance has been, at best, dimly lit.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles, California

Southern California has more than its share of rightwing bigots. Los Angeles Radical Women squared off against them when the Right to Life movement descended on Clinica Eva in El Monte in 1984. Clinica Eva, a low cost family-planning clinic, is located about 15 miles east of Los Angeles and serves primarily Latinas and poor women of every race.

Los Angeles Radical Women and other members of the Clinica Eva Defense Committee (CEDC) beat back the anti-abortionists, and this victory serves as a model for clinic defenders and abortion rights organizers across the country.

The CEDC--composed of Los Angeles Radical Women, West Covina and Pomona NOW chapters and independents--has defended the clinic with a security and patient escort service every Saturday for the last two years and with all night defense vigils when needed. Los Angeles RW and CEDC have consistently exposed police and city officials for their criminal unwillingness to enforce privacy and trespassing laws, called press conferences in response to clinic bombings in other parts of the country, and generated extensive publicity through letters to the editor, newspaper articles and radio and TV talk show appearances. The branch has helped organize fundraisers, including a Father's Day bake sale in front of the Clinic (an event which enraged the anti-abortionists) and a benefit in LA featuring numerous progressive poets and musicians from the talent-laden land of Hollywood.

In 1986, CEDC organized a widely publicized rally where, for the first time in years, Southern California abortion rights advocates faced "Right to Lifers" head on. CEDC also marched in demonstrations for the rights of others--such as South Africans, lesbians and gays, trade unionists, and Central American revolutionaries.

The victory in all of this is that militant defense has kept Clinica Eva open in the face of a two-year onslaught by the right wing and reduced their harassment to sporadic intimidation attempts at the clinic. From this struggle has emerged a seasoned cadre of principled, radicalized fighters who have linked up the battle for reproductive rights with other political movements under attack by the same enemy and who are committed to continuing the struggle.

NEWS RELEASE
September 30, 1985

From: Clinica Eva Defense Committee
11017 E. Valley Mall
El Monte, CA 91731
(818) 444-7700

Contact: Sara Drucker
(714) 593-3433 (afternoons)

Relf Star
(714) 620-5695 (evenings)

Monica Hill
(213) 935-8638

For Release: IMMEDIATELY

Do not use after Friday, October 4, 1985

ANTI-ABORTIONISTS PULL GUN ON CLINIC DEFENDERS

One of several anti-abortionist demonstrators pulled a gun on escorts at Clinica Eva, a family planning and abortion clinic in El Monte on Saturday.

"The violence of these bigots is intensifying at a frightening rate," said one of the women who has been escorting patients from their cars into the clinic for the last several months, to help them avoid anti-abortionist picketers.

This is the most recent in a series of incidents reported to the police that have included:

- Encouragement by the anti-abortionists, to people across the street, to throw rocks at the clinic defenders,
- Refusal by the anti-abortionist picketers to comply with police directives to not trespass on clinic property,
- Blatant disregard for the law which states that you may not deprive persons

of their right of access to public thoroughfares,

- An incident whereby an anti-abortionist, after getting instructions from one of his leaders, verbally abused and spat at patients and escorts, elbowed and shoved them, and made threats of violence. When police had left after questioning him, he suddenly reappeared wearing a bloody butcher's apron and wielding a bloody meat cleaver, which only after close scrutiny was found to be simulated. With this he terrorized patients in the parking lot and on the sidewalk.

- Tormenting of patients who are already visibly distressed, reducing them to near-hysteria, as witnessed in an incident on Saturday.

"What worries me is that I've just realized how truly vulnerable we are," said one of the women at whom the gun was pointed. "In view of the fact that those peoples' attitudes and actions are becoming increasingly more violent, I can only wonder what the hell they're going to do next."

The gun was pointed at two of the clinic defenders in the parking lot by one of two men who were colleagues of the anti-abortionist extremists. As these men were newcomers to the picket line, the clinic escorts were studying the car to familiarize themselves with it, as is the usual procedure, because of incidents where picketers have followed escorts home from the clinic.

"So you like my car, huh?" asked one of the men. "I have a gun, too. Let's see how you like that!" And he pulled a gun from the car and pointed it at the women. When the escorts said they would call the police, the men sped away.

The concern of the clinic defenders at this point is that nothing is being done to curb the escalation of this terrorism.

There is a real fear that in the name of "Christian Ethics", the victimization of women is being condoned to the point where violence and bombings will become commonplace.

Clinic escorts reported that on Friday there were at least 35 demonstrators, haranguing patients. Since there were only four women defending the clinic, the patients could not be effectively protected. They are bracing for a similar assault at the clinic this Friday (Oct. 4), at four o'clock, where the anti-abortionists have stated that an equal number of them will be on hand to "stop these baby-killers".

