

THE ABORTION DILEMMA

ON THE UNIVERSITY RIGHT

The Abortion Dilemma; by Joseph M. J. Sanlei
 Washington, D.C., Jan. 22, 1973; The Supreme Court of the United States of America effectively legalized abortion in the U.S., following a decision in the case of Sarah Weddinton and Marjorie Hames; the high court ruled that the right to a safe legal abortion cannot be denied any woman who so chooses to terminate a pregnancy within the first trimester. In the same year Catholics For a Free Choice, a pro-abortion rights group, was founded and the former National Association for Repeal of Abortion Laws (founded in 1969) became, in response to the courts ruling, the National Abortion Rights Action League, in order that, as a citizens lobby, it may work to insure compliance with the Jan. 22 decision.

1980 - As the seventh anniversary of the historic decision passed by last month, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in large urban centers and small rural communities, it was a date which was anything but unnoticed. Rallies both for and against the 1973 ruling (the largest occurring in Washington, D.C. Just this past Jan. 22nd with an anti-abortion message and an estimated twenty thousand plus attendance) are almost monthly occurrences in most of the 50 States of the American Union. The controversy rages on the floors of every State Legislature and throughout the complex American judicial system. From church pulpits, political platforms, newspaper and media editorials, medical journals, Vatican and Salt Lake City pronouncements, citizens lobbies (pro and con e.g. Birthright, Feminists For Life, NOW, ADA etc.) and a myriad of other

forums have come a torrent of rhetoric that has swamped the American consciousness; each group proclaiming the best of humanist, biblical or scientific foundations upon which their position stands.

Yet the New York Times, in a Jan. 21st article on anti-abortion political activism, reported that according to a national poll, taken by Dresner and Tortorello Research of New York just this past month, more than 88% of the American people "supported abortion in all or some circumstances" and that only 17% of the electorate felt that it was "very important" that a candidate favor abortion rights, and less than half that number (approx. 8%) believed it very important that a candidate be actively anti-abortion or "pro-life". The article's author, Ms. Leslie Bennetts, did not need to draw any conclusions for her readers concerning these figures, as the conclusions are obvious. The majority of the American people demonstrate a notable lack of concern over the abortion dilemma. To the political left, right and center, activist minorities carry on the "good fight" as they see it with the rest of the populace uninvolved. The Boston Globe, a longtime ally of the "pro-choice" forces, celebrated the Jan. 22nd anniversary with an editorial calling for the right of poor women to gain medical funding for non-medically necessary, non-rape/incest, abortions. The Globe contended that those opposed to Medicaid funding of abortions "have insured that poor

women bear the brunt of the belief that abortion is always morally wrong".

One of the most thorough studies of the multi-faceted abortion dilemma is the work of Dr. Harold Rosen, M.D. Ph.D, whose book entitled Abortion in America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967) seeks to understand the true nature and implications of abortion upon individuals as well as the society as a whole.

