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People Soup

Liberal Religious Youth
25 Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02108

ABORTION ISSUE!



The Status of Legal Abortion

by Susan Goodstein

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I am sick and angry and very frightened. I want to take all the women in this country, all the women in every society that oppresses us, that keeps us birthing, keeps us dying, I want to go away with all these women to a safe place. This is not my country. It is

On January 22, 1973 the Supreme Court legalized abortion up to 24 weeks of pregnancy.

A few days later, Congressman Hogan introduced a bill stating: "Neither the U.S. nor any state shall deprive any human being, from the moment of conception, of life without due process of law; nor deny to any human being, from the moment of conception, within it's jurisdiction, the equal protection of the law."¹

In May of '73 Senator William Buckley of New York introduced a bill stating: "Section 1, With respect to the right to life, the word 'person' as used in this Article and in the fifth and fourteenth Articles of Amendments to the Constitution of the U.S., applies to all human beings, including their unborn off-spring at every stage of their development irrespective of age, health, junction or condition of dependency. Section 2, This Article shall not apply in an emergency when a reasonable medical certainty exists that continuation of the pregnancy will cause the death of the mother."²

Unhappy with the loopholes in these bills- they apply only to state action, and would leave private hospitals and clinics free to perform abortions- the anti-choice movement is seeking to amend the constitution so that "no unborn child shall be deprived of life by any person unless it is medically necessary to save the life of the mother."³

Pennsylvania recently became the tenth state to ratify the proposal for a national constitutional convention to work on this amendment. If twenty-four more states ratify the proposal, the convention will take place.⁴ Even without such an amendment, there's plenty to worry about.

A 1975 study showed that 95% of abortions were performed in large cities, and that most hospitals preferred not to do abortions. Only 27% of the 5,400 non-Catholic general hospitals in the U.S. provided any abortion service at all.⁵ In 80% of U.S. counties there is not a single abortion facility.⁶ This is the reason why 770,000 women who needed abortions in 1975 could not get them. They were mostly young, poor, and rural, unable to travel to cities where abortion was available.⁷

In October 1976 Illinois Senator Henry Hyde attached an amendment to the H.E.W. appropriations bill prohibiting the use of federal funds for abortion, (except in cases where the woman's life is in danger) The thrust of this amendment would be to cut off federal Medicaid payments for abortion. This amendment passed both the House and the Senate but did not go into effect at the time because of a 1976 District Judge's ruling issued in an injunction against it. The injunction was in response to two lawsuits, one of them brought by the NYC Health and Hospital Corporation.⁸ The government appealed to the Supreme Court in February of 1977.⁹ In August the Supreme Court overturned the lower court decision, upholding the right of the federal government to withhold funding for elective abortions. The House and Senate continue to pass different versions of the amendment. In October the House conceded that federal money could be used for "medical procedures performed before the fact of pregnancy is established, necessary for the prompt treatment of the victims of forced rape or incest reported to a law enforcement agency." This requires a woman to stay ignorant of whether she is really pregnant, and to report a rape to police in order to be a "certified victim."¹¹ The 12 year old girl pregnant by her father is required to go to the police and report it before she knows she is pregnant, or else she can't get a Medicaid-funded abortion. Failing this, she must either bear the child, or pay for an abortion. All rape victims not wanting to bear their rapist's child would have to undergo abortions without knowing if they were actually pregnant. This is supposed to be an improvement over the original Hyde amendment, which allowed no exceptions for cases of rape and incest.

In June the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that states are not required to spend Medicaid funds for elective abortion. This ruling was in response to a Pennsylvania case seeking to determine whether the Social Security Act permits states to bar the use of Medicaid funds for abortion. The Social Security Act requires states to establish "reasonable standards" determining the extent of medical assistance given. The court's decision said in part that states had "a valid and important interest in encouraging childbirth" and that there was nothing in the words of the statute to show that it was unreasonable for a state to further this interest.¹²

As of August there is no longer any federal Medicaid money to pay for abortion, except in cases where the woman's life is in danger. Medicaid funds have previously paid for 300,000 abortions a year. Although states are still free to subsidize

abortions, 80% of the funding has been provided by the federal government in the past. It is unlikely that many states would be willing to increase funding for Medicaid abortions in order to make up the deficit.¹³ At least three states have already cut off funding. Massachusetts is trying to.