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CLINICA EVA--AN ABORTION CLINIC SUCCESS STORY

by Monica Hill, for L.A. RW Meeting of 7/29/85

The war to defend abortion and keep rightwing bigots from closing down clinics has been an unparalleled success at Clinica Eva in El Monte, CA. The way we've fought can be a model for other clinic defenders. And that's the purpose of our educational tonight--to share what we've learned and to build on that, so that this unfinished war for women's rights to control our own bodies will grow ever more large and muscular, in a war not soon to be over.

First, a little history: anti-abortion picketing at Clinica Eva started nearly a year ago. Two members of West Covina N.O.W. learned about it, and called the Clinic which eagerly accepted their offer to come escort patients. These N.O.W. members were woefully outnumbered then, but they stuck it out for months, every Saturday, in rain and blistering heat. When they saw a leaflet advertising a public forum on abortion rights sponsored by L.A. Radical Women in January, they came. Radical Women learned about the Clinica Eva struggle then, and joined the escort defenders. Soon after that, we all formed a defense committee, to better organize our strategies of defense.

Today, Eva, the clinic manager, says, "The clinic would have been closed down by now, if it weren't for the Defense Committee." And that's our victory! These months and months on the picket line have been a baptism of fire on how to go up against the right wing and win! And that has given us a tremendous amount of pleasure. Victory is sweet, especially when you've worked so hard for it.

But our fight has also been filled with lessons learned:

1. We learned that it's impossible to conduct this fight as a single issue, because it isn't.

- Women of color, especially Latinas, are primary users of Clinica Eva, because it provides low-cost reproductive medical care which victims of racist poverty can afford. So race is an issue.

- Many of the patients are undocumented workers without union protections and medical insurance. So race, anti-immigrant bigotry, and workingclass poverty are all issues.

- Many of the patients seek abortions or birth control secretly, because their husbands and churches vehemently oppose their right to decide when and if to bear children. So freedom of religion and freedom from religion is an issue, as well as separation of church and state, and husbands' oppressive power over wives and children. After you've

listened to what the anti-abortionists yell at us Saturday after Saturday, you're left with no doubt that their ultimate aim is to construct a religious state as viciously oppressive as Khomeini's regime in Iran.

- Some of the clinic defenders are lesbians and gays who know all too well the rightwing agenda for anyone who defies their dictate that all women and men should live within a nuclear family structure. So freedom of sexuality is an issue.

- The right wing charges that Jews are the primary abortionists. So anti-Semitism is an issue.

- Many of the clinic defenders, including Radical Women members, are socialist feminists who as leftists are opposed to everything the right wing stands for, including its favorite economic system, capitalism. So freedom of speech, association and political dissent are issues.

I could go on, but the main point is that the abortion rights struggle is multi-issue in essence. To fail to organize a multi-issue defense is to sell out our own allies, weaken our defense, and underestimate people's capacity to see the connections in the right wing's multi-pronged offensive.

2. Another valuable lesson we've learned and practice is internal democracy in the Defense Committee. There are differences of political perspective on the Committee -- naturally, because the Committee consists of various organizations and escorts not with any organization. Members of Radical Women, of N.O.W., of C.A.R.A.L. and ACLU discuss and debate differences, and then make decisions and stick to them. No one's opinion is squelched, and that's democracy.

3. We learned to arrive at decisions collectively and to act collectively. No one dashes off on their own--we consult each other, and this has made the difference on the picket line between success or failure.

4. We've learned that the anti-abortionists are outright liars who try to confuse people by using our words to teach their messages. So self-education is an ongoing activity of the Committee. Their book 99 Ways to Shut Down Abortion Clinics will be examined at an upcoming Defense Committee meeting.

5. We've learned that they are not isolated religious fanatics, but a highly organized and well financed national force who practice the same goon tactics and preach the same line across the country.

6. We've learned that the police are on the side of the anti-abortionists by their refusal to take any action against the verbal and physical assault on patients and escorts.

Theirs is a "non-interventionist" response to illegal activity, and they've refused to meet with us to work out a policy that would prevent potential violence. Would the police permit such harassment of IBM customers, or the local bank? Of course not!

7. Radical Women has learned from our experience in the Everett, Washington defense committee that to call on the FBI for assistance is pure folly, because the FBI and its cohort organization, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, are infamous for infiltrating and persecuting feminist and other groups, and for suggesting that feminists and clinic staffs are responsible for the firebombings--to "gain sympathy." Instead of secret investigations by the FBI, Radical Women urges public investigations through Congressional public hearings across the country.