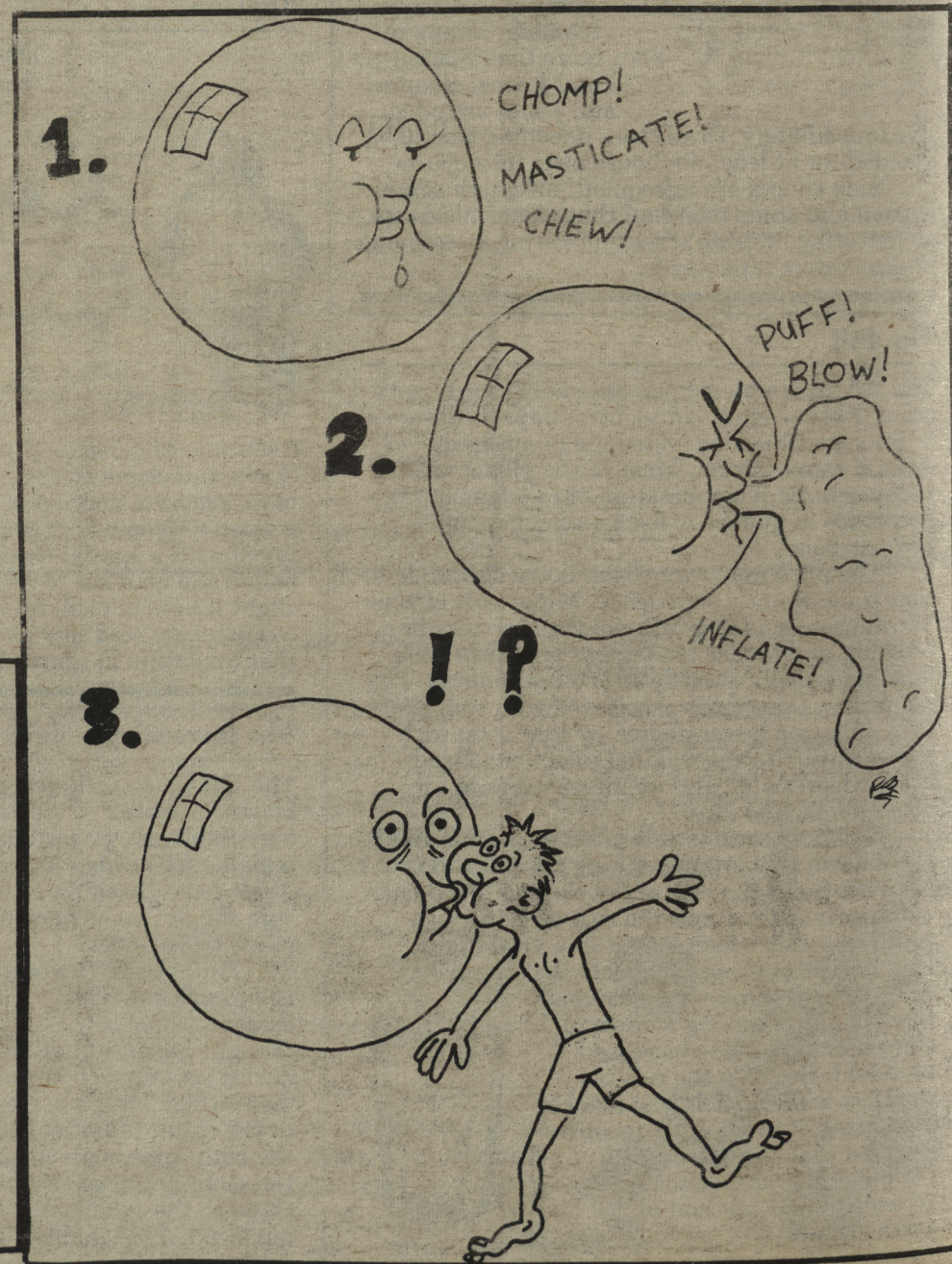
Originally published in 1954 as Therapeutic Abortion the updated 1967 edition examines abortion from medical, psychiatric, legal (this area is a bit dated in lieu of the 73 rulings) anthropological and religious considerations. In summary in the concluding chapter of the study Dr. Rosen argues

that "mature women as mature human beings, with all the respect and dignity to be accorded mature human beings, should have the right to decide whether or not they wish to carry a specific pregnancy to term. The responsibility for the decision, right or wrong, is already theirs..."

It must be noted that the above statement in dealing exclusively with those women Dr. Rosen calls

"mature" ignores those who because of age, emotional instability or the stifling nature of our sexist society (which denies many women the right to grow-up) cannot be called "mature" and yet choose abortion. However, no law in history, no just law at any rate, was ever written so that adults may be prevented from making rational decisions simply because they could not be expected for one flimsy reason or another to make the right choice.

No special interest group should be allowed to dictate the moral doctrines of their particular faith to the whole of American society - and certainly not to women who we all must recognize as the intellectual and thereby rational equal of males. Law makers in Canada will soon face the same controversies as were here described as occurring in the U.S. Canadians must begin now to guarantee that the right to a free choice becomes a reality throughout the Canadian nation.



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