The "Right-to-Life" movement claimed its first victim in October, when a 27-year old Texas woman died after a \$40.00 abortion in a Mexican border town resulted in massive hemorrhage and gangrene. Texas recently stopped funding Medicaid abortions.¹⁴

The Department of H.E.W. estimates that ninety women will die each year if those who would have gotten legal abortions have illegal abortions.¹⁵ That's 9,000 women each year suffering from hemorrhage, punctured uteruses, and the like.

The National Right to Life Committee now claims eleven million active supporters. Last year they raised \$250,000. This year they're expecting one million.¹⁶

By last March, the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment had received \$906,400 in contributions.¹⁷

President Carter has stated that "Life is unfair" in response to charges that the Hyde amendment would cause disproportionate suffering for the poor and third world women. (39% of black women are on Medicaid, compared to 7% of white women.)¹⁸ He has proposed "federal subsidies that would pay adoptive families four times the amount paid to natural mother on welfare to care for a minority, ethnic, or otherwise 'hard to place' child." Administration sources say that future legislative proposals will include payment of maternity costs for poor women who agree to put their babies up for adoption!¹⁹ In other words, poor women will be paid by the government to raise these children.

We're losing ground, that's obvious. The reason why is less apparent. There is a right wing backlash taking place in this country against women's rights, gay people, and third world people. Affirmative action programs are under attack in the Bakke case. The Supreme Court has refused to hear cases on discrimination against gay leaders. Phyllis Schlafly and "Stop ERA" think feminism is destroying the family. Mr. Bakke thinks black students are taking his place in medical school. The conservative elements in this country are becoming frightened by the various liberation movements. Although there is not the same kind of mass movement as there was around the Viet Nam war, leftist groups in the seventies seem to have a more developed political analysis; an understanding of what the situation is and why. The status quo is being threatened, privilege is being threatened, and it will not be let go of easily.

Cont. on page 5

Personals

People Soup Vol. 7, Issue 7
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 time and free to use any of the
 material contained herein. Any
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 the permission of the publisher
 to reprint.)

Editor: John Rosett
 Editor: Bruce Jo, John Elrond, Terry
 Herton, Mona Dayton, Mark Kersting,
 Greta Steve, Kim T., Jamie, and
 anyone else; your presence helped me
 heal faster than I could imagine possi-
 ble. I no longer look like Franken-
 stein and wish to see you all very
 much. The best thing about the hospi-
 tal were the shots. - Adam - I now
 live in Texas at 1319 Quannah, Irving,
 Texas 75060 (214) 253-5875
 Alison and Nada from U.A.E.: I
 miss your craziness. Love, Kathy,
 ABCD-MDA, Yall have made living in
 Boston very bearable for one lonely
 (sometimes) Southerner. Love You,
 Buisie

Kristin Gulbrandson: I love you!
 I'm going to Star next year. How
 about you? Julie (Blennock).
 Act I:
 (Hanging out in GLENROCK):
 DAVID: "I wonder what happened to
 BARBARA MEYERST!"
 (No answer, set fades)
 Act II:
 (Spot on DAVID):
 DAVID: "HINT! HINT!"
 18 Warren Pl.
 Glenn Rock, NJ 07452.

To all those lovely people I've
 lost somewhere along the line:
 I'm now alive and kicking at:
 Drake Hill Rd.
 Albany, NH 03818
 p.s. i miss you all...please write!!
 -ariel

Sadam, You are the epitome of FUNK.
 Come live in Boston with us Buisie.
 hey you!...tuts...out in 'dem rocky
 mountains...I love you...ariel

Laura, Peppermint Pusher,
 SPU's of the world unite! Let us
 rise up and overthrow (undermine?)
 the oppressor. We will stand up
 and be trampled on no longer!
 --Susan (5', 164")

To the peppermint freaks of German-
 town Conference: Where are you hiding?
 I'd really love to hear from you,
 even if I don't remember you 'cause
 we got somp'un in common. Write:
 The Peppermint Pusher
 c/o Jennifer Brett
 36 N. Hillside Pl.
 Ridgewood NJ 07450(please).

