women's national abortion action coalition

### national newsletter 917 15th street nw suite 502 washington dc 20005 (202) 347-0946

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### **National news**

San Francisco-Plans are underway for a West Coast conference the weekend of October 15-17 at the University of California in Berkeley. The focus will be on building for November 20. Tentative plans include a teach-in Friday night with a lawyer, a gay woman, a female minister, a woman from the Welfare Rights Organization, a Chicana, and a labor spokeswoman. Saturday and Sunday will feature workshops on constituency and implementation like mass action, legislation, and litigation. Saturday evening will feature Dr. Felicia Hance on "Our Bodies," a talk about what women do not know about their bodies.

There have been two press conferences since the national conference, one to report on decisions of the conference and one in response to the recent favorable court ruling on abortions, both very good.

A local woman has donated the rent on a new office for six months. A classaction suit is underway. There are now over 400 plaintiffs with 100 received at the NOW convention.

Atlanta-A forum on abortion, attended by 124 women, was held at the public library. A woman pediatrician and a Black doctor spoke. The Right to Life group picketed outside. Plans are to hold another forum to debate them.

Boston-The founding meeting of the local coalition was attended by about 60 women. A campus committee was set up to coordinate work on the different campuses represented so far. Plans at Boston University include a teach-in, a debate between the "Value of Life" group and Dr. Barbara Roberts, and a display of contraceptive and abortion devices, "The Abortion Waiting Room."

(continued on page 4)

### NCC set, Oct 2 in Detroit

TO: All organizations supporting WONAAC's abortion law repeal campaign

FROM: The National Working Committee (NWC)

RE: The National Coordinating Committee (NCC) meeting of WCNAAC, October 2, 1971 at 12 noon sharp, 2230 Withrel Street, Detroit, Michigan

Dear Sisters,

Enclosed you will find minutes of the first meeting of the NCC of WONAAC held in Washington D.C. on August 28 -- a very successful meeting with close to 100 women attending from a number of areas around the country. (continued on page 2)

NCC, cont. from page 1

At that meeting we decided to hold the next NCC meeting within 4-5 weeks in the Midwest. Detroit offered to make arrangements, so October 2 is our date. The meeting will be at the Detroit YWCA, 2230 Withrel Street, and will begin at noon sharp.

We would like to review some of the important decisions and discussions at our last meeting which will provide the basis for the agenda at the Detroit NCC meeting.

#### National Structure

At the Women's National Abortion Conference in July we established two on-going structures, the NCC and the NWC. Both were based on organizational representation only. At the conference a question was raised about what role individual women who are active supporters and builders of coalitions around the country would play in regard to this structure. At the NCC meeting we voted to amend the original structure proposal to provide the NCC with the authority to add individual women active in the abortion campaign to these bodies.

Of particular importance to our up-coming meeting are additions to the NCC. If local areas feel there is an individual woman or women who play a central role in building this abortion law repeal campaign and support the aims of WONAAC and would like to recommend that they be added to the NCC, they should forward these names to the WONAAC national office as quickly as possible.

As approved at the Washington D.C. meeting of the NCC, the national office of WONAAC is now located in Washington D.C. Our new address is: WONAAC, 917 15th St. NW, Suite 502, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 347-0946.

We feel that the next three weeks should focus on obtaining a well-rounded list of national endorsers for WONAAC. We are printing a special endorser card in addition to the statement that is already prepared. These cards, which will be available at the NCC meeting in Detroit, can be reproduced in your area and should be sent into the national office regularly.

Additional points to be discussed at the NCC meeting include: 1) finances, 2) march route for the November 20 demonstrations, 3) rally for the November 20 demonstrations, 4) national hearing, 5) task force organizing, 6) literature and publications, and 7) litigation and legislation.

Short area reports (3-4 minutes) should be prepared to be given at the meeting. Those areas which are not able to send a representative should send in short written reports for publication.

### Speaking tour

BARBARA ROBERTS, MD, a former coordinator of Women Vs Connecticut class action suit, member of New Haven Women's Liberation, now working at the National Heart and Lung Institute in Washington DC, is a National Coordinator of the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition. She spends one day a week performing free abortions in a DC clinic.

