

Emotive

Once again, anti-abortionists will be using all sorts of emotive arguments to try and pressure MPs into outlawing late abortions. This is just a first step for them — they want to stop all legal abortion. This would lead to women having illegal abortions, with the consequent ill-health and even risk of death. It is important that the majority which believes that legal abortion must be available, and which agrees with women having the choice, makes its voice heard.

By joining the National Abortion Campaign, you will become part of a mass campaign to defeat the anti-abortionists.

FIGHTBACK

Two national campaigns have risen to meet these attacks.

S.T.A.C - the Stop The Amendment Campaign has been set up to fight any amendment to the bill which reduces the time limit for abortion..Anti-abortion M.P's such as Anne Winterton have been trying to introduce this.

C.A.D.I - the Campaign for Access to Donor Insemination was set up by the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights to fight all aspects of the bill which restrict the access of single women and lesbians to D.I.

LOCALLY - The Nottingham N.A.C group believes that the best way to organise the fightback locally is to build a united campaign to respond to all of the implications of the Embryology Bill, and to fight all legislation which threatens a womans control of her own body.

NOTTINGHAM NAC

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Anti-abortionists are
trying to stop women
having the babies
they desperately
want and trying to
force women to have
the babies they don't
want

We believe in choice
Women must decide

* NOTTINGHAM NAC *
* PUBLIC MEETING *
* Speakers from - National STAC and CADI *
* and local Campaigns. *
* MONDAY 5TH MARCH 1990, 7.30pm. *
* International Community Centre, Mansfield Road. *
* (Creche available) *

OUR BODIES — OUR CHOICE!

Once again, anti-abortionists are attacking women's rights. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill now going through Parliament will regulate infertility treatment and research on pre-embryos. Anti-abortionists oppose research which requires experimentation on pre-embryos. They are also determined to use the bill to reduce the time limits for abortion.

The issues raised by the Bill are serious and complex and need to be considered carefully. By seeking to use the Bill to amend abortion law, anti-abortionists have shown yet again they will stop at nothing to impose their minority views on the rest of us.

Of course there are links between embryo research and infertility treatment, and abortion. The most important link is that both concern women's ability to control their own fertility, to do so safely, and to make use of up-to-date medical knowledge. Anti-abortionists claim to be 'pro-life' and to have the interests of women at heart. But that's just not true!

Why we need embryo research

Currently, a number of techniques are used to help women and men who are infertile. Some would not have been developed if research on embryos had not been allowed. A number of the methods used produce 'spare' embryos. It is these which are used for research, with the permission of the donor woman. Anti-abortionists say it is wrong to produce embryos or to experiment on them, unless they are then placed in a woman's uterus. But doctors and scientists doing this work believe this would be unethical, without first ensuring that the embryo was undamaged and capable of producing a healthy baby.

At the moment, women who discover that the foetus they are carrying has a serious genetic disorder have an abortion if they decide they do not want to continue the pregnancy. If the anti-abortionists are successful, it would affect these women in two ways: they would not be able to have a late abortion following diagnosis; and it would put an end to their hopes that current research will lead to early screening techniques. As a result, many of them would not dare get pregnant again.

Whose Choice?

Anti-abortionists believe that from conception a new human being is formed. They use this to justify stopping all research on pre-embryos and campaigning for an end to legal abortion. This is very much a minority viewpoint — over half the population believes that research on human pre-embryos is justified if it helps make progress on prevention and treatment of diseases like muscular dystrophy and cystic fibrosis (Marplan, April 1985) and to prevent congenital disability (Marplan, May 1985).

And 8 out of 10 believe that abortion should be available on demand for the first 3 months of pregnancy. A majority also agree with the right to choose abortion after 18 weeks of pregnancy on grounds such as serious disability in the child if born, for young girls or where the woman's health is affected by the pregnancy (Marplan 1988). But anti-abortionists believe they have the right to impose their beliefs on the rest of us, whether we agree with them or not.

Their proposals and ours

Anti-abortionists are not just trying to stop embryo testing. They also want to restrict infertility treatment to married women. They will try to get the bill amended to ensure that women getting treatment must have their partner's permission.

We believe that all women who want a baby and who would benefit from treatment should be able to get it. That would include lesbians and other unmarried women. There is no legislation stopping other unmarried women from having babies and, in fact, anti-abortionists want to force such women who do get pregnant to continue their pregnancies whether they want to or not! Women without partners do not generally require expensive techniques to get pregnant — artificial insemination is cheap, simple to do and has a good success rate.

We want to see treatment and research which helps infertile women to have the children they want to continue. This is not just research using human embryos, of course. We want the research into genetic disorders to continue. Women who have had babies, only to see them suffer from often painful diseases and die young, must be given the chance to have healthy babies. Women who are themselves disabled may also need help to get pregnant. They have just the same right as other women to have the babies they want.

Abortion

Yet again, anti-abortionists are trying to reduce abortion time-limits. If they succeed, the most vulnerable women will be affected — the young, older women, those whose health is at risk, and those carrying a foetus with a serious disorder. No woman has an abortion at any time without serious consideration. Late abortions are more stressful, and no woman would have one without good reason.

Many women have abortions later than they should because they have been held up by anti-abortion doctors or other medical staff, or because of NHS cut-backs. Rather than reduce time-limits, we need to change the law so that women, not doctors, make the abortion decision, so delays are not built into the system. We need widely-available pregnancy testing, more day-care abortion facilities on the NHS, and research into more methods of early testing for disability.

NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN