

The Abortion Campaign: A Study of  
Moral Reform and Status Protest.

Alan Henry Clarke, B.A., B.Phil.



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## Abstract

This study focuses on three major pressure groups involved in the abortion campaign, namely, the two anti-abortion organisations 'Life' and the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, and the National Abortion Campaign, a grassroots organisation which supports the campaign for 'A Woman's Right to Choose'.

Participants in moral reform campaigns have been described as status discontents motivated by a desire to enhance or protect a declining status position (Gusfield, 1963; Zurcher and Kirkpatrick, 1976). Gusfield's original theory of moral reform as a mode of status politics contains four main theoretical issues which are outlined and discussed under the following headings: cultural fundamentalism, orientation to reform, expressive politics and status defence. These issues are examined within the context of the anti-abortion campaign.

From an examination of pressure group literature, a study of campaign rhetoric and an analysis of questionnaire and interview data obtained from sixty-four active anti-abortion campaigners a number of conclusions are drawn. Firstly, cultural fundamentalism is identified as a feature in the anti-abortionist perspective. Secondly, assimilative and coercive reform strategies are evident in both the campaign literature and the individual accounts of campaign participants.

Thirdly, the data do not support the notion of symbolic crusades as a form of expressive politics, indeed campaigners can be seen to be instrumentally oriented. Finally, although status inconsistency is observed this is not a source of moral indignation. This supports the view that moral indignation can be a rational response to the violation of deeply cherished values (Wallis, 1977). Cultural defence rather than status defence is identified as the force behind individual mobilisation. This finding confirms recent research on moral crusades (Bland and Wallis, 1977; Leahy, 1982 and Wood and Hughes, 1984).

The influence of the women's movement in the campaign to defend the 1967 Abortion Act is assessed and the feminist interpretation of abortion as a critical indicator of women's status in society is discussed. Data are presented from a study of forty-two pro-abortion supporters.

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## Introduction

Before the passing of the Abortion Act in 1967 abortion was covered by the Infant Life (Protection) Act 1929, which proclaimed that, in all but a few exceptional cases, procuring an abortion was a criminal offence. The new legislation introduced a number of major changes and removed criminal sanctions in cases where, according to qualified medical opinion, a pregnancy posed a threat to the physical or mental health of the mother or any of her existing children. In line with clause two of the Act, when determining whether the continuance of a pregnancy involves such a risk of injury to health, doctors can now take into account the woman's 'actual or reasonably foreseeable environment'.

In 1969 54,819 legal abortions were performed in England and Wales, this figure rose to a peak of 167,149 in 1973, falling to 129,673 in 1976 and subsequently rising to 162,480 in 1981.<sup>1</sup> According to official statistics there have been over two million legal abortions performed in Britain since the Act came into force. Currently one pregnancy in five is medically terminated. Estimates as to the number of illegal abortions performed annually prior to 1967 vary considerably, ranging from 15,000 to 100,000.

The controversy over abortion did not end with the passing of the Abortion Act. Since 1967 there have been eight attempts in Parliament to restrict the working of the Act. In some ways it could be said that the real debate has only just begun.

Over the past sixteen years pressure groups have been actively engaged in campaigning for a change in the abortion law. Both the anti-abortion and pro-abortion groups have held mass demonstrations, in London and some of the larger provincial cities, which have attracted tens of thousands of supporters. Small scale public meetings and open lectures have been organised by many of the local branches of the national pressure groups. There has also been media coverage of the issue, current affairs programmes on radio and television have outlined the content and discussed the implications of the various Bills introduced to amend the Abortion Act, while national newspapers and women's magazines have featured articles on abortion and presented the findings of specially commissioned national opinion polls.

It is the pressure groups which form the major focus of attention in this study. The opening chapter provides a brief sketch of the history of abortion law reform in Britain and describes the course of the campaign in the 1970's. Four major pressure groups are identified; the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA) and the National Abortion Campaign (NAC), both of which want free abortion on demand and campaign under the slogan 'A Woman's Right to Choose'; and the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) which wishes to see the 1967 Act repealed and the medical termination of pregnancy allowed in only a small number of cases, and finally the 'Life' organisation which holds the view that abortion is always indistinguishable from murder and must be abolished.

The impact these groups have had on the abortion debate, as well as the extent of their current influence, are central themes in this study.

In the sociological literature on social movements considerable attention has been given to moral crusades and the activities of moral entrepreneurs. Gusfield (1963) in a study of the American Temperance movement has postulated that participants in moral reform campaigns are motivated by feelings of status discontent. He sees crusades as a mode of status politics. Those individuals who engage in campaigns to secure a public reaffirmation of their cherished values are assumed to be motivated by a fear that their social standing and status position are under some sort of threat. Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (1976) claim to have found support for Gusfield's thesis in their study of participants in two anti pornography campaigns. Investigations into moral crusades in Britain have commented on the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association (Wallis, 1976a) and the Nationwide Festival of Light (Wallis and Bland, 1979). Chapter Two considers the contribution of these studies to our understanding of moral protest as a form of status politics.

In Chapter Three the content and strategy of the anti-abortion campaign is examined in order to determine whether or not the campaign constitutes a moral crusade. Utilising Gusfield's concept of cultural fundamentalism, and taking into account his analytical distinction between assimilative and coercive reform, the anti-abortion stance is examined as an example of moral protest.