She was a featured speaker at the Women's National Abortion Conference last July, and her comments on abortion, "Abortion Laws Murder Women," are available from WONAAC.

As part of her commitment to the campaign for abortion law repeal, Barbara has agreed to be available for speaking on the following dates:

September 23, 24 Seattle
October 5,6 Atlanta
October 13, 14 Houston
November 7-13 Los Angeles

All honoraria received from her speaking engagements will be donated to WONAAC.



I am tired of seeing women in septic shock, with perforated wombs, even disembowled by incompetent butchers because their own physicans were prohibited by law from helping them. I have seen these atrocities and others with my own eyes and I am tired of them. They are a direct result of inhuman, unconstitutional abortion laws. Laws that murder women.

-- Dr. Barbara Roberts

## Educational projects

One of WONAAC's goals is to publish and to make available educational material on litigation and class-action suits concerning abortion, sterilization and contraception laws.

The Illinois Women's Abortion Coalition, which is a local affiliate of WONAAC, has set up a "Legislative/Legal Task Force" which has compiled an excellent and extensive report entitled "Abortion, Contraception and Sterilization -- a Compilation of Federal Legislation and Court Action and Laws and Legal Activity in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin," dated August 1971.

The report deals extensively with all recent developments in legal and legislative activities in the midwestern states. Copies of the IWAC's research report can be obtained by writing to IWAC, 343 S. Dearborn Ave., Room 302, Chicago, Ill. 60605 (price 50¢).

Nancy Stearns, on behalf of the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition, New Women Lawyers, and the Women's Health and Abortion Project, Inc., submitted an <u>amicus curiae</u> brief to the Supreme Court, concerning the Texas and Georgia suits which are scheduled for argument this fall. (An <u>amicus curiae</u> brief is one which is submitted by a party which claims interest in a particular case and petitions the court to accept its brief in order to assist the court in its consideration of that case.)

This brief clearly establishes that the decision to have an abortion is a woman's constitutional right. Besides being an excellent legal document, it presents a brilliant feminist analysis of the legal oppression of women in this country.

Any group considering a women's class-action law suit against their state's abortion laws should begin by reading this brief, as well as Abortion Rap by Kennedy and Schulder. Nancy Stearn's brief is available in pamphlet form for \$1.00 plus mailing costs from WONAAC, 917 - 15th St. NW, Suite 502, Washington, D.C. 20005.

### Area reports

National News, cont. from page 1

A one-hour TV show saw a debate between the Right to Life group and a coalition speaker. A class-action suit is underway and is expected to go into court in mid-October.

Pittsburgh-Abortion Justice Association is concentrating on legislative action. Excellent fund-raising material including a letter by Catholics favoring abortion has been circulated. They have also gotten doctors who perform abortions to write a letter to other doctors asking for endorsement of abortion law repeal.

Philadelphia- There has been fantastic press coverage ever since the national conference. The Coalition has been on the radio 15 times, one time a debate with the Catholic Church. A demonstration was held July 31 with approximately 120 women attending.

Chicago-A Chicago-area conference was held August 28 with about 45 women from Chicago, Madison and Milwaukee. The conference approved the idea of a regional build-up action in October focusing on class-action suits with the theme "On to Washington." A telegram of solidarity was sent to Shirley Wheeler by the conference participants.

Investigation is underway for the cossibility of a statewide class-action suit. The one currently pending in the Supreme Court includes men as plaintiffs and is not clearly based on a woman's right to choose. The legislative committee has compiled a list of laws on abortion for the Mid-West region.

Detroit- A rally and demonstration of about 400 people was held on August 31 to coincide with the filing of the class-action suit which currently has over 700 plaintiffs. They held a fundraising cocktail party which raised about \$300.

New York City-The coalition is just getting underway with a meeting projected for September 22. They are projecting a city-wide high school meeting.

Washington, D.C.-Women for Abortion Action was founded late in August. The first major meeting is projected for September 18 after the campuses open.

