

# 'Drop the charges'

"...I wish to make public that I have been doing abortions in my clinic in Montreal for the past few years and I am proud of having helped a few thousand women to obtain safe medical operations. I am convinced that by doing so, I have saved many from death and many others from injury, disease and tremendous anguish. I am more firmly convinced than ever that the law under which I am now being tried is unjust, cruel and dangerous to women, and unnecessarily restrictive..."

This was the public announcement from Dr. Henry Morgentaler's abortion clinic, made March 16, 1973 at the second cross-country conference of the Canadian Women's Coalition to Repeal the Abortion Laws.

Using the Vacuum Suction Technique, Morgentaler has performed 5,000 abortions in the past few years, without a single death or serious complication. With the lowest complication rate, and requiring an average procedural length of one hour, this technique requires no hospitalization. Advantages of this technique include little blood loss, no damage to tissue, immediate recovery, and reduced cost to women receiving the abortion.



## FIGHT FOR ABORTION REPEAL

- 1967 - Morgentaler presented a brief to federal government urging that "abortion on request be available in the first three months of pregnancy."
- first vocalized confrontation of Canada's anti-abortion laws by Morgentaler.
- Morgentaler's outspoken views prompted the Quebec government to react.
- 1970 - June 1 - Morgentaler arrested on two charges of conspiring to perform and of performing abortions.
- 1973 - police laid new charges on Morgentaler early this year for performing an abortion on a woman forced to testify in court by police.
- March 27 - letter by Morgentaler to Quebec Social Affairs Minister, Claude Castonguay demanding authorization of his clinic by the provincial government to perform legal abortion on demand.
- Spring of this year - CTV's W-5 program aired a film showing Morgentaler performing an abortion in his clinic.
- film was seized by police, with a promise from Quebec's Minister of Justice, Jerome Choquette, that new charges would be laid on the basis of this film.
- August 4 - Dr. Yvan Macchabee, close friend and colleague of Morgentaler, arrested on charges of performing illegal abortions, after his appearance on the W-5 program.
- Macchabee, had opened his abortion clinic 5 days before his arrest.
- "accomplice" petition circulated in Quebec by the Front Commun pur l'Abrogation des Lois sur l'Avortment (Common Front to Repeal the Abortion Laws) - public declaration signed by over 200 people in Quebec of having assisted someone in obtaining an illegal abortion.
- petition was signed by Macchabee.
- August 15 - Morgentaler and 15 others, including one staff member, women who were in the clinic to obtain an abortion and friends accompanying them, were arrested by police.
- four new charges were brought against Morgentaler under the abortion section of the Criminal Code in form of a preferred indictment.
- August 17 - Morgentaler released from custody under exceptionally restrictive conditions - no media contact or

travel outside Montreal.

- August 30 - Morgentaler again arrested with six new charges laid against him as a result of his August 15th arrest.
- September 24 - Morgentaler due to appear in court.

### OPINION OF THE PROSECUTION MOVEMENT OF MORGENTALER AND MACCHABEE

- situation is being used by the government to roll back the gains of women to their right to have an abortion - in the fore front is Justice Minister Otto Lang's cutbacks in the number of abortions being performed.
- it is no accident that the attack is taking place in predominantly Catholic Quebec.
- no accident that the focus of the attack is a male rather than a female doctor.
- significant that it is a doctor and not an out-spoken patient being prosecuted.

### NATIONAL ENDORSERS TO DATE

- The Federal NDP
- Grace MacInnis, NDP MP (Vancouver-Kingsway)
- Jean Thibault, secretary general of the CSN (Confederation of National Trade Unions)
- Michel Chartrand, president of the Montreal Central Council of the CSN
- Doris Anderson, editor of Chatelaine
- Laura Sabia, chairwoman of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women
- Pauline Julien, Quebec folksinger
- The Montreal Labor Council
- The Canadian Women's Coalition to Repeal the Abortion Laws
- The Humanist Association of Canada
- The League for Socialist Action
- Dr. Augustine Roy, head of Quebec College of Physicians and Surgeons
- Pierre Burton, journalist