Carlotta and Jennifer, i still
 remember you, love, Beth

To Abbe, Shelley, Susan, John, Max-
 well, Ammonita, and Chaucer:
 I'm enjoying living in our HOME
 tremendously. Even though I get so
 frustrated I could scream sometimes,
 so frazzled I turn into the ulti-
 mate bitch, I love recently come to
 the realization I love every minute
 of it. Have some re-fried beans
 from Beantown on your tacos...
 I love you all muchly,
 just another taco

Hello to all yall Knoxvilleians!!!!!!
 How's trix in the 'Gateway to La-
 Follette? Do yall still have them
 old 12-bar K.C. blues? If you ever
 get over them, let me know and maybe
 we can work something out. Say
 hello to Stuart/Dave/Co. for me.
 Yall take care! JR

Ken Dermatta....Where are you???

To Bruce Jo, Twilly, and Doug Webb:
 The Tacos are very irate at all
 of you. If you want to find out why,
 contact us, but DON'T CALL COLLECT!!

To Richie (cute and cuddly '77): How
 is it that we live maybe 20 miles away
 from each other, but I only see you
 at conferences? Let's get together.
 Much love-Jennifer

Ted Altenburg- we miss you out here
 in foggy California. What's the mat-
 ter? Broke your thumb? Love and hugs,
 Julie.

To You: I am in the process of
 shaping my personal reality and
 putting peices of my life back to-
 gether. I am now residing at the
 following address until Aug. 31,
 1978, maybe longer.
 Paul H. Pigan
 Apt. 3
 233 Beacon St.
 Boston, MA 02116.

I've decided that I am in dire need
 of warm fuzzies and mysterious hap-
 penings. Please send lots of hugs,
 strange letters, cryptic phone calls,
 and unexpected visits to:
 Beth Huffine
 1005 Vanderbilt Ave.
 Claremont, CA 91711
 (213) 626-6843

To Tom Smith from the 'Patch-
 alive again, you'll have to come to
 Bean Capital to do it! You had
 better be at Winter Tri-Fed and you
 better bring your instruments.
 After all, I dragged my banjo all
 the way down there and you were
 gone! ONE MORE CHANCE, SON!!!!!!
 With all the love that's decent, JR

Charles Huff (AKA Carlos), how was
 Alaska? I assume you're back.GA'76,
 remember the coffee house? you fell
 asleep by the fountain. I lost my LRY
 button and i wish i'd gotten to
 know you better. I'll try writing but
 i'm not sure you'll remember me.
 Love, Beth H.

Paul Bailey (originally of New Brun-
 swick): only once we shared a dream,
 close to two years ago at a Princeton
 Conference. I try to remain mundane
 and tell myself it was a temporary
 oblivion but everyday my love for you
 is multiplied. I can't forget the
 warmth and gentleness you project, I
 feel it in my heart and hips every
 second. I wish to be wrapped in your
 warmth again. Is it possible?
 Beverly Mauger
 317 Washington Ave
 Phoenixville, PA 19460
 (215) 933-9003 (collect)
 if anyone knows how I can get in con-
 tact with him, let me know.

To LIISA from ABBE
 welcome to LRY! I love you, sweetie!

To Sunco Federation:
 I love you all!!! Until next time,
 Brian Poteat!! La-di-da, la-di-da.
 Peace,
 Lynne

To: John Rosett, Barbara Dykes, Susan
 Buis, Bruce Jo, John Elrond, Terry
 Herton, Mona Dayton, Mark Kersting,
 Greta Steve, Kim T., Jamie, and
 anyone else; your presence helped me
 heal faster than I could imagine possi-
 ble. I no longer look like Franken-
 stein and wish to see you all very
 much. The best thing about the hospi-
 tal were the shots. - Adam - I now
 live in Texas at 1319 Quannah, Irving,
 Texas 75060 (214) 253-5875
 Alison and Nada from U.A.E.: I
 miss your craziness. Love, Kathy,
 ABCD-MDA, Yall have made living in
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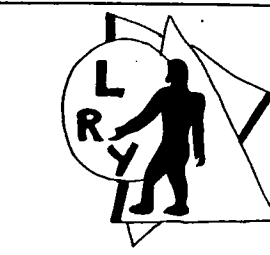
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 I'd really love to hear from you,
 even if I don't remember you 'cause
 we got somp'un in common. Write:
 The Peppermint Pusher
 c/o Jennifer Brett
 36 N. Hillside Pl.
 Ridgewood NJ 07450(please).

Dave Marshall & Ellen Mintz, The
 more I travel around in LRY, the
 more I realize what truly excel-
 lent people and good advisors
 yall are. Your loving disciple,
 Susan

EDITOR'S NOTE:
 In August the Supreme Court over-
 turned a lower court injunction
 against the Hyde amendment. There are
 now no federal Medicaid funds for a-
 bortion, except in cases where the wo-
 man's life is in danger. This fact was
 accidentally omitted from the arti-
 cle "A Decade of Reform". Please
 forgive us...