Chapter Four explores the explanatory value of Gusfield's thesis by raising some of the methodological problems encountered when utilising such concepts as 'relative deprivation', 'status inconsistency' and 'moral indignation' to account for individual mobilisation. It is argued that many of the theoretical issues in Gusfield's thesis of status protest cannot be examined without reference to the actual accounts of movement participants. This completes the first part of the study.

Some of the major theoretical issues surrounding the emergence of moral reform movements are examined further in Part Two with the reporting of the findings from an empirical study of 106 active participants in the abortion campaign. The first chapter in this section covers the aims and objectives of the survey, describes the preparatory fieldwork, and outlines the nature and content of the self administered questionnaire giving details of the attitude statements used. The sociographic and attitudinal data are presented in Chapters Six and Seven respectively, thus enabling a comparison to be made between pro-abortion and anti-abortion campaign participants. Following on from this, emphasis is placed on the anti-abortionists in order to assess and evaluate Gusfield's main analytical concepts, namely, cultural fundamentalism, assimilative and coercive reform, expressive politics and status discontent. These are examined, not from a study of the campaign literature and statements made by leaders of the national pressure groups, as was the case in Chapter Three, but from the accounts of individual campaign participants.

Drawing extensively upon questionnaire and interview data Chapters Eight and Nine discuss whether or not the anti-abortion movement resembles a moral crusade, and examine Gusfield's central thesis that status discontent, or the desire for status enhancement, is a significant factor in individual mobilisation.

Having described the social and cultural roots of the anti-abortion movement and presented the findings of a study of active participants in the anti-abortion campaign subsequent chapters concentrate on the pro-abortion movement and its supporters. Chapter Ten describes how abortion emerged as a central theme in feminist politics in Britain and was eventually adopted by the Women's Liberation Movement as both a symbolic and a practical issue. In assessing the role of the women's movement in the struggle for abortion rights Chapter Eleven recounts the background to abortion law reform in Italy, France and the United States of America and compares the situation in these countries with the British experience. The penultimate chapter is based upon an analysis of the interview and questionnaire data collected from active participants in a NAC group, and explores the nature of individual recruitment, identifies individual motives for participating in the campaign for 'abortion on demand', and comments on reactions of respondents to the anti-abortionist stance. General conclusions from the study of participants on both sides in the abortion campaign are summarised in the final chapter.

#### References

1. The annual number of legal abortions performed in England and Wales since the passing of the 1967 Act are recorded in appendix 1.

PART ONE.

Abortion Law Reform and the Sociology of Social Movements.

## CHAPTER I

Abortion, Parliament and the Pressure Groups.

The Abortion Act received the Royal Assent on 27 October 1967 and came into force six months later on 27 April 1968. Since this date there have been eight attempts in the House of Commons to amend the 1967 Act, two official inquiries into the working of the Act and much fierce and sometimes emotional debating of the abortion issue both inside and outside Parliament. The purpose of the present analysis is not to provide a comprehensive and definitive history of the abortion campaign in England and Wales. This is rightfully the task of the social historian. Nor is it intended to produce an account of the philosophical, legal, theological and moral arguments surrounding the status of foetal life in its various developmental stages. The primary aim is to concentrate on the main pressure groups involved in the current controversy over abortion legislation and to determine the extent to which their organisation, structure and operation can be interpreted and understood within the general framework of the sociology of social movements. While the current theoretical issues in this field will be examined with the aid of empirical data collected from an in-depth survey of a sample of pressure group members in the East Midlands it is necessary at the outset to provide an account of the changing nature and intensity of the abortion law reform campaign, particularly during the last decade.

A preliminary perusal of the dialogue between the anti-abortion and pro-abortion lobbies suggests that a central

theme of the controversy revolves around the question of abortion as a moral issue. On one side there are those who support the right of the unborn child to be protected, and on the other those who believe that it is a woman's right to choose. Within the context of this general debate a number of pressure groups have emerged. Although united in either their general opposition to, or support for, restrictive legislation on abortion these groups have displayed significant differences in their structure, organisation, longevity, geographical dispersal and the socio-cultural characteristics of their membership. Some groups have had a readily identifiable local base, appealed to specific sections of the population and been relatively short lived. In contrast, other groups have been organised on a national basis and have attracted support from a wide range of individuals and associations. The present analysis will concentrate on groups in this latter category. The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) and the 'Life' organisation have strenuously and actively supported moves to amend present legislation while movements like the National Abortion Campaign (NAC) and the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA) have attempted to resist such changes and advocated a less restrictive approach to abortion than that contained in current legislation.

#### The Law Prior to 1967

In order to appreciate the course of the abortion argument during the decade 1970 to 1980 some knowledge of the situation leading up to the introduction of the 1967 Act is necessary.

As the passage of this piece of legislation through Parliament has been documented in detail by Simms and Hindell (1971) only the salient aspects require mention here.

There were two statutes governing abortion in England and Wales in force when the issue was being debated in the Commons in the late 1960's. The Offences Against the Person Act 1861 made it an offence to procure an abortion and the Infant Life (Preservation) Act of 1929 made it legal to terminate a viable fetus in order to save the woman's life.