Dr. Henry Morgentaler

### DEFENSE ACTION BEING PLANNED

- campaign action surrounding the case of Marie Claire Chevalier, of France, included the circulation of a now famous petition of accomplices, with the statements of famous French women who have had abortions, and massive rallies demanding her acquittal, proved to be a valuable lesson for future action in repealing abortion laws.
- August 25, 1973 - The Canadian Women's Coalition to Repeal the Abortion Laws passed a motion to help initiate and build widely supported action in having the charges laid against Morgentaler and Macchabee dropped.
- the theme of "Drop the Charges" is envisioned as uniting the differing views on abortion laws from supporters of reforms of the laws to those who support the concept of "free abortion on demand" to those who wish to support the doctors for other reasons such as civil liberties.
- to this effect - a defense committee will hold a public meeting on September 24, room 142, SUB at 8 p.m. The committee has been discussed in terms of being non-exclusionist action oriented and based around the single issue of preventing the victimization of Morgentaler and Macchabee.
- media coverage in Eastern Canada to this situation has been better than in Western Canada, therefore the defense committee's first major task is to inform the media of continuing action and support of the doctors' case.
- for further information on the defense committee contact Wendy - 433-8998 or Sheila 439-5361.

## Reflections on registration

When I graduated from junior to senior high school, I was predictably affected by the size, the number of people and the seeming coldness of the new environment.

But after three years, the school was like a second home for me; all the faces were familiar, the school had a personality of its own and was not the cold, concrete walls it had seemed at first.

I imagine things could be the same now that I am an official card-carrying student of the University of Alberta. I was a little apprehensive, a little scared, and mostly thrilled by the overwhelming immensity of the campus. But after only a few days, the campus is beginning to make sense and I am starting to feel a part of it.

I suppose most freshmen were worried about registration day. It was the thing we were warned about by people who supposedly knew what it was like. I found that by following instructions to the letter and using a bit of common sense, registration was a tolerable and interesting experience.

The letter in the September 11 issue of Gateway which said that after registration a frosh is "literally destroyed" and "his faith in the essence of higher learning is suddenly shattered" made me laugh myself to sleep in class. With a reasonable amount of patience and acceptance of a few unavoidable facts, one should not be discouraged one iota by registration, let alone be "literally destroyed."

So now I go to classes and listen attentively to my teachers—excuse me, my "profs," and I sit in SUB like

everyone else watching people go by or reading my textbooks or sleeping, and I feel good because I can adapt so well.

Watching the people pass by, I look for similarities between the social auras here and at high school. The same "interest groups" are here: the cafeteria communists who will defend to the death their beliefs so long as they don't have to fight for them; the radical groups who are trying to give us a "real" education, for instance, the Angela Davis Club who in the September 11 issue of Gateway tell me that I'm a kid if I enjoy myself during the bustle of registration week and I'm a kid unless I become concerned about major issues like the "refusal to allow political groups .. to use SUB facilities to inform students of the real issues."

It seems to me I saw many booths run by political groups in SUB during registration week... But if the ADC tells me to become politically concerned, I guess I should and forget about any social or academic interests I may have. What really bothers me is that a person is labelled not-politically-concerned unless he agrees with the people who tell him to become politically concerned. Now there is an important issue.

Well, that's my first impression of U of A. I think it'll be a great place to be for the next few years. Most of the people are friendly; there isn't such a high degree of the seniority complex as there was in high school and there seems to be a touch of identity, of brotherhood between myself and every student I pass.

Gordon Turtle

Burp into print

# Gateway

love'em

## Staff Meeting

crayons not provided

**room 282 SUB** X ← here

why are you reading this?  
are you coming?

→ **6:30 pm tonight**

special meeting for

→ **staff writers** ← oops!

after regular meeting

graphics by alf the whip

## The Gateway

THE GATEWAY is the newspaper of the students of the University of Alberta. It is published by the Students Union twice weekly during the winter session on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Contents are the responsibility of the editor, opinions are those of the person expressing them. Letters to the editor on any subject are welcome, but must be signed. Please keep them short, letters should not exceed 200 words. Deadlines for submitting copy are 2 P.M. Mondays and Wednesdays.

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 news ..... Brian Tucker    production .....Loreen Lennon  
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STAFF THIS ISSUE: Scott Ballentine, Allan Bell, Graham Bell, Peter Best, Eugene Brody, Paul Cadogan, Satya Das, Mike Ekelund, Audrey Fedirko, J.O. Hanley, Ross Harley, Terri Jackson, Paul Jones, Harold Kuckertz, jr, Doug Moore, Greg Neiman, Kent Richardson, Nadia Rudyk, Alex Taylor, Margriet Tilroe, Gordon Turtle, Terry Valeriot.