8. We've learned to be militant and self-confident in our ability to verbally and physically defend women's rights, because we're doing it, not just talking about it.

9. We've learned that it's vital to conduct a public fight in order to encourage others to join and to expose the hypocrisy of the anti-abortionists. Getting to the press and distributing leaflets is critical.

10. Through months and months, Saturday after Saturday of working together, under fire, we've learned to respect and care for each other (most of whom were strangers in the beginning), because of the commitment and courage exhibited by every escort.

11. We have also learned that not all clinics are as courageous as Eva and her staff, who refuse to lie low and then close down, but welcome support in standing up and fighting back.

12. And oh, have we learned to know our enemy! We face them in flesh and blood every week of our lives.

There is of course, much to be done.

- We need to publicly pressure city officials to denounce the harassment and violence at clinics and to enforce women's legal rights to abortion and other reproductive medical care.

- We need to get the word out to more and more people and strengthen our defense lines.

- We will soon be seeking a court restraining order on the anti-abortion picketers.

It is an aggressive fight well worth joining. The "pro-life" terrorists must be stopped before they strip us of our constitutional rights, a life and death matter to all women.

* * *

Stop Terrorism Against Abortion Clinics

The right wing is mounting a national campaign to deny women the right to safe, legal abortions. Family planning clinics throughout the country have been threatened, picketed and firebombed for over eight years, and the attacks are escalating.

Here in Southern California, a seventeen-alarm fire recently gutted the Feminist Women's Health Center in Hollywood and the San Diego Birth Control Institute was firebombed just before that. Numerous clinics, including Clinica Eva in El Monte, are plagued by anti-choice picketers on a regular basis. These self-righteous moralists have invaded Clinica Eva, blocked its entrances and parking lot, trapped patients in their cars, photographed them in post-surgery recovery, pushed shoved and made death threats to clinic escorts, and verbally terrorized patients and escorts with shouts of "Murderer!"

These same goon tactics are being used across the country. The stated goal of these terrorists is to shut down all abortion clinics and force women, especially poor women, to return to life-threatening back-alley abortions. The right-wing bigots expose their hypocrisy and racism by calling for mandatory motherhood while supporting forced sterilization of women of color.

Women are the First Target -- Who Will Be Next?

The right wing has a full agenda of rights rollbacks. But they have made women's rights to abortion their primary target — for now. Their ultimate aim is to wipe out civil rights gains and relegate women, people of color and lesbians and gays to a form of slavery.

These are the same forces who support union-busting, charges of reverse discrimination, anti-semitism, curtailment of Native American sovereignty, scapegoating undocumented workers, media censorship, and the U.S. war drive.

We Will Defend Ourselves

Feminist and community groups are successfully defending clinics across the country. This is the front line on the battle to defend reproductive rights. We must make a militant stand wherever the right-wing bombardment is aimed and put an end to the terrorism.

Help Stop the Attacks

- **Stand with the feminists on Clinica Eva's defense picket line until the right wing has been sent packing.**
- **Demand from your city and state officials full investigations and prosecutions of those responsible for clinic firebombings, invasions and harassment.**
- **Write or call your state and national legislators and urge them to speak out against clinic violence and to retain or restore funding for abortions.**

For further information, call (818) 918-0492, (714) 593-3433 or (213) 935-8638.

**CLINICA EVA DEFENSE COMMITTEE
P.O. Box 5761
El Monte, CA 91734**

Alto al Terrorismo Contra las Clínicas del Control de la Natalidad

Grupos derechistas en los Estados Unidos están empeñados en una agresiva campaña que niega el derecho femenino al aborto legal. Clínicas del control de la natalidad en todo el país han sido amenazadas y bombardeadas durante los últimos ocho años. La intensidad de los ataques va en aumento.

En el área del sur de California, el Centro de Salud Femenina de Hollywood y el Instituto de Control de la Natalidad de San Diego fueron bombardeados recientemente. Numerosas clínicas, incluyendo Clínica Eva en El Monte, están siendo objeto de demostraciones semanales por parte de elementos que se oponen al aborto. Algunos de estos individuos hasta han invadido el edificio de Clínica Eva, han obstaculizado el tráfico en la plaza de estacionamiento de coches, han atrapado a los pacientes en sus coches, los han fotografiado en la sala de recuperación y los han llamado "asesinos."

Estas mismas tácticas están siendo empleadas en toda la nación. El objetivo de estos terroristas es el cerrar todas las clínicas de control de la natalidad y obligar a las mujeres, especialmente a mujeres pobres, a volver a los tiempos del aborto ilegal y peligroso. Estos individuos ponen de manifiesto su racismo e hipocresía al pedir, al mismo tiempo, maternidad forzada y esterilización mandatoria para las mujeres negras.