From 1938 to 1958, at approximately ten year intervals, three court cases took place in which medical practitioners were acquitted on charges of performing illegal abortions. In 1938 Mr. Justice Macnaughten ruled that it was lawful to terminate a pregnancy not only in order to save a life, but to protect the health of the woman. Similar judgements were made by Mr. Justice Morris in the trial of Drs. Eleonore Bergmann and Mary Ferguson in 1948, and in the case of Drs. Newton and Stungo heard before Mr. Justice Ashworth in 1958. The resultant case law produced two important rulings affecting the interpretation of the relevant legislation. Firstly, it appeared that health was to be viewed in both physical and mental terms. In the Bourne case of 1938 Macnaughton stated that it could be considered lawful to terminate a pregnancy in order to prevent the woman becoming a 'physical or mental wreck'. Secondly, providing that the doctor sincerely believed that the decision to terminate the pregnancy was the right thing to do, and that honesty of purpose was evident on the doctor's part,

the abortion could not be considered as having been done unlawfully.

The prevailing statutes and existing case law concerning induced abortions did little to clarify the position, particularly for the medical profession. As the case law had not been tested in the High Court some uncertainty surrounded the whole procedure. Apprehension and ambiguity in medical circles was aggravated by the fact that the court decisions appeared to place the onus on the doctor to prove that he or she had performed the operation in good faith and if the pregnancy had not been terminated the patient's health would have suffered either physically or mentally.

### Reform

It was during the period from the passing of the 1929 Infant Life (Preservation) Act to the Bourne case of 1938 that the abortion controversy received increasing attention from professional bodies. Resolutions reflecting the growing awareness of the moral, social and medical arguments surrounding the abortion issue began to find their way on to the agendas of various medical committees. Consequently, in July 1935 the British Medical Association set up a committee on abortion. In this climate of increasing debate, both in public and private settings, a pressure group was formed in February 1936 calling itself the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA). A comprehensive account of the formation and development of this reform movement has been provided by Alice Jenkins (1960), a founder

member who held the post of Honorary Secretary. The impetus for the movement was provided by a group of feminists who devoted considerable energy to campaigning for sexual reform and birth control. The individuals forming the intellectual and administrative core of this group were generally similar in social background and political and philosophical outlook. They tended to be supporters of the Labour Party and active participants in a number of social movements, particularly those associated with the emancipation of women.

The work of the ALRA during this period was of a largely propagandist nature. Its ultimate aim was to achieve the repeal of the law relating to abortion and ensure that it was replaced by a law 'freeing the medical profession from all legal restrictions except those required by medical or humanitarian considerations'. However, the political and social conditions of the 1930's, with concern being expressed over the falling population, did little to provide a climate of opinion in which the call for the introduction of a liberal approach to abortion legislation was likely to attract a favourable response. Thus, in its formative years the Association was compelled to direct its efforts towards encouraging informed debates and discussions of the relevant issues and generally preparing the way for a future campaign. The prevailing social attitudes surrounding sexual behaviour and the conventional views concerning the role of women were important external factors which helped to influence and shape the tactics and methods adopted by the early reformers. As a pioneering pressure group they sought to acquire a certain respectability for their cause. This they

attempted by attracting support from members of the community who held positions of social or professional importance. A Medico-Legal Council was formed within the Association and academics, lawyers, medical consultants and politicians of all parties, who were known to have expressed views favourable to a more liberal policy on abortion, were invited to join. During this period the main contribution of the ALAR was in ensuring that the views of the reformers gained a hearing. Although the Association's members could be described as militant feminists, the role of the group was largely educational. In the 1930's there was little preoccupation with direct political action to achieve legal reform.

The disruption caused by the Second World War severely curtailed the activities of the ALRA. The available documentary evidence and relevant biographical information suggests that in the post-war era the Association underwent a number of changes. In the years immediately following the war there was some indecision with regard to the course of action necessary to achieve a more liberal approach towards abortion. Some members felt that a policy of direct political action should be adopted, while others advocated a concentration of effort to establish abortion case law favourable to their cause. By the 1950's it was evident that the majority of members were in favour of the former course of action. However, as the Association's membership was declining at this time the extent of their activities in this field was limited. As Simms and Hindell have stated:

The Association would flare briefly into life whenever Parliamentary action promised and then relapse into an almost moribund state until the next excitement. It

responded to events but did not attempt to create them. (Simms and Hindell, 1971, p.76).

Something of the pioneering spirit characteristic of the group at its inception appeared to have disappeared. The social base of the group had changed little since the late 1930's and as one observer has remarked, the increasing age of the membership and failure to attract new members, resulted in the Association becoming 'more of a social club than a pressure group' (Barr, 1967, p.342). For a pressure group to be successful in influencing the climate of opinion and achieving its aims, it must not merely respond to changing circumstances, but endeavour to create an atmosphere and situation conducive to reform. It must play an active part in cultivating public opinion and petitioning legislators. In the early 1950's the ALRA was failing to promote its cause with sufficient vigour and it had lost much of its former forcefulness.

It was during the early years of the 1960's that the Association entered the most influential stage of its career. In the months leading up to the drafting and reading of David Steel's Bill on the medical termination of pregnancy the ALRA had an influence virtually unequalled by any other parliamentary pressure group. As Pym has stated:

Abortion Law reform was a clear case of pressure groups having an influence, and perhaps represents the high-water mark of pressure group intervention. But one must remember that it is relatively rare for groups to play so major and unrestrained a role as ALRA did. (Pym, 1974, p.80).

