

Abortion: a question of affluence

The following article is written by Bev Eddy and Carole Kimberlin, who are associated with the Nebraskan Organization for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NORAL). A march to show support for repeal of Nebraska's abortion laws will be held this Saturday at 10 a.m. Marchers will assemble on the south side of the Nebraska Union and march to the capitol for the rally.

The present Nebraska abortion law prohibits abortion except to preserve the life of the mother. However, the question of whether legal abortions should be available to Nebraska women is, at this point in time, rather academic. Legal abortions are available to Nebraska women if they can afford to travel out of state to obtain them. Approximately 4000 Nebraska women had legal abortions last year alone. For most of them, it meant a trip to New York in order to obtain a simple operation that takes about 10 minutes and involves a recuperative rest period of two hours. The women can fly to New York, have an abortion and be back in Nebraska the same day. For the poor woman, abortion fees are waived, but the woman from Nebraska is still faced with the cost of plane fare. The Nebraska law, in effect, is only serving to prevent the poor woman from obtaining the same medical treatment readily available to the middle class woman.

A proposed bill which NORAL hopes to see introduced to the Unicameral in its upcoming session would make abortion legal up to the 20th week of pregnancy. Abortion would thus become a decision made solely by a woman and her doctor during this time.

The law would also allow abortions to be performed in any "licensed medical facility," thus allowing for the establishment of out patient clinics and eliminating, in most cases, the need to pay the prohibitive prices of hospital care for abortions done in the first twelve weeks of pregnancy.

The moral question of abortion is a more difficult one to deal with. Many people sincerely believe that human life begins at the point of conception, thereby making abortion murder. Others believe that a fetus becomes a human being when it can exist outside the uterus. Leaders within the religious community, as well as those in the legal and medical professions, are divided on this issue. Since there are no clear-cut answers on this issue, we believe that the question of whether or not to have an abortion should be one decided by a woman and her doctor.

The fact is that restrictive laws do not prevent women from taking desperate measures to obtain abortions. It is estimated that a million U.S. women a year were resorting to self-induced or back-alley abortions before 1970. Nor is the problem of illegal abortions limited to this country. Death statistics for countries in Latin America with very restrictive abortion laws show that one of the major causes of death among women of childbearing age is illegal, mainly self-induced, abortions. Abortion laws need to be evaluated not only in terms of the rights of the fetus but also in terms of the rights of women to control their own bodies and the number of children they will bear.

For many countries, efforts to control

the population growth stems from a desperate situation in which there is not enough food available to feed the people already born. The urgency of this situation is intensified by the fact that world population is expected to double in the next 30 years. Because the U.S. presently has the technological ability to raise enough food to feed its population does not mean we can isolate ourselves from the problems of the rest of the world.

Contraceptive measures are, of course, the preferable means of birth control. Certainly, as contraceptive measures become safer, more effective, and more widely accessible, the need for abortion should become lessened, but it will not be eliminated. Women, for whatever reasons, will continue in their attempts to obtain complete control over the number of children they will bear.



arthur hoppe Impeach the Supreme Court

It was in the fall of 1971 that the U.S. Supreme Court, in a little-heralded decision, destroyed utterly not only the faltering economy but the entire culture of 20th Century America.

The Court held simply that the airlines could not practice sexual discrimination when it came to hiring stewardesses.

While the Male Liberation Front hailed the ruling as a tremendous victory ("Down with the female chauvanist pigs in the sky!" they cried), gloomy airline executives rightfully quivered with forebodings of fiscal disaster.

For the fact of the matter was the the primary reason any businessman flew from Point A to Point B was in hopes of seducing -- or at least envisioning the seduction -- of the airline employee who served him aloft.

That the airlines had come to recognize this was obvious. Not only did they hire the prettiest young things as stewardesses, but they outfitted them in mini-skirts and HotPants and then advertised their wares with such campaigns as: "I'm Molly, fly me to Miami!" Or wherever.

Indeed, things had reached the point where one airline was planning to equip its 747s with not only a cocktail lounge, but a piano player and private upstairs rooms. Of course, that was first class. Second class passengers would have to be satisfied with topless stewardesses and an old-fashioned orgy.

But the Supreme Court ruling knocked such plans into a cocked hat. In desperation, some airlines bravely tried to carry on by equipping their male stewardesses (or "stewards," to use the newly-coined word) with HotPants.

Nor was it all roses for the stewards. Many quit on the grounds they were "tired

of being treated as sex objects." Those who remained grew surly. "Coffee, tea or a punch in the snoot, buster?" became a common salutation.

Needless to say, air travel fell off 73.2 per cent and the majority of airlines without sex to sell, went bust.

While this was a body blow to the economy, it was nothing compared to what followed. For once the Supreme Court ruled against sexual discrimination in employment, the entire advertising industry was doomed.

Who will ever forget the revised shaving cream commercial in which a hairy Scandinavian sailor now peeled the familiar lime and, staring into the camera, whispered: "Take it off. Take it all off." The shaving cream firm went broke a month later.

"Should a lady offer a gentleman a Tiparillo?" left consumers, at best, nonplussed. A hairy-legged man in short cowboy pants crying, "Join the Dodge rebellion!" did nothing whatever for the automobile sales. While the new slogan, "Does he or doesn't he?", bankrupted a giant cosmetic firm overnight.

But it was when a nude Joe Namath appeared in the centerfold of Playboy that the world knew 20th Century American culture (and Playboy) was dead.

Without sex, manufacturers had nothing to sell but their products. Consumers bought only what they needed. Eventually, the U.S. achieved a rational economy based solely on the logical laws of supply and demand -- one that no longer depended on creating sexual fantasies and romantic dreams.

It was not only rational and logical, everyone agreed, but it was as dull as dishwater.

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