Las Mujeres Son el Primer Blanco – Cual es el Próximo?

Los grupos derechistas están empeñados en anular los logros conquistados después de tantos años de lucha. Sin embargo, por ahora se concentran en el aborto. Pero el objetivo final es el de anular todas las victorias femeninas, de los negros, de los homosexuales y de las lesbianas.

Estas son las mismas fuerzas que apoyan la destrucción de los sindicatos, el anti-semitismo, el movimiento Anti-Indio, los ataques contra los trabajadores indocumentados y la carrera armamentista norteamericana.

Nos Defenderemos

Grupos feministas están defendiendo a las clínicas del control de la natalidad en todo el país. Esta es la primera trinchera en la defensa de nuestros derechos. Tenemos que detener los ataques terroristas y vencer a este elemento subversivo.

Ayúdenos a Deterner los Ataques

- **Marche con los grupos que defienden la Clínica Eva hasta que los derechistas sean derrotados.**
- **Pida a los dignatarios de la ciudad y del condado que se investigue y persiga a los responsables de los ataques contra las clínicas.**
- **Escriba o llame a sus representantes estatales y nacionales y pídales que se manifiesten contra la violencia de los grupos derechistas y retornen los fondos para el aborto.**

Para mayor información, llame al (818) 917-1663, (714) 593-3433 or (213) 935-8638.

COMITE DE DEFENSA DE LA CLINICA EVA
P.O. Box 5761
El Monte, CA 91734

Labor Donated

7/85

ESCORT GUIDELINES
for Clinica Eva in El Monte, CA

GOAL: Our goal is to assist patients to enter and leave the clinic without being physically or emotionally assaulted by anti-abortion picketers, and to show those picketers that their attempts to deny women the right to abortion, birth control and reproductive medical care will be resisted.

ESCORT ORGANIZERS:

The Defense Committee will have two escort organizers on duty each Saturday, from 8:15 to 1:00. They will lead the escorts, confront them when they fail to follow rules, keep a written record of incidents involving picketers, patients or escorts, and will call the police when indicated. Escort organizers will be rotated to give numbers of defenders this experience. Escorts should report all incidents to one of the escort organizers immediately.

- Escort organizers will be appointed ahead of time so that they know who they are each week.
- The escort organizers will be responsible for bringing a water jug and/or cooler and ice if needed.

POLICIES FOR ALL ESCORTS ON DUTY:

- Sign in with the escort organizer as soon as you arrive for escort duty. This will be a permanent record of our attendance and will be useful if we ever need witnesses to trespassing or assaults.
- Do Not Talk With Picketers. Engaging in conversation with the rightwing picketers is useless--they've already decided which side they're on. Talking with them only distracts us from our escort responsibilities and may provoke unnecessary fights. Also, the police will have no legitimate reason to accuse us of provoking picketers' bad behavior if we are not speaking to them.
- Maintain a "Buddy" System. You will be assigned with a partner to a particular area, such as front door, east of building, near parking lot, or far parking lot. Don't leave your area unattended or your partner alone. We'll try to relieve each other and rotate areas so that nobody stays in the sun too long. The "buddy" system is important for your physical protection and provides a witness for possible legal purposes.
- All teams should continually check their own positions and the possible need for them to assist another team. Be careful not to get so involved in your own conversation that you miss what's happening around you!
- Teams being harassed by picketers should move apart briefly, and then re-group after the hecklers have lost their audience.
- It is recommended that all defenders provide themselves with whistles--to call for help in a major incident and for front door defense. The person on front door defense must have a whistle--rightwingers have been known to charge clinic front doors and we must be prepared to get there quickly to keep them out of the clinic with a chain-lock defense.
- How To Discourage Blocking Tactics: Keep patient between two escorts. Hold your arms out straight and yell, "Don't touch me!" Call for cameras to record blocking by picketers who are not legally allowed to impede progress into the clinic or along the public sidewalk. WE WANT TO AVOID ANY CONFRONTATION WITH THE PICKETERS, BUT WE WILL NOT BE BLOCKED!
- When calling for a Spanish-speaking escort, a camera or help, don't use escort's names. We don't want them to have any personal knowledge of us for harassing purposes.