The change in the ALRA's fortunes may be attributed to a

number of factors. This was a period of social reform. There was an apparent readiness to evaluate and reassess legislation within the fields of sexual behaviour, capital punishment, divorce and drug taking. Within this general climate of changing social attitudes the media and the politicians were more amenable to discussing abortion than had been the case in the previous decade. However, if one factor were to be singled out as being of paramount significance in the revival of the campaign for abortion law reform it was the occurrence of the thalidomide tragedy. One commentator has asserted that: 'It was the thalidomide tragedy ..... which the reformers see as the turning point in public opinion and as the stimulus for real "professionalisation" of the reform movement' (Barr, 1967, p.342). A view also expressed by Simms and Hindell in their study of the events leading up to the passing of the 1967 Act when they state: 'The drug thalidomide was the motor that re-invigorated the ALRA and which paved the way for reform' (Simms and Hindell, 1971, p.108). This is not to suggest that the campaigners used the disaster to publicise their cause. The tragedy served to change the context of the abortion debate, emphasis moved from questions of morality to those of public health. The media publicity given to the thalidomide disaster made public opinion more receptive to the abortion issue. According to Pym, although the period was characterised by changes in social attitudes new values did not appear to be extended to abortion until 'the calamity of thalidomide provided an effective catalyst' (Pym, 1974, p.65).

The influx of younger activists to ALRA produced a vigorous

campaign in which endless energy was devoted to lobbying Members of Parliament, organising petitions, meetings and rallies and using, for the first time, the results of national opinion polls to substantiate their case. Consequently they were extremely influential in deciding the content of the Steel Bill. Not only did the Bill's parliamentary sponsors display a willingness to listen to the Association but there was little or no organised opposition. The ALRA was the first organised body to formulate definite views on the issue. There was a notable lack of authoritative statements from other sources, such as the Church or the medical profession. In short, the situation both inside and outside Parliament was one extremely favourable to abortion law reform.

The ALRA had, with the help of a team of experts including Glanville Williams, Professor of English Law at Cambridge University, prepared a clear and concise case for reform. Under the direction of Alastair Service, their Lobby Organiser, the Association ascertained and monitored the attitudes of the Members of Parliament and gathered together, from both sides of the House, a body of supporters.

The campaign was so thorough and intense that in the face of little opposition within the House the Bill was successful in its Second Reading, obtaining 223 votes for, and only 29 against. After this initial success the Bill did not proceed unhindered but met with a flood of amendments in subsequent parliamentary sessions. Considerable time was devoted to the drafting and wording of the Act. The course of the Bill through

Parliament, and particularly the events and argument surrounding the Report Stage and Third Reading, have been suitably documented elsewhere. The views of the British Medical Association and other professional medical groups have also been described and commented upon by others (Simms and Hindell, 1971: Simms, 1974a; 1976). The intention so far has been to illustrate how the main pressure group in the debate went through a number of transitions, over a period of thirty years, in its battle for abortion law reform. It originated, in the late 1930's, as an association of radical feminists attempting to publicise the abortion issue; went through a temporary decline in the post-war period when it responded to events rather than attempting to create possibilities for reform, to emerge in the 'sixties as a forceful and efficiently organised parliamentary pressure group.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill was finally passed by 167 votes to 83 in July 1967, and became law in April 1968. Under this new Act abortion was now legal, up to twenty eight weeks, if:

- a) the continuance of a pregnancy involved a risk of injury to the physical or mental health of the woman, or any previous children, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.
- b) there was a substantial risk that if the child was born it would be seriously handicapped by physical or mental abnormalities.

The former of these two became known as the 'social clause' and has attracted considerable criticism and opposition in subsequent debates. The Act stated that two registered medical

practitioners involved in determining whether the continuance of a pregnancy would involve a risk of injury to health could take into account 'the pregnant woman's actual or reasonably foreseeable environment'.

The intention of the participants in the reform movement and the supporters in Parliament had been to clarify the law on abortion, and to alter a situation which permitted abortion on demand for those with sufficient money. Steel himself was concerned to eradicate what he considered to be the scourge of criminal abortions. The ALRA was primarily concerned with introducing what they saw as a humane abortion law. This aim is apparent from the way in which they presented their argument. As Simms has noted three issues occupied the central ground in the controversy. Firstly, a strong case was advanced for the need for abortion in instances of foetal abnormality. It was advocated that abortion should be permitted where a child was likely to be born with a severe mental or physical handicap. Secondly, the supporters of liberal reform wanted the woman's health and her social circumstances taken into consideration. In other words strong emphasis was placed upon actual and foreseeable environmental conditions. Finally, it was argued that abortion facilities should be available to women who had been victims of rape (Simms, 1970).

#### Opposition.

As suggested previously the Bill did not pass through its various Parliamentary stages unopposed. Some Members did raise

objections over the wording of certain clauses while others opposed abortion per se. However, these critics did not form part of a strategically organised opposition. There was pressure from various sectional interest groups outside of Parliament, notably the British Medical Association, the Royal College of <sup>Obstetricians and</sup> Gynaecologists and senior church members and religious leaders. These groups were not without influence on the sponsors and drafters of the Bill. Nonetheless the situation was one in which the ALRA had taken the initiative and, in promoting reform of the legislation, decided the main issues on which the debate would be conducted.