Baltimore-A new coalition has just been formed; the first meeting had an attendence of over 20 women.

Cleveland- A rally was held August 26 featuring Geraldine Roberts, founding organizer of the Domestic Workers of America, a NOW woman, a woman from the United Women's Contingent, and a high school woman and a campus woman.

<u>Seattle</u>-A coalition meeting was held <u>August</u> 26 with the focus on why abortion law repeal should be the center of our work now. The meeting featured Bernadine Garrett, a member of the Welfare Rights Organization, and a candidate for Seattle City Council (see her statement elsewhere this issue).

<u>Denver-Boulder-</u> A successful coalition is going with meetings of over 40 women every other week. Plans are underway to start a chapter of the coalition on the campus in Boulder.

News flash: Charges have been dropped against Nancy Manfredonia, a Long Island sister who was arrested for having "exposed" her 14-month old baby to a talk on abortion by Bill Baird.

### **Decorations**

The new expansive offices of WONAAC have just opened. Newly painted and fresh, the walls demand decoration. We would like areas to send in copies of posters and leaflets on the abortion and other feminist struggles to do the job.

And to make the newsletter useful to abortion groups around the country, we need reports from <u>all</u> local areas on what is happening. This information is useful both for the newsletter and for future reference by the national office.

If you want your group listed in our directory which will appear in the next issue, send in the name, address and phone number immediately!

### Literature

#### LITERATURE ORDER FORM

Mail to: WONAAC, 917 - 15th St. NW, Suite 502, Washington, D.C. 20005

Description	<u>Price</u>	Quantity Cost ordered		
Posters: March on Washington 11" X 17"; 2 colors	5¢/ea; 25/\$1; 100/\$3			
Stickers Arch on Washington Abortion, a Woman's Right to Choose; one color	sample copies free; 100/50¢ 300/\$1; 500/\$2; 1,000/\$3			
Printed Brochures Abortion is a Woman's Right 17" X 22" three-fold One color	5¢/ea; 25/\$1; 100/\$3			
Black, Chicana and Asian Women and Abortions; 17" X 22" three-fold; one color English and Spanish	5¢/ea; 25/\$1; 100/\$3			
Buttons March on Washington and SF Abortion: A Woman's Right	25¢/ea; 25/\$3; 50/\$5; 100/\$8			
Printed Leaflets General: Why March on DC & SF 82" X 11"; one color	sample copies free; 100/\$2			
In Spanish: Why March on DC 8 SF; $8\frac{1}{2}$ " X 11"; one color	sample copies free; 100/\$2			
Black Women and the Abortion Law Repeal Campaign; $8\frac{1}{2}$ " X ll"; one color	sample copies free; 100/\$2			
Educational Stearns' Amicus Curiae brief 60 pp; limit one per area	\$1.00/ea			
Printed endorser cards	sample copies free; 100/\$1			
What is WONAAC leaflet $8\frac{1}{2}$ " X ll"; one color	sample copies free; 100/\$2	-		
	Total cost:			
Enclosed is \$ for	fullpartial payment on th	e above order.		
NameAddress				
City	StateZip	Phone		

### Task forces

This abortion campaign affects every woman in this society, and we want to concretely demonstrate this in the November 20 demonstration. Coalitions should attempt to organize committees or task forces of women who will work on building specific contingents for the march. These committees can organize and bring into motion the various constituencies in their area and build them as professionally as possible. These committees can put out various constituency leaflets, posters, and buttons. For example, the national office is putting out for distribution a Black, Chicana, Asian women's brochure, button and leaflet, in English and Spanish.

After task forces or contingents are built and organized they may want to publish information as to why doctors, teachers, artists, etc. are going to be participating in and building the November 20 demonstration, and ask for support and membership. Copies of literature, posters, ideas, and the meeting minutes and questions should be sent to the WONAAC office.