- When to Call the Police: To build a record of rightwing illegal activity and to continually pressure police to protect our legal rights, we may decide to call the police for the following incidents:
 - Trespassing: Anti-abortion picketers may legally be on the sidewalk, in the side parking lot, or in the back alley. They are not allowed on the front lawn of the Clinic or in the small parking area back of the Clinic, as these are privately owned areas. Picketers must not be allowed to enter the Clinic at any time!
 - Shoving or touching: Report to the escort organizer any incident of picketers' attempts to touch you or a patient, even if they don't cause injury.
 - Blocking access to Clinic: Report to escort organizer if picketers stand between your patient and the clinic when you are escorting.
 - Threats: Report to organizer any threats made to you by a picketer.
- If an incident happens and the police are called, the defender involved should not discuss any incident with the police alone, even if the cop says to. An escort organizer (with a tape recorder) must accompany any of our witnesses, so that we have a record of discussion with the police.
- The police should be called only after the escort organizers together with some Defense Committee members have collectively decided to call them. Individual escorts should not make this decision alone.

Clinica Eva Defense Committee
 11017 Valley Mall
 El Monte, CA 91731
 (714) 593-3433 or (213) 935-8638

Labor donated
 June, 1985

NEW YORK CITY, N.Y.

New York City, N.Y.

In a blitz of speaking engagements beginning with a forum in 1985 on the 12th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, New York Radical Women raised the call for a militant multi-issue democratic abortion coalition.

NY RW has participated in two coalitions which have opted for "networking" and the politics of single-issue moderation over building a city-wide campaign in defense of abortion rights. In a statement to the New York Pro-Choice Coalition's January 22, 1986 rally, the branch urged New York feminists to take up leadership in the battle against the right. Many responded enthusiastically when Radical Women pointed out that the best leaders in the fight are women of color, lesbians and radicals who demand more, not less, because they are being hit hardest by the right wing. RW insisted there can be no compromise concerning feminist demands and no substitute for mass action.

NY RW's location at the heart of an international media center and its proximity to Washington D.C. has given the branch a unique opportunity to publicize the militant clinic defense work RW has spearheaded across the country. NY RW became steeped in organizing around the Congressional Hearings on Clinic Violence called in 1985 by the House Civil and Constitutional Rights Subcommittee. Other D.C. visits included lobbying members of the Subcommittee and the Black Caucus, emphasizing the interconnections between the civil rights struggle and the present day fight to guarantee women's constitutional right to abortion.

Radical Women

32 Union Square East, Room 307

New York, NY 10003

NEWS RELEASE

January 29, 1985

From: Radical Women
32 Union Square E., #307
New York, NY 10003

Contact: Maxine Reigel
(212) 315-2052
(212) 677-7002

For Release: Immediately

Feminists Gather to Defend Abortion

"Showdown Over Abortion: Feminists vs. the Right Wing" was the title of a rousing New York City forum commemorating 12 years of legalized abortion in the U.S.

Held on January 26 on New York University campus, the program attracted more than 75 feminists and student and community activists concerned about the rise in firebombings, violence and harassment aimed at abortion clinics and supporters.

Four panelists spoke against the backdrop of a banner which boldly proclaimed the evening's theme--"Unite to Save Abortion: Defend Reproductive Freedom!"

Chairperson Emily Woo Yamasaki of Radical Women opened the program by pointing to the resistance of pro-abortion forces to escalating attacks on women's control over their bodies. "All over the country," she said, "people are marching in sub-zero weather this week to prevent our rights from being sacrificed on the altars of the so-called 'moral majority.'" She cited nationwide organizing by Radical Women--from a 200-strong abortion defense rally in Seattle, WA, to tonight's forum in Manhattan--as well as actions by many other feminist groups.

Representing the Coalition to Protect Women's Health, Washington, D.C. activist Ricki D. Grunberg recounted the efforts of D.C. feminists to protect abortion clinics. She told of organizing counter-pickets to the harassment by anti-abortionists, as well as working to insure that existing clinics provide safe, quality health care. The National Organization for Women, she reported, recently organized highly effective 24-hour vigils across the country to safeguard clinics from bombing attempts during the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.

Ana Lopez, an East Harlem activist and member of the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, stated that anti-abortion violence is "not just crazies bombing the clinics, but an organized effort to intimidate women and tell us we do not have the right to choose."

Lopez stressed the connection between the issue of abortion and other aspects of reproductive freedom, particularly the forced sterilization of Puerto Rican women. She charged that the 45% sterilization rate is part of U.S. economic and military efforts to suppress the people of Puerto Rico and their struggle for nationhood.

Betty Maloney, a member of Radical Women, drew on her experience in organizing the defense of the Feminist Women's Health Center of Everett, WA. She pointed out that the anti-abortion forces there, as throughout the country, openly support other repressive efforts such as defeating the Equal Rights Amendment, cutting social services, curbing the rights of lesbians and gays, undermining Native American treaty rights and promoting anti-labor legislation.

Maloney warned against relying on the FBI or the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to defend abortion clinics. "These government agencies," she charged, "have a long history of spying on and disrupting all progressive movements. They are proven enemies of women, people of color and labor." She

concluded that feminists must build their own physical defense of threatened clinics while reaching out for broad public and community support.

Speaking as a representative of the Medgar Evers Center for Women's Development, Barbara Omolade called on the pro-abortion movement to combine the fight for reproductive freedom with other survival issues for poor women and women of color, particularly the eradication of poverty, and the provision of housing, quality health services and child care.

Omolade characterized abortion clinic firebombing as closely linked to other elements of social violence from anti-civil rights church-bombing in the South to the recent shooting of four Black youth in a New York City subway.

In the lively discussion that followed, many in the audience castigated the hypocrisy of the anti-abortionists in calling themselves "pro-life." "How can the right wing claim to support human life," asked one woman, "when the same people support sterilization abuse, cutbacks in vital services and the military invasion of Nicaragua?"

Reproductive freedom was seen as closely tied with other social issues internationally as well as in the U.S. As one man said, "We have a responsibility not to back off the issue of abortion. Our militancy and resistance here has a great effect on revolutionary struggles all around the world."

Several participants echoed the call for a message of "No compromise!" to anti-abortion forces. Abortion and control over one's own body is, they said, a fundamental, democratic right that cannot be bargained away and must be defended by uniting a wide range of forces in a national movement.

In turning to practical tasks at hand, those attending the forum talked about upcoming plans for the battle to save abortion rights. Maxine Reigel, NYC Organizer of Radical Women, announced a national call by her organization for congressional hearings in all cities where abortion clinic firebombings had taken place. More than 30 people signed up to help with further picketing,

lobbying, petitioning and letter-writing efforts.

Those who attended this forum sponsored by Radical Women left with renewed determination to win the battle to defend reproductive rights.

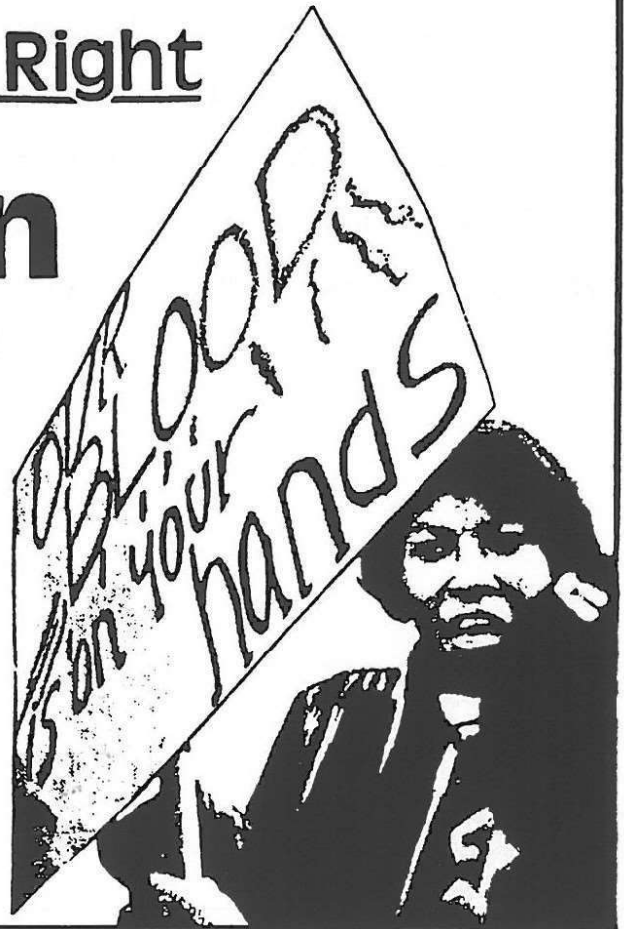
For more information, contact Radical Women, 32 Union Square East, Room 307, New York, NY 10003, (212) 677-7002.