In January 1967 opposition to reform began to gain momentum with the launching of a new pressure group under the name of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC). This was some six months after David Steel's Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill had received its Second Reading and less than five months before it entered its Report Stage. The Society adopted propaganda methods and campaigning techniques and strategies similar to those which had brought the reformers so much success. Members of the group lobbied Members of Parliament, wrote letters to the national press and commissioned opinion polls to illustrate the extent to which their views were endorsed by public opinion. The central administrative and advisory positions in the Society were held by the Bishops of Bath and Wells and a number of gynaecologists, among whom the most notable was Professor Hugh McLaren of Birmingham University. The declared aim of SPUC was stated as being to reassert the principle laid down in the Declaration of the Rights of the

Child by the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 1959, that children need special safeguards and care, including suitable legal protection before as well as after birth. In spite of a short but well organised campaign mounted by SPUC the abortion law was reformed with the enactment of Steel's Bill.

Three years after the passing of the Abortion Act public and parliamentary debates on the issue underwent a change in both direction and emphasis. The grounds of the controversy shifted to issues more promising to the opponents of reform who now held the initiative. The anti-abortion lobby could point to the abuses under the 1967 Act and this provided valuable evidence for their cause. Thus, the proponents of liberal reform were thrown onto the defensive and the anti-abortion movement began to extend its campaign. By changing its course of attack from one of complete opposition to abortion to fighting the abuses of the law, SPUC began to draw support from the moderates, who had supported the initial reform but then become concerned about the increasing number of abortions. The publicity given to alleged abuses served to arouse general public concern. A number of articles appeared in the press written by journalists claiming to have uncovered breaches of ethical conduct, on the part of some medical practitioners, of horrific proportions. In 1974 a book was published which contained allegations of serious malpractice and disregard for the law in certain areas of the 'abortion industry' (Litchfield and Kentish, 1974). Although verifiable evidence could not be produced to substantiate the accusations the attendant publicity

was sufficient to encourage more moderates to call for a reappraisal of the salient issues surrounding the law relating to abortion.

During the early 1970's SPUC held a number of mass rallies mainly to increase public awareness of the abortion question and attract the attention and support of politicians. In 1971 an estimated 8,000 people attended an anti-abortion march in Birmingham while in three consecutive years from 1972 the Society organised rallies in Liverpool, Manchester and London attracting, according to the most conservative estimates of the media, around 50,000 protesters on each occasion. The Manchester rally consisted of a two mile march in which each demonstrator carried a white paper daisy, the emblem of SPUC. At the end of the march the 'flowers' were deposited in special containers, 'each flower representing the death of an unborn baby' (Times, 26 March 1973, p.2).

The publicity given to the alleged abuses and the intensity of the anti-abortion campaign were factors which influenced a Labour Member of Parliament, James White, to introduce a Private Members' Bill in 1975. The Bill easily obtained a Second Reading with a commanding majority of 115 votes. The clauses in the Amendment Bill were designed to restrict 'abortion on demand'. Changes were proposed in the wording of the Act, with the inclusion of such terms as 'grave risk' and 'serious injury' in the so called 'social clause'. In addition to this, the Bill recommended that the time limit for abortions should be reduced from twenty eight weeks to twenty and that the activities of

advisory centres and referral agencies should be restricted and tightly controlled. These proposals were strongly supported by SPUC who organised a mass demonstration in London attracting over 50,000 anti-abortionists. Part of the rally consisted of a silent procession led by children carrying white flowers. The Bill was eventually referred to a Select Committee, the proceedings of which will be discussed in a later section.

Nearly two years later another Private Members' Bill was introduced, this time by William Benyon, Conservative Member for Buckingham, who was an active participant in his local SPUC group.<sup>2</sup> The clauses of Benyon's Bill were weaker than those put forward by White, but if the amendments had been accepted they would have brought about a significant reduction in legal abortions. On 25 February 1977 the Bill obtained its Second Reading by a majority of 38 votes. A number of Members joined forces to make a determined effort to fight the Bill and seventy hours of parliamentary time was taken up by the debate in ten sittings in June and July of that year. Eventually time ran out and the parliamentary session came to an end, thus preventing the Bill making any further progress. The following year Sir Bernard Braine attempted, under the Ten Minute Rule, to introduce a Bill to amend the 1967 Act but received little support.

The third Amendment Bill, designed to reduce the number of abortions, was presented by John Corrie, Conservative Member for North Ayrshire and Bute, in 1979.<sup>3</sup> Its principal aims were to alter the wording of the Act by including such qualifying phrases as 'substantially greater' in the 'social clause' and reduce the

upper time limit for abortion from twenty eight weeks of pregnancy to twenty weeks. In addition, the Bill called for changes in the law relating to the functioning of private clinics and counselling services. The Third Reading of the Bill began on Friday 8 February 1980 and as twenty eight groups of amendments had been accepted for debate, with only three Fridays remaining during which these could be heard, the Bill ran out of parliamentary time. On 22 April 1980 an attempt was made by David Alton to introduce a Bill under the Ten Minute Rule to reduce the time limit for abortion to twenty four weeks. The Bill was unsuccessful.

During the past fourteen years SPUC has played an important role in mobilising opposition towards the 1967 Act, both inside and outside Parliament. It clearly falls into the category of a promotional pressure group in that it is a readily identifiable group seeking to 'promote a cause arising from a given set of attitudes' (Kimber and Richardson, 1974). The Society has formed the spearhead of the anti-abortion campaign throughout the 1970's and has a current membership of 30,000. The other major national organisation to emerge solely in response to the abortion issue is the 'Life' group which was set up in 1970.