Dear LRYers,
 I am spending this year after high
 school back in high school but in a
 french boarding school. I am in the
 mountains in southeast France and it
 is much like New Hampshire. It's beautiful
 but I miss LRY. If any of you at home
 would like to hear about what it is like
 here or would like friends here visited
 or if you know other LRYers or any
 Americans living here, please write and
 tell me and I'll be happy to write
 back or deliver messages. Otherwise,
 have a great year and enjoy LRY to its
 fullest.

Lots of Love,
 Chris Friese
 GOUARFUL-OVF
 c/o Le Collège Cévenol
 43400 Le Chambon-sur-lignon
 FRANCE



This here is the old LRY symbol, aban-
 doned in 1974 because of it's sexist im-
 plications. At that point there were attempts
 to create a new symbol but no conclusion was ever
 met. Therefore, at the 1977 Summer Boards a
 directive was made to find a new symbol. This
 directive hopes to provide an expression of
 the spirit of LRY in one specific art form we
 can all relate to.
 The symbol will be printed in our Creat-
 ive Contributions issue. Contributions are
 welcome anytime up till our deadline June 1.
 At that point you will be free to vote on
 the symbol of your choice. Results will be
 presented at the Summer Board meetings 1978
 where a final decision shall be made. Please
 send symbols to:
 LRY-People Soup
 25 Beacon Street
 Boston, MA 02108

**MOMENTUM TOWARDS DISARMAMENT UU-UN YOUTH
 SEMINAR BY Abbe Bjorklund**

All LRYers and Unitarian Universalist
 youth aged 15-21 are invited to the fifth
 annual Unitarian Universalist-United Nations
 youth seminar, from February 15 to 17, 1978,
 at the UN Plaza in New York City.

The seminar was designed at a planning
 session in October by a group of LRYers and
 other UU youth. We decided on the subject of
 disarmament because we feel that it is a
 seriously pressing issue, to youth especially,
 to become educated about the arms race and
 aware of what you can do about it. There will
 be a drafting Committee throughout the sem-
 inar developing a plan-of-action, to be pre-
 sented for modification and adoption by the
 whole seminar at a final workshop.

The seminar will be a number of workshops
 conducted by experts on disarmament, and also
 discussion periods. The major topics to be
 explored are: the dimensions of the arms race,
 the differences in positions of the major pow-
 ers, the prospects for the forthcoming Special
 Session of the General Assembly of the UN on
 Disarmament, the relationships of the arms
 race with world hunger and the population ex-
 plosion, and the perplexing psychology of pub-
 lic inattention and indifference to the mount-
 ing dangers of the arms race.

We will sleep in the Community Church in
 New York City and have evening programs there.
 Wednesday evening will be get-to-know-each-
 other games, a folk music concert, and a slide
 show and movie on disarmament. There will
 also be a chance to explore New York City or,
 for those who want to sleep, a quiet room.
 Thursday evening will be a simulation game, a
 slide show, and more opportunity to explore
 NYC.

The seminar formally ends with a worship
 on Friday evening, but for those who want to
 stay together, we will have group restaurant
 trips and opportunities for those coming from
 outside the city to stay over in NYC with
 those living in the city.

The seminar is being co-ordinated by
 Bob Brown, the Director of the UU-UN office.
 Rev. Joel Schoenfeld, the new minister at
 the Community Church, will help out with non-
 workshop activities like cooking and group
 processing.

The planning committee decided on cer-
 tain limits including a rule that no drugs
 and alcohol are to be brought on the premises
 and that everyone is expected to go to bed by
 1 AM so that they're not too tired for the
 morning programs.

The cost of the seminar is only \$16.50
 including all expenses except transportation
 and spending money. If you need scholarship



assistance check out your local church. When
 this is not feasible, the UU-UN office is
 willing to reduce the price to \$10.50 for peo-
 ple from low-income families coming a long
 distance.

It should be a lot of fun and an excellent
 experience if you are interested in the arms
 race and you want to do something about it.
 The seminar is on a Wednesday night, Thursday,
 and Friday, but if you give your teachers notice,
 you'll probably be able to get an excuse.
 After all, it will be an educational experience!

