

A few years before *Roe v. Wade*, some radical feminists were handing out copies of their **ideal abortion law- a blank sheet of paper**. It was a statement against the illegality of abortion, as well as against others working for reform. **Women's bodies, women's choices, should not be legislated by any governing force**. They knew that then and we know that now.

Back then, some women in the women's movement felt the topic of abortion was too controversial- that it would alienate people from the movement. Now almost every feminist organization or group has abortion rights on the highest of their priorities.

The tactics of today's mainstream feminist movement don't sit right with the more radical faction.

*Signing this or that petition, lobbying...*

We will probably have to compromise to get any leeway from the government, but while the efforts are appreciated, we should not be compromising with a system that seeks to control us, that endeavors to maintain women's bodies as property of the state. Reform makes things (seem) incrementally better, but as long as the government exists, it has the capacity to control us. To work within the system is to be compliant. *Telling horror stories about underground abortions...*

The symbolism of the wire hanger is a powerful one. And while the reality of fatalities and injury and other horrors should not be denied, there seems to be such a focus on deterring the government from illegalizing abortion based on the horror stories, that we forget that historically, women used to do their own and each other's abortions, that the knowledge was there, but stolen by the medical profession, which was contrived and regulated for the purpose of making money (not because people who aren't trained and licensed have no business performing the procedures). **Women need to learn more about their bodies** instead of leaving it up to the doctors (for those who can even afford doctors), that there are different methods, like menstrual extractions, emmenagogues, other herbs, and even massages that can help one abort a fetus. In addition, focussing on how horrible illegal abortions were, are, and will be, takes away from improving legal abortions- the expense, the impersonal treatment by some practitioners. The mainstream feminist movement has been fear-mongering around the possibility of Bush's reign causing abortion to be illegal. Things do seem to have gotten worse with so many conservatives in office, but it seems there's a better option than spreading fear.

**We can empower ourselves and others** by educating about birth control. For the most part, many birth control methods- pills, shots, patches- mess up women's bodies. For those who have the ability, information about fertility awareness should be readily available. Tracking one's cycle is a hassle, but completely natural and harmless. There are other options other than those that mess with our hormones.

**Women can learn how to do abortions.** There was once a group called Jane in Chicago (check out the book "The Story of Jane") that helped women get underground abortions and later learned to do it themselves before it was legalized. They learned that it was an easier procedure than a tonsillectomy, that they can do it safely with little risk of injury or infection. We can learn about the various methods of birth control and abortion to determine options, safety, etc. We can make it available, affordable, more natural and personal. We can develop relationships that are supportive and educational. We can make it happen- by and for women.

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