We want to gather the growing numbers of women who are eager to get involved -- Black, Chicana, Latina, Asian, Puerto Rican and Native American women, campus women, gay women, high school students, housewives, artists, professionals, welfare women, working women, young women, older women, women from churches, women from political organizations, trade union women, military women, all women across the country. By organizing local area task forces and contingents of these groups of women for the Nov. 20 demonstration it will help demonstrate the depth of sentiment on the part of all women for the repeal of all anti-abortion laws which murder women. By coordinating these contingents on a national scale, at the Nov. 20 demonstration the government will have to recognize that this abortion campaign is a movement of women fighters who represent the millions of womee in this country and all over the worls who are determined to win our right to choose whether or not to have children.

### **NCC Mimites**

WONAAC NCC MINUTES, AUGUST 28, 1971

Attendance: approximately 85 from 10 states and Washington DC

Agenda: I. Area Reports

II. National Office Reports

a. general

b. materials

c. finances

III. November 20 demonstration

IV. Structure

V. Next NCC Meeting

#### I. Area Reports

Reports were given from San Francisco, Georgia, Boston, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Illinois, Michigan, Connecticut, New York City, Washington DC and Baltimore. (See p. 1)

#### II. National Office Report

A. General

It was proposed that the national office of WONAAC move from New York City to Washington DC to facilitate all aspects of organizing the fall abortion law repeal campaign. The new address: 917 15th Street NW Suite 502, Washington DC 20005.

It was moved that WONAAC send an international call to women in other countries working on the women's liberation movement and the abortion and birth control issues. A call was read. (See p. 8).

The following women have agreed to move to DC from the old NY staff: Kipp Dawson, Carol Lipman, Sherry Smith, Joan Gombos, Marsha Coleman, Nancy Rosenstock.

There was a motion that WONAAC write a statement explaining the origins and goals of WONAAC for the press and general distribution.

#### ALL MOTIONS APPROVED

B. Materials

New materials, including posters, a Third World brochure and stickers were projected. Also that the Newsletter be a regular feature, along with educational material. Available for distribution at the NCC meeting were the amicus curiae brief, posters, brochures, fund letters, endorser sheets and buttons. Motion to approve report.

MOTION APPROVED

(continued on page 8)

### Endorsers

Two major goals laid out by the NCC and the Working Committee which met in Washington D.C. September 11 were to raise \$34,000 and to collect the signatures of 1,000 endorsers for WONAAC and the fall actions.

The 550 endorsers of the Women's National Abortion Conference which formed WONAAC were collected in only two months. With our added strength we should double that by October 20, one month before the November 20 demonstrations.

Sisters on the West Coast who attended the NOW convention in September kicked off our drive with an impressive list of endorsers, which number over 100. Whole chapters of NOW which have endorsed WONAAC include Detroit NOW, Westchester NOW, San Francisco NOW, and Maryland NOW. And NOW women from Tucson, Arizona; Knoxville, Tennessee; Portland, Oregon; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Chicago, Illinois; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Orange County, Fresno, Riverside, Sacramento, and San Carlos, California; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; and New Jersey also have endorsed.

Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, longtime activists in the gay movement and NOW members from San Francisco, also endorsed at the NOW convention. Organizations which have endorsed WONAAC include the Chicago Lutheran Women's Caucus, Rhode Island Coalition for Repeal of Abortion laws, Association for the Repeal of Canadian Abortion Laws, and the General Clinic of Renton, Washington, an abortion clinic headed by Dr. Franz Koome.

The broad spectrum of endorsements for the abortion law repeal campaign are represented by the diversity of the organizations which the women represent. A few are: Welfare Rights Organizations in a large number of states, Federally Employed Women (FEW), Clergy and Iaymen Concerned about the War in Vietnam, Illinois Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy, the New Democratic Coalition, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, International Socialists, Socialist Workers Party, and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Of particular concern in obtaining endorsers should be working women and women in unions.

Over 25 endorsements were gathered at the recent Midwest Abortion Conference, and an equal number were obtained at the National Student Association convention in Colorado.

As part of WONAAC's education program, we plan to print for national distribution, a compilation of women's organizations specializing in the abortion movement and a bibliography of literature available on abortion. Please fill out the enclosed form and return it to our national office.