According to its literature it is a:

.... non-denominational and non-political association of men and women who have combined to uphold the following principles:

1. No one has the right deliberately to destroy innocent human life.
2. All abortion involves the destruction of human life. When this is done deliberately it is a crime against humanity (Wheatley, 1974).

In attempting to ensure the recognition of these principles in legislation and in fighting for the repeal of the 1967 Act, 'Life' closely resembles SPUC in its organisation and structure. However, while SPUC is primarily concerned with pressing for tighter legal control over abortion and its subsequent abolition, 'Life' aims to provide a 'caring service' for pregnant women. It has approximately 18,000 members working in 200 local groups. These groups provide 'material and moral help for women who are suffering either physically or mentally as a result of pregnancy or who are tempted to seek abortion'. The members offer friendship, advice, guidance and support on a voluntary basis. The provision of this 'caring service' sets 'Life' apart from the purely promotional type of parliamentary pressure group.

#### Defence.

With the passing of the 1967 Act and the introduction of a more liberal and humane policy towards abortion the ALRA considered its work to be almost completed. In the early 1970's there were between seventy and eighty thousand abortions per annum and the Association felt that it had succeeded in making abortion possible for the deserving cases without bringing about a situation of abortion on demand. The overall consensus of opinion within the group was that the real problems remaining were of a technical nature and could be solved without recourse to new legislation. This prevailing attitude has been summed up by Simms and Hindell:

The Abortion Law Reform Association ... maintained that further law reform would have little practical effect. Law reform had been necessary to free doctors to act in the best interests of their patients without fear of prosecution. This had been achieved. But it was to misinterpret the function of law reform to suppose it could solve the practical problems that now confronted the Health Service in relation to abortion (Simms and Hindell, 1971, p.224).

The Association was of the opinion that the real problems remaining were of an administrative or attitudinal nature. More facilities were needed within the Health Service for abortions and some doctors had yet to become accustomed to the new legal situation. These problems could not be solved by amending the Abortion Act. The stance taken by the Association was clearly stated in an edition of its official bulletin published five months after the Act came into force:

It is no longer the law that is preventing women obtaining NHS abortions, it is the attitude of some of the doctors and the shortage of NHS facilities. A further reform of the law will not alter these factors in the slightest. (ALRA Newsletter, 1968)

Consequently the ALRA devoted its energies to campaigning for what it considered to be 'minor technical improvements'. In such an atmosphere it entered a phase of semi-retirement. This enabled the anti-abortion movement to gain considerable ground in the first half of the 1970's. Aided by a number of sensationalist articles in the national press, the labelling of London as the 'abortion centre of the western world' and a growing concern among Members of Parliament over the rise in the number of abortions, the anti-abortion lobby attracted some valuable support. When James White introduced his Bill in 1975

the pro-abortion lobby had only just begun to regroup and organise itself for another campaign; this time a defence campaign.

The mid-1970's witnessed a significant revival in the pro-abortion campaign but it was a campaign with its origins and support in a social and political base different to that characteristic of the reform movement of the 1960's. The ALRA had been, in many ways, an elitist group. As Barr remarked in 1967, '.... ALRA remains an essentially "Hampstead" group of professional men who can spare the time for its work and the otherwise unemployed wives they can afford to support' (Barr, 1967, p.342). This was to change with the impetus for action coming as it did from within the women's movement and in March 1975 the National Abortion Campaign (NAC) was launched. This group was formed to organise the fight against the Abortion Amendment Bill then being presented in the Commons by James White. This move marked an important development in the pro-abortion lobby; the cause of abortion was no longer the concern of a single parliamentary pressure group but as Greenwood and Young have remarked it became the 'focus of a mass movement' (Greenwood and Young, 1976, p.58). Shortly before the emergence of NAC, the ALRA was experiencing a number of changes in its membership and structure. In January 1975 the Association, partly as a result of an influx of new activists, re-established itself as a militant and forceful pressure group with the mounting of a campaign under the banner of 'A Woman's Right to Choose'. It published numerous informational pamphlets articulating its demand for 'abortion on request'

within the first twelve weeks of pregnancy. The title of its new bi-monthly newsletter 'Breaking Chains' is indicative of the changing nature of the group's approach. No longer was the ALRA content with the contents of the 1967 Act, or with the opinion that nothing could be gained by changing the law. Thus in response to pressure from the anti-abortionists to amend sections of the Abortion Act the ALRA emerged with a new and more radical membership and entered on another stage in its campaigning history.

The National Abortion Campaign held its first public demonstration, which was against the White Bill, on 21 June 1975 in London. This rally attracted between twenty and twenty five thousand supporters. Support for the campaign was forthcoming from numerous groups and associations. The TUC, the National Women's Liberation Conference and the National Labour Women's Advisory Committee all passed resolutions against the Bill. The First National Conference of NAC was held in October and was attended by one thousand members. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a programme of action involving, not merely the defence of abortion rights, but the eventual extension of such rights. The pro-abortion movement was not content with merely protecting the legal rights to abortion secured in the 'sixties but launched a counter-attack at the anti-abortion lobby and passed a resolution at the National Conference to fight for 'free abortion on demand' (Knight and Gorton, 1976, p.18).

