

Defence committee formed

York students told of Morgentaler's bravery

By MICHAEL HOLLETT

Almost 100 people turned out for a meeting last Friday to listen to supporters of Dr. Henry Morgentaler, the Montreal-based doctor currently facing imprisonment for performing

abortions. The speakers at the meeting were Eleanor Pelrine, author of *Abortion in Canada* and founder of the Canadian Association to Repeal Abortion Laws and, Heidi Fischer, co-ordinator of the Toronto Committee

to Defend Dr. Morgentaler. They also played a tape recorded excerpt from a speech Morgentaler made recently in Edmonton.

The women had just recently returned to Toronto after a cross-Canada tour in support of Morgentaler. Morgentaler accompanied the women on most of the tour but Heidi Fischer said, "He was too strained to carry on."

Pelrine was the first speaker and said her career had been re-directed from writing to fighting the abortion laws as a result of some research she had done on the topic.

She is presently working on a biography of Morgentaler and spent much of her time discussing his background.

Morgentaler was born in a Polish ghetto to Jewish socialist parents. All his family were killed in Auschwitz except for his brother.

ABORTION ON W5

"Morgentaler's prosecution began when he performed an abortion the CTV television program, W5, said Pelrine. "Morgentaler has been brave enough to proclaim that he performed from 6,000 to 7,000 abortions.

"He has taken on the justice minister of Quebec, the revenue department and the ministry of injustice. He has put his profession and freedom on the line."

In response to accusations made by anti-abortions groups, she said, "Morgentaler didn't solicit women for abortions and he never turned anyone away because they couldn't pay. His top fee was \$200 but he did hundreds for free and hundreds more for a lot less (than \$200)."

In his taped speech Morgentaler said, "We are for the right of women to have an abortion with safety, dignity and medical doctors.

"A Gallup Poll of a few years ago

showed 2 out of 3 women agreed that women had the right to decide to have an abortion with their doctors."

APATHETIC MAJORITY

He said, "We represent the majority but it's a silent, sometimes apathetic majority. We must organize and let the country and Parliament know we represent the majority.

"The anti-abortion groups, the fetus fetishers, are headed by fanatical zealots who have no regard for the safety of women. Our side has respect for women, for the human person, concern for the health and welfare of women who need abortions.

Morgentaler concluded by saying, "What sustains me is that I helped many women who needed help. Because of my work many women are alive and healthy. With your support I will continue to fight."

After the tape was played Heidi Fischer spoke. "We are up against

the big money that the other groups have. The Knights of Columbus gave over \$1 million to fight abortion last year," she said.

"It is estimated that over \$3 million has been spent in victimizing Morgentaler. His funds have been frozen on a bogus tax charge and he can't pay his lawyers' fees."

Fischer said, "It cannot be stressed how important it is for us to organize and let the people in power know how we feel."

YORK CHAPTER

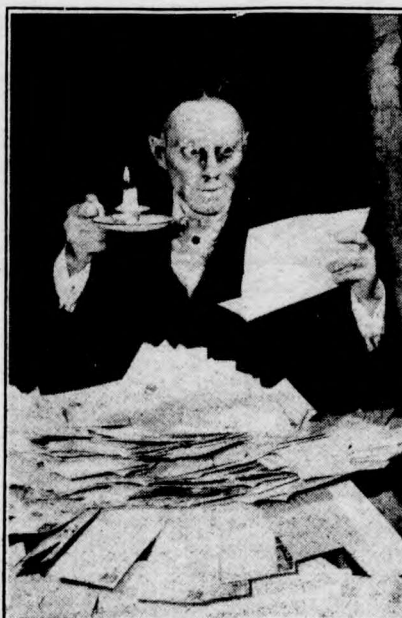
During the meeting Dale Ritch announced that a York chapter of the Committee to Defend Morgentaler was being formed and fifty of the people present signed a list expressing interest in the organization. Ritch later said that anyone wishing to join or to obtain information about the committee should phone 667-3532 or come to the clubs room in N109 Ross.

Following the meeting a collection was taken and \$70 was raised.



C.T. Squassero photo

In its never-ending quest to reach the third page of Excalibur, the York Outdoors Club last week launched its second annual rappel down the west side of the Petrie Science Building. The ruse worked.



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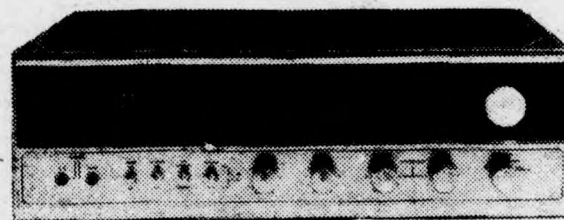
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