

TTC cont.

ciency, but a reduction in the real standard of living for workers.

The decrease is manifested through: (1) less worker job security; (2) less worker bargaining power leading to lower wages; and (3) the loss of full-time benefits for workers required by law. Also, particularly in an area such as transit service — a shift to part-time staff can coincide with a decrease in the quality of services provided to the public. It was these basic concerns that shaped union opposition to the TTC management decision to hire part-time workers, and, subsequently led to the work slowdown as a viable — and understandable — form of worker protest.

In the past, many people at York have given empathy and support to striking workers. This was demonstrated by the large numbers of students and professors who refused to cross picket lines during the university support-staff strike at York two years ago. We believe that this type of solidarity should be shown for TTC workers. In addition, on a practical level, if transit service should ever be cut off, there will be a great inequity between those students who can still travel to York (i.e. through access to cars or car pools) and those who will be left stranded.

For these reasons, if the TTC workers do ever go on strike, or if there is a full lock-out, York University should be temporarily closed.

Steering Committee
York New Democrats

Right to Life vs. Pro-Choice: Network fights for free access to abortion

by Jessica Rudolph

When I was 13 years old I walked into a Right to Life office and explained that I was seeking counselling in regards to my unplanned pregnancy.

I was not pregnant at the time. I was doing research for a social studies essay on abortion and I wanted to get the real picture. I wanted to see how Right to Life dealt with pregnant teenagers and I didn't want to simply walk away with a handful of pamphlets.

I was told that medically, it was safer for me to continue with my pregnancy than to undergo a first trimester abortion. I was told that emotionally, it would be less traumatic to have a child and either raise it myself (though I was still in junior high school) or give it up for adoption, than to terminate the pregnancy. Finally, I was told that morally, it was my duty to continue with the pregnancy because African and Asian birth rates were frighteningly high, and abortion constituted "white race suicide."

One of the founders of the York Pro-Choice Network, Martha Kanya-Forstner, comments, "This story reveals the broader rightwing agenda of the anti-choice movement. Related to the argument against a woman's right to control her own body are further attacks

limiting the decisions women make over their lives. These people stand against daycare, against affirmative action, against birth control and sex education. In aligning themselves with the growing New Right, both in Canada and the United States, anti-choice forces are fighting a battle attacking immigration, homosexuality and the rights of unions and working people in general."

The Network was started last year by female and male graduate and undergraduate students who mobilized partly because of their concern about "Operation Rescue." "Operation Rescue" is made up of people committed to outlawing abortion in Canada. In addition to picketing in front of clinics, they terrorize patients by verbally abusing and physically attacking them as they attempt to enter the premises. Members of "Operation Rescue" try to barricade the entrance to clinics and in the past have done so by chaining themselves to entrance-ways using Kryptonite locks around their necks.

Choice is seen to be an issue relevant to students for a number of reasons. As the Network explains, female students must be able to decide the conditions under which they pursue their education. If women are restricted from deciding when or under what conditions to have children, a bar-

rier is erected in their pursuit of equal access to education. Free access to abortion, as much as universal daycare and equal wages, is a prerequisite for women's equality within society.

The Network points to a number of misconceptions surrounding the issue of abortion. First, it points out that no one is "pro-abortion." Whereas the anti-abortion movement seeks to pressure women into bearing children against their will, the pro-choice movement seeks neither to coerce women into having unwanted babies nor having unwanted abortions. Since no method of birth control is infallible, unplanned pregnancies will occur, and access to abortion has to remain an option so a woman can choose to deal with her pregnancy as she sees fit.

Second, they argue that restrictions against abortion don't prevent abortions. Restrictions hurt low-income women who can't afford to side-step the law by having abortions out of the country or by covert means. In the '60s illegal abortions often resulted in sterility, and were the number one killer of women of childbearing age.

Third, the Network addresses the link anti-choice forces make between abortion and euthanasia, and abortion and the Holocaust. This offensive trivialization of the Holocaust, and this entire tactic of

linking wholly separate issues to invoke strong and sympathetic reactions is a blatant example of emotional manipulation.

Finally, a response is made to the frequent admonition, "She had her fun. Let her pay for it." As summarized by Childbirth by Choice, "This shockingly vindictive taunt, equating motherhood with punishment for sexual activity, could only be made by someone who does not value children or motherhood."

The Network is lobbying on the platform of "No New Law," and is struggling for greater access to free abortion. As part of this fight it organized Pro-Choice Day at York on October 11, with speakers from York's faculty, the Ontario Federation of Students, and the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC). Furthermore, it is active in organizing a National Day of Action, which will be held at noon on October 14, at Queen's Park. All across Canada rallies and marches will be held in support of abortion rights.

Sherie MacDonald, of OCAC, said people will be rallying to improve the quality of life for women and children and against the attitude that caring about life begins at conception and ends at birth. In the words of a popular bumper sticker, "Fetuses are not babies. Abortion is not murder. Women are not criminals."

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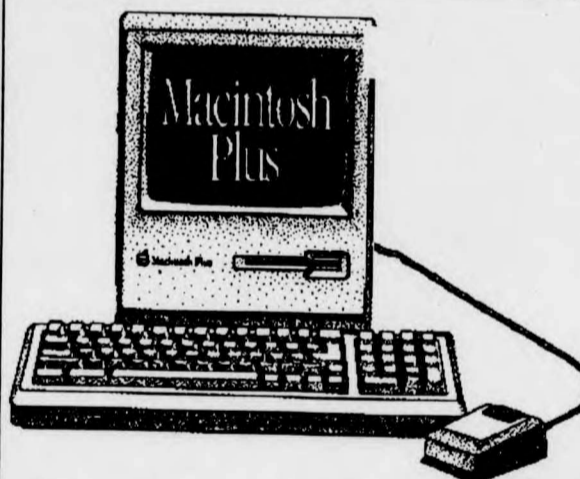
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