NAC was formed as a promotional pressure group with a

national membership. Local branches were established throughout the country to fight SPUC and 'Life' at grassroots level. National Planning meetings were organised in centres around the country to discuss policy matters. The decisions taken at these meetings were passed on to a Steering Committee for consideration. The organisation was, and still is reliant upon voluntary help, and has played a major part in fighting all three private members' bills brought before Parliament between 1975 and 1980.

In 1976 sixteen pro-abortionists formed the Co-ordinating Committee in Defence of the 1967 Abortion Act. This body played an important part in organising, directing and sustaining opposition to the Corrie Amendment Bill which was defeated in 1980. At that time the Committee had more than fifty member organisations including ALRA, NAC, Tories for Free Choice, Doctors for a Woman's Choice on Abortion, Christians for Free Choice and the main abortion charities, engaged in the fight against the Corrie Bill.

#### Official Committees.

As previously stated, after the passing of the 1967 Act the course of the debate altered. The implementation and interpretation of the Act became the primary focus of attention. The national press played a considerable part in regenerating public interest in the issue and influencing and stimulating public opinion with their revelations of alleged abuses under the law. The situation was such that London became dubbed the 'abbattoir

of the world's unborn' and the law was reviled by ardent anti-abortionists as being a licence to print money for some unscrupulous doctors working in the private clinics. In an article in the Times in June 1969 Norman St. John-Stevas, Conservative Member of Parliament for Chelmsford, stated that '... an examination of the way the Act has worked in practice makes out an overwhelming case for reform' (Times, 27 June 1969, p.11). In mid-July of the same year he pursued this line of argument in the Commons when he asked the House for leave to introduce a Bill to restrict abortion. He informed the House that he did not wish to see the Act repealed but just certain sections of it amended. In his speech he made reference to the existence of a small minority of doctors who were making large sums of money by flouting the law and he claimed that anyone with the slightest concern for public morality must be concerned about such abuses of the Act. David Steel spoke against the Bill, and when put to a vote St. John-Stevas was refused leave to introduce a Bill by 210 votes to 199; a narrow margin of 11 votes.

Concern over the working of the Act began to be expressed both inside and outside Parliament. In November 1969 SPUC produced the results of a Gallup Poll commissioned by themselves suggesting that 62 per cent of people wished to see a change in the law. On the 17 November 100 Members of the Commons signed a motion tabled by St. John-Stevas referring to 'the deep and widespread public anxiety over the working of the Abortion Act 1967' and calling for the setting up of a committee to conduct an independent and impartial inquiry.

In the years following the implementation of David Steel's Bill the consensus of opinion among the anti-abortionists was that insufficient consideration had been given to the consequences of such legislative measures. The 1967 Act was seen as the outcome of a concerted campaign organised and conducted by a pressure group which was representative of only a small section of the population. In the view of the anti-abortion movement some Members of Parliament had behaved irresponsibly. This feeling was evident in certain sectors of the media. In an article entitled 'Power without Responsibility' Ronald Butt stated that the Bill:

..... was pushed through Parliament as a private member's Bill under the steam of a minority pressure group, while Ministers stood safely on the side lines but gave it a helping hand with parliamentary time.  
(Butt, 1969, p.9)

Within Parliament the attitude of Members towards abortion was gradually changing. In the face of increasing pressure from the anti-abortion lobby, increasing numbers of abortions and the growing publicity given to alleged abuses, the hardliners began to draw the support of the moderates in their call for an inquiry. As Leo Abse stated:

I have urged, with 250 other Members, that there should be a total review of the Abortion Act. It is an Act which came into existence without any thought. It is an Act which came into existence because of the pressure of a particular lobby. (Times, 28 June 1970, p.2)

A change of government, with the defeat of Labour in the 1970 General Election, produced a Conservative majority and a hardening of Parliament's attitude towards the Abortion Act. On 23 February 1971, Sir Keith Joseph, the Secretary of State

for Social Services, announced in Parliament that the Government had decided to 'appoint a committee of inquiry to review the operation of the Act on the basis that the main conditions for legal abortion remain unaltered'. Thus the aim was to investigate the nature and extent of the abuse of the current legislation and make suggestions for its elimination or prevention. The appointed committee was not given a mandate to re-examine the pro and anti-abortion arguments. Its terms of reference were such that it was not to concern itself with the moral and ethical principles underlying the Act, but merely to examine the workings of the legislation and suggest ways in which the law could be altered in order to enable it to operate more efficiently.

Under the chairmanship of the Hon. Mrs. Justice Lane a fourteen member committee was organised. This consisted of senior representatives of the medical, legal and nursing professions, along with members from the educational and welfare services. The Lane Committee began to take evidence in Autumn 1971 and amassed large quantities of information from individuals, groups and societies over a period of two and a half years. During this time it held 33 meetings totalling 54 days. Four sub-committees were appointed to study a particular area intensively and report back to the main committee. These sub-committees altogether held 31 meetings. Within these sessions information was provided by 194 organisations and 529 individuals. In addition to this, questionnaires were distributed to gynaecological units in Health Service hospitals, some referral agencies and private clinics. The Committee also commissioned

a survey of abortion patients, by the Institute for Social Studies in Medical Care. Other information and confidential comments were solicited from the appropriate government departments. The final report was published in three volumes in April 1974.