#

Feminists vs. the Right

Showdown over Abortion

- How can feminists defend our clinics from rightwing violence and harassment?
- Lessons of the struggle for reproductive rights



Speakers

Ricki D. Grunberg

Coalition for the Protection of Women's Health,
Washington, D.C.; member of NOW

Ana Lopez

National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners
of War; community activist from East Harlem

Betty Maloney

Socialist feminist and defender of Feminist
Women's Health Center, Everett, Washington

Representative of the **Medgar Evers
Center for Women's Development**

Chair: Emily Woo Yamasaki Radical Women, New York

Saturday, Jan. 26, 8:00pm

Dinner 7:00pm • Social 10:00pm

NYU Loeb Student Center &

566 LaGuardia Place, Top of the Park, 5th Floor
South of Washington Square, Manhattan

Door donation \$2.50, low income \$1.50
Dinner donation \$4.00

Traducción al Español
Information or Childcare (call 2 days in
advance): (212) 677-7002 or 315-2052

Auspices: Radical Women

NYU and NYC Branches

Labor Donated 1/85

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Melbourne, Australia

Although the "Right to Life" (RTL) is failing in their campaign to convince the Australian public that abortion should be banned, their vile propaganda and harassment of hospitals and clinics continues. While the recent struggle for reproductive rights has centered on the state of Queensland, Melbourne Radical Women has been in the forefront of activity which has occurred in Victoria.

In 1980 RTL held their "March for Little Feet" on the day of a May Day march and rally. After the May Day march, hundreds of participants returned to confront the anti-abortionists, who then quickly dispersed. In 1985 and 1986, the RTL again rallied on the same day as the May Day march, and both years Melbourne RW led in the counter-demonstrations. The 1985 counter-mobilization was organized on the spot: supporters of a woman's right to choose got no warning that the RTL was on the move. In 1986, RW initiated a united front after learning that another insidious "March for Little Feet" was planned. The militant abortion rights rally, organized in less than a week, was reported on every TV news service.

Another focus of Melbourne RW's work around reproductive rights has been the school system. Through its involvement in the teacher's union, the branch played a vital part in the successful campaign to get a warning issued to schools about the offensive and hysterical anti-abortion film, "The Silent Scream."

Abortions have been accessible in Victoria for the last fifteen years, but this availability is not the case throughout Australia. The U.S. experience has made it clear that reproductive rights activists cannot be complacent. Whenever the RTL mobilizes, Melbourne RW is there, working to ensure that all women--including the young, women of color, working women, the poor and disabled--have the right to control their own bodies.

RADICAL WOMEN

PO Box 334, Fitzroy, 3065, Victoria, Australia.

5th February, 1986

Mr. Ian Cathie
Minister for Education
Parliament House
Spring Street
Melbourne, 3000

Dear Mr. Cathie,

It has recently come to the attention of Radical Women that the anti-abortion, so called "Right to Life" organization is attempting to show the film, 'The Silent Scream' in schools. We object to the screening of this film in schools in the strongest possible terms.

'The Silent Scream' is offensive and hysterical propaganda that is based on total falsehood and misinformation. The film, which was made in the United States, has now been totally discredited. Reputable medical practitioners in that country revealed that the so-called information that the film promotes is just plain wrong.

Radical Women believes that the whole issue of abortion should be discussed in schools but not in this highly sensationalist and inflammatory way. Discussion about abortion should be carried out in an accurate, reasoned and informed manner as part of comprehensive health and human relations courses.

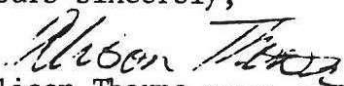
We recognise and support that it is up to individual school communities to make decisions about such curriculum matters and we call on you to provide the necessary information so that school communities can make informed decisions.

We therefore call upon you to:

- 1) initiate an investigation into the background and accuracy of the film, 'The Silent Scream'
- 2) provide factual information about the film's accuracy to school councils.

A 1980 Women's Weekly survey showed that 94% of Australian women favour the availability of legal abortion, demonstrating that the community in general would not support the showing of highly emotive material like 'The Silent Scream'. These figures make it even more crucial that accurate information about the film is immediately distributed. If a small minority of schools choose to show this damaging and inaccurate material at least they should know what they are doing.

Yours sincerely,


Alison Thorne,
Melbourne Radical Women Organiser

A TRIBUTE TO DR BERTRAM WAINER--COURAGEOUS FIGHTER FOR ABORTION

by Alison Thorne, for Melbourne RW Meeting of 1/28/87

* * * * *

It is only fitting that this Radical Women meeting pay tribute to Dr Bertram Wainer, a courageous man, who died this month at the age of 58.

Wainer's name is synonymous with the cause of reproductive freedom and his campaigns against backyard abortions in the late sixties and early seventies will be remembered as a turning point in the struggle.

In 1985 Bertram Wainer spoke about how he first got involved in fighting against Australia's reactionary abortion laws and the police corruption that went with them. He said "I don't think I had any particular involvement with women having abortions other than a generalised commitment to working-class people not being disadvantaged, whether it be because of their sex or the poverty of their childhood and inadequate opportunities to get an education. Abortion as an issue for me--I wasn't looking for it. Here was an issue where people because of their class origins--that is they were poor people--and because there is something special about women being oppressed by laws which were designed to keep the poor down and advantage the rich. I just saw it, as it were, a little bit at a time. This woman can't get an abortion, that woman can, and that is wrong."