Local organizations specializing in abortion struggles:			Literature published in my area on abortion: (Please send one copy of each)	
Name	Address	Phone	Title Author-Pub. Price	
			Please indicate price for single and	

### International call

Throughout history few things have been more universal or known fewer national boundaries than the suffering of women from the denial of our right to control our own lives, our own bodies. Decades ago the suffragists of the United States took inspiration from their British sisters and went on to build part of the international movement through which women won the right to vote.

Today, in every corner of the earth, laws deny women the right to abortion, the right to decide whether or not to have children. Now a new generation of women has begun to stand up for our rights. The struggle for the right to abortion is rapidly crossing boundaries of nations and continents, of language and background. We have inspired one another and learned from one another.

In the United States women from many backgrounds are uniting in this fight. On November 20 we will march in massive numbers on Washington D.C. and San Francisco to demand the repeal of all anti-abortion laws, with no forced sterilization and the repeal of all restrictive contraceptive laws. We call on our sisters around the world to unite with us on that day, to bring our power together, to let the world hear in one united voice and many languages our slogan "Abortion -- A Woman's Right to Choose." When we join together throughout the world, no force can stop us.

#### NCC Minutes, cont. from page 6

C. Finances

A budget of \$34,000 was projected. See report on fund-raising in this newsletter p. 9. Motion to approve report.

MOTION APPROVED

#### III. November 20

The following ideas were raised for consideration concerning the November 20 demonstration in Washington. These included: 1) that the march route duplicate that of the Suffragists 2) that we begin negotiations soon for the march route 3) that we begin preliminary steps for organizing task forces, and 4) that we

investigate the possibility of holding a national hearing in Washington DC lead-ing up to the Novemver 20 demonstrations.

A lively discussion ensued focusing around the possibilities for the national hearing. Suggestions included attempts to get famous women to sign statements saying that they had an abortion, get them to agree to testify, and circulate this statement nationally; and to go on a national campaign to get names of local anti-abortion figures who would be investigated at the hearing. Additional ideas for task forces were raised.

Motion to approve the report.

MOTION APPROVED

#### IV. Structure

There was a motion to amend the structure of WONAAC as follows: that the NCC have the power to add to itself and to the NWC leading individual women who are playing an active role in building and supporting WONAAC's program.

Motion: that the NWC be composed of project directors, heads of task forces and staff as well as representatives of organizations residing in the locale of the national office and individuals approved by the NCC.

Motion: to add Fran Pollner, Tina Hobson and Helen Gurewitz to the NWC if they agree; to appoint Carol Lipman, Joan Gombos and Barbara Roberts Nov. 20 Project Directors. ALL MOTIONS APPROVED

#### V. Next NCC Meeting

It was moved by a Columbia University Women's Liberation representative that members of the NCC from local areas who could not attend national meetings meet at the same time as the NCC. They would all have the same agenda and carry out phone converstations to come to mutual agreement on projects. Discussion.

MOTION DEFEATED

It was moved that the next meeting of the NCC be held in the Midwest to facilitate more geographical representation, and that the meeting be in four weeks; the agenda and minutes would be forwarded in the call for the meeting. It was announced that the next working committee meeting would be held in two weeks in DC.

Announcements.
Meeting adjourned.

### **Fund Raising**

Abortions cost a lot. Sometimes they cost a woman her life. That is why it is so crucial for us, at the national and local levels, to meet the quota set by the National Coordinating Committee of \$34,000 by November 20. The success of our entire campaign, our ability to stop abortion laws which murder women, depends on it.

At the NCC meeting we laid out a plan of attack for the campuses, the communities, and for various constituencies that we feel can serve as a basis for the most dynamic and productive kinds of fundraising. Some of these concrete suggestions which are listed below should be tried in every area. They are initial ideas, and women who have other suggestions should communicate them to us so they can be shared around the country.