For a registration form, write:
 UU-UN Office
 777 UN Plaza
 Room 7D
 New York, New York 10017

There is a limit of 50 participants, so
 register fast!

Well folks, we (the exec. comm.) had a
 big debate before we decided on abortion as
 the theme of this issue. We were afraid of
 alienating the male half of LRY by focusing
 on an issue of such concern to women. We
 finally decided that abortion, like birth
 control, should be as much the man's re-
 sponsibility as the woman's, and figured
 that most LRYers would feel the same. Abor-
 tion is an important issue and we think that
 everyone should know the facts.

The views and beliefs expressed in this
 paper are not necessarily those held by the
 people who put it together.

By the way, people, the original idea
 behind this paper when it was started in
 1973, was that it would be a means of com-
 munication between LRYers. The executive
 committee is not supposed to write the
 whole paper, just put it together. Would
 yall please send articles, stories, poetry,
 graphics, black and white photos, etc. in so
 that it will be more your newspaper and not
 just ours. Thank you! -- the exec comm



Dear People,

Hello! As you know, Kent, Ohio has been very active since the decision of the Kent State University Board of Trustees, to construct a \$6 million gymnasium annex on the site of the May 4, 1970 shootings, was made public late last spring. The Move the Gym movement, born on May 4, 1977, with the student occupation of the KSU administration building, has grown thanks to word and energy from around the country.

At 3:12 pm, Oct. 21st, the KSU president, Brage Golding, was granted a temporary restraining order (TRO) prohibiting rallies and demonstrations from the main part of campus. Fifty-four individuals, approximately 2000 John Dees, and any "groups acting with or in concert with a group called the May 4th Coalition", are listed as defendants in the university briefs.

The TRO gave Golding the power to make extensive use of tear and pepper gas at the October 22nd rally. A force of approximately three hundred armed police and sheriff's officers enforced Golding's directives, some officers on horseback. A few M-16's and at least one M-1 semi-automatic were also present. The resultant physical and psychological harm to those protesting or simply watching was enormous. The last rally which had been ordered to disperse was on May 4, 1970.

The true nature of the court order was exposed on Monday, Oct. 24th, when six people (five of them students) were arrested in the Student Center Plaza, for reading the First Amendment to the US Constitution. They were charged with criminal trespass and civil contempt of court. Others, including the Executive Secretary of the Student Caucus, were later cited for contempt for their alleged presence at either rally. One student was arrested outside of class.

A hearing was set for Nov. 10th, when Golding intended to make the TRO permanent. Late in the afternoon of the 9th, the university dropped the suit "without prejudice", meaning it can be reinstated at one hearing.

Golding originally sought the TRO on the day before the 22nd rally, of which he had been fully aware for the previous month. At the 21st hearing, Jones heard no arguments other than the university's. The order was then "dismissed" hours before the scheduled hearing on the 10th. Because a university was able to use the judicial system to blatantly restrain free speech and assembly, a dangerous social and legal precedent is set for other college presidents who would restrict social and academic freedoms on their campuses.

A major tool of the KSU administration and the courts is their supply of money: they seem to have enough of it to do anything but Move the Gym. Due to bonds set as high as \$5,000 for misdemeanor charges and mounting legal expenses for filing fees, appeals, etc., we are in a state of financial crisis. The KLDf, formed in 1971 for the defense of the Kent 25, is responsible for the legal and financial aspects of this movement. We are very lucky to have 11 lawyers who have been working since May for no money. At this point, some of them cannot afford to pay their phone bills. Close to 400 people have been arrested and unfortunately, money is one of the necessary evils in attempts to get a fair trial.

It is because of this crisis that we are appealing to students and people of conscience everywhere. We are thankful to the thousands who have come to Kent to Move the Gym. Just because there is nothing "sensational" for the wire services at this

May 4, 1970 was a significant day for the student movement. It still is today. This summer and fall in Kent and California have proven that the student movement is not dead. When administrations, courts, and police work in concert against us, people stand up to say NO to injustice. We are asking you to continue to say no and to help us get a fair trial in Portage County. If everyone put in their two cents...

In Struggle We
Thank You
Sherry Hahn
Sue Hartman
KLDf

Dear Soup;

I am a one-time LRYer, now 19 years old, and becoming intrigued by the recently formed CSA (Communities for Study and Action, at one time SRL). While I was associated with LRY (mostly in MYF and CMF) I feel that I had a lot of input. However, the amount I got back was vastly more than I put in. Therefore, I feel like sharing a few ideas, in hopes that I can continue to repay the benefits I have received.

Firstly, I'd like to say a few things about the "religious" part of LRY. Religiousness comes in socially useful and socially harmful varieties, using as criteria the amount of good it does the individual vs. the amount of detriment it leads the individual to cause society at large. A prime example of what I mean is that is my opinion that the Vatican's version of Catholicism is ultimately harmful, because the constructive reinforcement of the various members of the faith is not sufficient to outweigh the globally destructive effects of the edict against contraception. I guess it's obvious from that statement that one of the most important facets of my belief is the idea that we can and must control our own destinies.

There is a group in Evanston, Illinois (one of my favorite towns) called the National Center for Human Potential, dedicated to the philosophy of self-actualization, self-motivation, and self-determination. I am taking a seminar by these people, and their ideas very much promote the "master of my fate, captain of my soul" type of self-determination, but one point, important in my mind, is that they carefully refrain from making the point that this tends to conflict with the Judeo-Christian concept of relinquishing control of one's life. "God is my co-pilot" I can see, but "Climb into the backseat, leave the driving to the Lord" is an entirely different matter. We know that the world is in one hell of a mess, and Isaac Asimov, in his book Of Matters Great and Small, presents a very sound demonstration of the need to solve the population problem by the end of this century(!), if we are to survive for even another dozen generations. I don't want to go into figures here, but anyone who needs convincing should read Asimov in that volume or any of his others on the same subject. One thing he points out, however, is that we can and must solve this for ourselves, that we cannot "trust in the Lord" to haul our humanly erring asses out of this particular crisis. This is the application of the anti-Judeo-Christian ideas that I expressed earlier. I sincerely believe that if people

cannot change the other-world(heaven) centered directions of their religions, then this world is going to go swiftly down the drain. I don't mean that the standard of living will be vastly lowered, I mean that it is quite possible that within our lifetimes we will see world-wide famine, pandemonia of the first order, and as a direct result, Armageddon. I bullshit you not.

Again, I want to refer to Asimov. He says that many people accuse him of doom-saying, and either claim that he is being overly alarmist, or point their fingers and ask him why he is just hollering, and not doing something about it. I'll take my stand, with Asimov, being the eight-ball on that one. The proof is there, without changing moral opposition to birth-control, we will perish as a race. As to what to do about it, the most effective weapon in our arsenal is the pen, is education, is dissemination of these fundamental truths of our human predicament and survival.

Where do we go from here, if we want to survive? Paolo Soleri gives us one highly creative and practical alternative in his concept of population implosion as presented in Archology, but this is at best a stop-gap measure and leaves unanswered to at least some degree the problem of food supply. Much as I dislike the idea, I must realize that synthetic foods are necessary, that no matter what R. Buckminster Fuller and many others say, we cannot rely on Mother Earth any more than on Jehovah to pull us through this one. Robert Heinlein has two sayings which go hand in hand, and I think they have bearing here. Just as "Never underestimate the power of human stupidity", says a lot about how we get here, so "Never underestimate the power of human ingenuity" is a good expression of my belief that if we could only get together, we could figure this out.

I'm becoming far too windy. But this means a great deal to me and you and the human race as a whole. I hope I have succeeded in arousing some curiosity, alarm, disbelief, or whatever. If so, please write to:
Peter Heyar #30456
107D PO Box 1568
Hutchinson, Kansas 67501

I will answer all letters. I need support and stimulation desperately.

much love,
Pearl Wisdom

People Soup: Deadlines and Themes

- 1) Power to the People - You got it!
- 2) Abortion - Deadline: December 2
- 3) Spirituality - Deadline: January 17
- 4) Creme on Educational Alternatives - Deadline: March 1
- 5) Sexism - Deadline: April 16
- 6) Creative Contributions - Deadline June 1
- 7) Creme on Ecology - Deadline: July 20

All contributions on any of these themes are welcome, encouraged, and appreciated at any time. Please take note of our deadlines so we can serve you a thick, hot Soup.

Thanx,
Shell
The Editor

illegal abortion ~ a personal account

Most people reading the *Soup* are too young to know what it was like not to have legal abortion available. We have a general sense that having intercourse then was a big deal, and that if you got pregnant you went to Tijuana, or to a "home for unwed mothers" somewhere in southern Jersey. This article is an attempt to help people understand what is involved in having an illegal abortion.

Mary Frances was brought up in a Catholic neighborhood in Mass. She went to parochial school through high school. "I knew the catechisms, I knew the Bible backwards and forwards, and I knew that none of it made much sense in terms of my lifestyle." She hung around with a tough crowd, mostly people older than herself. They were considered sluts. "Good girls" didn't associate with us. "Good boys" would tell them stories about what they did with us, and they'd keep away. Still, she couldn't help but assimilate the values around her to some extent. "The ultimate fear was that you'd be an unwed mother. Whenever I saw a pregnant woman, I would look at her fingers to see if she was wearing a ring, to see if she was married. I still do that, it's a habit. Virginity was a big deal. You were supposed to save yourself for your husband. Men were really into that 'popping cherries'. We used to joke about what we would say on our honeymoon when we didn't bleed. 'Oh, it was only once, with one other man.' Everyone pretended they weren't messing around. Everyone talked about who was doing it, and who'd gotten pregnant. 'There goes one more.' We were disappearing, and we were scared we'd be next. It was sinning against God, and you'd be punished for it. You'd have to carry the child around like a scarlet letter. I tried not to be religious, it was 'uncool', but it was so ingrained, you believed it and lived by it."

"I was fourteen when I got pregnant. That was in 1967. I'd been using condoms, sometimes. Foam was hard to get, it had just been invented. You would try to tell the druggist you were using it for a douche. There was very little information available. You learned a little 'on the street'. Everyone was always trying to do rhythm in some vague way. People used withdrawal."

After four and a half months of not getting her period, she went to her family doctor to confirm that she was pregnant. He didn't do a urine or blood test for pregnancy, but examined her and asked "How many times did you do it?" She told him she didn't see how that had anything to do with it. He gave her some pills and told her to take them, not explaining what they were, not even telling her she was pregnant. She left in disgust and hasn't seen him since.

"They were morning-after pills, DES. I didn't know that at the time. I'm a DES baby, he had it right there on the chart in front of him, but he just gave them to me and didn't tell me anything."

She didn't take the pills. They wouldn't have done anything at that point anyway, except to make her incredibly nauseous and expose her and the fetus to the risk of cervical cancer. Knowing she didn't want to have the baby, but not even knowing what an abortion was, she called her sister-in-law.

"I went to her house and we talked. 'But that's not legal,' she said. Then she called a friend and she came over and explained the different kinds of abortion to me. They made arrangements for me with some doctor and a woman who called herself a midwife. Anna Lee and her friend found out it would be a saline, and that it would hurt, that I would 'give birth'. They never said, 'What about the baby?' Anyone else I might have told would have. They encouraged me to talk about my feelings.

"I pretty much ignored it, tried not to think about it. The abortion was done at Anna Lee's house. The doctor and midwife were good people, I was lucky. They were doing it as a service, because they believed in it, not for money, because I never gave them any money, and my sister-in-law said she didn't either. They were political people, they stole the saline and other supplies from where they worked. They wouldn't tell me their names. There was a lot of fear of getting caught. I still won't tell all the details of the abortion because I'm still scared for them, even after ten years.

"The abortion took a long time. It hurt. They gave me something else before they gave me the saline, if it wasn't an anesthetic, something else to start the contractions. They all stayed with me throughout. Anna Lee held my head. She kept saying how I was so calm, it was so amazing. I was a zombie. I was in pain, I was scared, I felt like everyone else knew more about my body than I did. I tried to float away from the whole scene, to not be there, and I did most of the time, but the pain kept pulling me back.

"When I expelled the fetus they told me not to look, but I did. I freaked out, I felt like I had killed something. I kind of went into shock, I went into a crazy space. I just took myself out of that place and that situation.

"I stayed in the house for four days, and Anna Lee took complete responsibility for me. She told me when to eat, when to go to the bathroom. After four days, when I was still hemorrhaging much more than I should have been, she took me to a hospital. I don't know how she got me in, she must have told them I'd miscarried.

"In a lot of ways being in the hospital was much more frightening. Anna Lee knew I'd probably get a D&C, but she didn't know much about it. She said something about 'scraping'. The word frightened me.

"After I came out of the hospital I took care of myself. I had to, I had to function. I just put away my feelings. I never cried or got angry, I never dealt with it.