Wainer opened the Fertility Control Clinic in East Melbourne in 1972. The clinic has been a focus of "Right to Life" protest. In the mid-seventies it was firebombed. But fifteen years later Wainer's clinic remains open, performing abortions and giving contraceptive advice. The Fertility Control Clinic bulk bills direct to Medicare so no woman is excluded from using the clinic's services because of financial reasons.

Wainer's death reminded me personally how much I owe to the Fertility Control Clinic. In 1974 I was fifteen years old and pregnant. What would my own life now be like if I had not been able to choose safe abortion on demand? Would I even be alive? What would the lives of thousands of women like me, now be like?

In 1974 the controversy surrounding the establishment of the Fertility Control Clinic was still generating public heat and the explosion of the second wave of the women's liberation movement had put the issue of free, safe, abortion on demand firmly on the public agenda. So as a suburban teenager I knew about abortions and I knew about the Fertility Control Clinic. I also knew quite clearly what choice I wanted to make. Had it been but a few years earlier the choice would have been a backyard butcher or an unwanted pregnancy.

While abortion has been easily available in most Australian states for the last decade, the situation is a constant battle in Queensland. The prompt action of Bertram Wainer in 1985 helped to ensure the continued availability of safe abortions in that state. On May 20 that year, the Queensland Police conducted simultaneous raids on the abortion clinic in Townsville and Greenslopes in Brisbane. They stormed the buildings and, in a massive invasion of privacy, seized nearly 20,000 personal medical files. They arrested Doctors Bayliss and Grundmann, who ran the two clinics, and charged them with "conspiracy to use force to procure an abortion". The day after the raids Wainer flew to Queensland and publicly defied the Bjelke-Petersen Government by keeping the clinics open.

A woman's right to control her own body is fundamental to her ability to achieve social, political and economic equality. Without reproductive rights--the right to choose to have or not have children--women's choices become economic dependence or poverty, illegal abortion and forced sterilization (e.g., Depo Provera) or loss of jobs and educational opportunities.

Bertram Wainer has made a key contribution in the battle for reproductive freedom. Of course we must continue his work. We must defend the right to safe abortion, demand improved and safe contraception, oppose the forced use of contraceptives such as Depo Provera and other forms of temporary or permanent forced sterilization; we have to fight for free twenty-four hour child-care and a permanent end to poverty for single mothers and their children.

Bertram Wainer and his work as a public fighter for safe, legal abortion and accessible contraceptive advice will live on in the ongoing struggle for reproductive freedom. In continuing this struggle, we will pay the greatest tribute to the memory of Bertram Wainer.

* * * * *

CAMPAIGN JUNE 1986 7

Sidney, Australia

May Day crowd confront "Right To Lifers"

MELBOURNE: "Right to Life your name's a lie, you don't care if women die!" and "Abortion happens, make it safe" were two of the chants that rang through the City on Sunday May 4 at a loud and angry counter-demonstration held to protest the annual Right to Life Walk for Little Feet.

Over 200 people supporting the slogan "Free, safe abortion on demand" converged on the Bourke Street Mall from the end of the May Day march and the Anarchist Centenary celebration.

The pro-abortion supporters faced a barrage of police provocation and violence but remained firm in their commitment to ensuring that the

pro-choice arguments were loudly heard.

One demonstrator was released from a police van after the crowd sat down behind the van and refused to move while she was still in custody.

The counter-mobilisation was organised by Radical Women, Freedom Socialist Party and Socialist Action. It was endorsed by 16 other organisations including feminist, student and gay groups.

The leaflet calling for the counter-demonstration stated "Once again, the anti-abortion Right to Life Association is trying to turn May Day, the day of International working class solidarity, into a forum for its reactionary anti-woman policies.

"In America, their cohorts have bombed abortion clinics. One of

their US gurus, the author of *99 Ways To Close An Abortion Clinic*, was recently out here to advise them. Here, as in America, militant action is the best way to stop them."

Melbourne Radical Women Organiser, Alison Thorne said

"The counter-mobilisation was very successful and really lived up to the call to make May Day militant. The anti-abortion numbers were certainly down this year and the strategy of confronting them every time they march is vital and it is working.

"The majority of people in Australia support abortion being freely and safely available for all who want it. We are not going to let a right wing, anti-woman minority force poor women into the hands of backyard butchers", she said.