#### Campus

On many campuses women's groups have fought for and won sizable budgets for education and action around feminist issues. There have been actions on a number of campuses around demands for female gynecologists and for abortion referral, and contraceptive devices and information. We should try to obtain honoraria for speakers from WONAAC and should get endorsements and request money for leaflets, buttons, posters, etc. to build local campus coalitions and the national actions.

The National Student Association recently passed a resolution endorsing the idea that women students should have free access to abortion and birth control. In light of that, campus groups should place resolutions before student governments calling for support of WONAAC and the November 20 demonstrations. Budgets should be submitted for office space, publicity materials, and speakers.

Professors, particularly in medical schools, in the social sciences, and in counseling departments, should be approached for endorsements and for money. As a general rule, whenever there are more than two women together talking about abortion, take a collection:

There are a number of pretty good films on abortion. Use them as fund-raisers and for getting endorsers.

#### Community

Cocktail parties: One of the ways to meet women interested in the abortion law repeal campaign and who are in a position to contribute generously is to ask a well-known woman who has a large house or apartment to host a cocktail party. A key aspect of this is to get a good guest list and to plan well. You can charge at the door or by the drink; get donations of food and liquor and have a good fundraising pitch at the height of the evening.

Doctors, many of whom have guilty consciences about the price they extract for abortions, should be asked to donate the cost of one abortion. Psychologists, according to some studies, are the most receptive to the idea that abortion is a woman's right. Find them in the yellow pages. Go after pharmaceutical companies; they know where their money comes from and thay are eager for good FR on women's issues.

Whenever you run across an "angel" please send the name, address and phone number to the national office for follow-up.

Regional and local coalitions should set themselves quotas to help WONAAC reach the \$34,000 goal.

Our goal is \$34,000. That's a high cost for so basic a right as control of our bodies. But we'll meet it, and we'll win. On to November 20.

### The Newsletter

This issue of the <u>WONAAC National News-letter</u> was prepared by: Marsha Coleman, Kipp Dawson, Joan Gombos, Carol Lipman, Nancy Rosenstock, and Sherry Smith.

# WHAT IS WONAAC?

WONAAC is based on a nationally coordinated abortion law repeal campaign including legislation, legal action and nationally coordinated mass demonstrations in Washington DC and San Francisco on November 20 for the repeal of all anti-abortion laws and the corollary demands of no forced sterilization and the repeal of all restrictive contraception laws.

We were formed at a national conference held at Columbia University July 19, 1971, attended by over 1,000 women from 23 states and 253 organizations. The call for this conference was initiated by women organizing Women Vs Connecticut, the class action suit in that state and women's liberation groups in New York City. This call was then endorsed by hundreds of women around the country who participated in the spirited and educational conference which formed WONAAC.

WONAAC aims to reach all women...Black, Chicana, Iatina, Asian, Puerto Rican and Native American women, campus women, gay women, high school women, housewives, professional, welfare and working women, young women, women from churches, political organizations, trade unions, the military and communities across the country...and to build the broadest possible movement for abortion law repeal.

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT is by Bernadine Carrett, Washington State Welfare Rights Organization and candidate for Seattle City Council, made at a press conference on July 28, 1971 following the Women's National Abortion Conference.

I would like to express my full support of the demands the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition is making for the repeal of all abortion laws, and an end to forced sterilization.

I understand all too well that abortion laws, even so-called liberalized abortion laws, discriminate against the poor and minority women like myself. Because of these laws we are inevitably the victims of illegal, back-alley abortions which kill thousands of us yearly. These repressive laws also result in many of us being forced to undergo sterilization. I believe that no one has the right to decide for a woman whether she will have a pregnancy other than the woman herself.

It is in this area of contraception that we have our greatest fight ahead. Government-financed family planning centers, which are used primarily by poor and minority women, often are little more than research laboratories using us as the guinea pigs. We have the right to know whether pills and devices are fully tested before we take them.

It is past time for women to gain control over their own bodies.

Vonaac

917 - 15th St. NW, Suite 502

Washington, D.C. 20005





Cal Cmte on Therapeutic Abortion Box 2111 South Station Van Nuys, Cal 91404

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