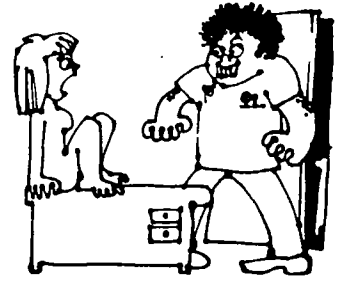
"Sometimes I would see the image of that mass, the fetus. It was a five month fetus. It would have been worse for me not to look, I might think about it even more, try to imagine what it was like. I was still afraid of getting caught; I wondered if they would send me to prison. I felt like I was wrong, like I'd had to bury this shameful thing, bury my pregnancy. Sometimes I feel like it was an injustice—I would have had a ten year old child by now, and I killed it. But then I think about a ten year old child, and I knew I did what was right for me."

About four years later Mary Frances became pregnant again. She'd been taking birth control pills her sister-in-law gave her, but stopped because they made her breasts swell and hurt all the time. "That was the first time I told anyone else about my first abortion. I told my best friend I was pregnant. She cried, I didn't understand why. Later we understood; it was because we were in love with each other, and there I was pregnant by some man.



"I knew that I wanted an abortion. There was no question about it. But they had this law that you needed the father's consent. He wanted the baby, he wanted us to get married. He kept making plans for his son, making up names for it. I understood the way he felt, he thought he was in love with me. But I knew it was something I shouldn't have to put up with all that hassle. He knew he couldn't stop me.

"Before I could have the abortion we had to go see a counselor to make sure that it was okay with the man. He didn't tell me anything that was going to happen, just kept saying stuff like 'What are your other op-



tions?' 'Well, we could get married,' Louie said. It was ridiculous. The counselor gave the impression that he just couldn't understand why I didn't want to get married.

"I made all the appointments. I knew what I was doing this time. I told my boss I had to take time off to go to the hospital for an abortion. He was disappointed in me. I'd ruined his image of me as his good little girl. He thought he was my father, would tell me not to go out at night, and throw away my 'Ms.' magazines.

"It was expensive, over \$400, because they made you stay in the hospital overnight. They put me in the maternity ward and women would see my small belly and say 'Oh, did you just have your baby? What was it?' I just told them it was a girl. Whatever they wanted to hear.

"There are all these people taking care of you, but you don't get any support. You have to lie there with your feet in the stirrups while some stranger comes in and bathes you and shaves you and douches you. I don't know why they had to do that. It felt absurd.

"They make you wear these leggings and a drape, everything's covered except your vagina, the doctor can't see you and you can't see him. When he came into the room he said, 'Are you clean?'; like he wouldn't touch me unless my body was clean, my vagina was clean. The doctor and nurse barely spoke to me, they didn't explain anything. The nurse kept shaking her head, she obviously didn't like what she was doing, and looked down on me. The only comfort I got was she kept dabbing my face with a wet sponge. It wasn't much help.

"The abortion only took a few minutes. There was very little pain. I kept looking down at the tube, expecting a little body, but there was nothing, just mucus. I didn't feel any religious guilt, the mass wasn't a baby. And this time I knew I hadn't sinned by having sex.

"Afterwards my best friend and the man came to see me. I felt good, like I was a 'hip chick', I knew what I was doing. I knew all the stuff in the hospital I'd had to deal with was bullshit. I felt powerful, liberated, really good about not having the child.

"The first abortion was an introduction to feminism for me. All the support I got from those two women. The second time, I got a sense of my own strength, and I also realized how much more I wanted my best friend there with me than Louie. That's when my whole sexuality started to change. After the abortion I slowly cut things off with him.

"I told my mother awhile ago that I'd had two abortions, I didn't tell her any details. She freaked. She was upset that I hadn't told her, that I had 'disposed of' two of her grandchildren. I'm so glad that I didn't tell her. I would have two kids right now."

Mary Frances' story isn't the classic one of aborting alone in agony in a hotel room somewhere, contrasted with legal abortion in a clinic surrounded by good doctors and counselors. The reality of abortion does not guarantee that in simple, medically safe abortion the people involved are caring in any way. This is by no means an argument for the "good old days" when dedicated radicals would do abortions right in your own home. The fear of being caught, the pain, the danger from a botched or incomplete abortion, are all real. Her experience was exceptional. She was lucky to have such friends and connections. Most women don't. The issues raised here are not just ones of accessibility and safety. They include the whole problem of patriarchal medicine's attitude towards women and our bodies, and the shame and fear that women were brought up with in the sixties and are still learning in some form today.

-Susan Godstein