On completion of their inquiry the Lane Committee stated, 'we are unanimous in supporting the Act and its provisions. We have no doubt that the gains facilitated by the Act have much outweighed any disadvantages for which it has been criticised' (Lane Committee 1974, vol I, para. 605). The Committee did discover problems in the operation of the Act and obtained evidence with regard to abuse in the private sector. However, they concluded that the abuse was on a small scale and stated that, 'the more reputable parts of the private sector have performed a valuable service which in many respects has compared favourably with that of the NHS' (ibid. para. 443). They rejected the anti-abortionist argument that legalising abortion produced a situation in which supply created demand and private profiteering rackets abounded. Evidence of abuses, such as touting, was confirmed but this the Committee said had to be viewed in perspective. They felt that:

Much of the adverse criticism is justified: in consequence of the Abortion Act a situation has arisen in which a very small number, of perhaps about 20 or 30 members, of the medical profession and those associated with them, have brought considerable reproach upon this country, both at home and abroad. (ibid.)

In the opinion of the Committee many of these abuses took place because the Health Service had failed to provide adequate

services to meet the demand for abortions thus creating a situation that could be exploited by a 'small minority of doctors' in the private sector.

In the view of the Lane Committee the abuses could be dealt with by changes in administrative procedures; major legislative reform was not necessary. Tighter control over the activities of the private clinics could be achieved with the introduction of stricter regulations enforced by an inspectorate who would make regular reviews of licences. The only main legislative reform recommended was the lowering of the upper limit for termination from twenty eight weeks to twenty four.

The Committee was aware of the reception their report would receive from the anti-abortion lobby and made the following statement:

Our generally tolerant attitude may disappoint those who see the Act and its workings as evidence of a serious and progressive decline in the standards and morality in sexual behaviour in this society. We understand this point of view and we sympathise with the motives of those who, disturbed by contemporary evidence of licence, press for action to curtail it. (ibid. para. 608)

Nonetheless, the overwhelming view of the Committee was that the advantages of the 1967 Act far outweighed any disadvantages. It was also suggested that some of the disadvantages were of a temporary nature.

The easing of social restraints is likely to be followed by a period of over-reaction towards licence and by abuse of their greater freedom by a minority; and this must be lived through, for the sake of larger advantages. (ibid.)

When the Labour Government received the Lane Report it declined to make any statement on its conclusions until it had considered the views and opinions of various interested parties. This gave the anti-abortionists time to mount an attack on the report and continue their campaign by publicising stories of malpractice. Six months after the Lane Committee presented its findings the book by Litchfield and Kentish (1974) was published. According to one Member of the Commons the effect was such that: 'The conclusions of the Lane Committee were swept aside in the emotional surge of horror and disgust' (Sinclair, 1978, p.14).

The second official investigation into the operation of the Abortion Act began in February 1975 when James White's Bill was referred to a Select Committee. The appointed task of the Committee was to consider the Amendment Bill, collect evidence on abortion and then make any necessary recommendations. As the Committee pursued these objectives it soon became apparent that there were fundamental differences of opinion among the members on the abortion issue. Of the fifteen members, six were determined to defend the principal provisions of the 1967 Act. The Committee decided that, under the circumstances, if any progress was to be made during the Parliamentary Session they must concentrate on those areas of abuse about which there was a consensus that some form of control was necessary. Agreement was reached on a number of issues, such as, counselling, certification and the size of fees charged in the private sector. In an interim report on 20 July, nine such recommendations were published. On 21 October Mrs. Barbara Castle, the Secretary of State for Social Services, informed the House that 'the Government

accepts in principle all the Select Committee's recommendations'.

In January 1976 the Government announced that it felt the House should decide whether or not the Select Committee should be reconvened and the matter was put to a free vote. The vote was in favour of reappointing the Committee by 313 votes to 172; a majority of 141. Never before had so many Members voted in a debate on abortion. The Committee was only one week into its new term when the six members who supported the 1967 Act asked to be discharged because they felt the majority view of the Committee was biased against the Act. The Committee continued to function, produced two further reports, and was terminated in November 1976.

#### Summary.

As the above analysis has shown the Abortion (Amendment) Bills which were introduced during the last decade all sought to reduce the numbers of abortions by lowering the upper time limit for the medical termination of pregnancy, changing the wording of sections of the 1967 Act and imposing stricter regulations on the private sector. Consequently parliamentary debates on abortion were devoted to issues of a largely legalistic and technical nature. The recent readings of the Corrie Bill are illustrative of this trend in that a large proportion of parliamentary time was taken up with the discussion of matters relating to the viability of the foetus and whether the upper time limit for legal abortion should be reduced from twenty eight weeks.

Both the anti and pro-abortion pressure groups have made contributions to these debates through their lobbying activities and publicity campaigns. The arguments and counter arguments they have formulated in response to the proposed legislative changes appear to have, at times, served to provide an inaccurate presentation of their fundamental aims and objectives. For the hardline activists in the campaign the major issue at stake has little to do with time limits or fine distinctions over the meaning of sections of the original Act. For such participants the abortion controversy is one of moral dimensions. At the core of these groups are the firmly committed participants who have not, in the course of the abortion battle, moderated their views. On the one side there are those who favour abortion on demand as a right and on the other, those who aim to ensure the repeal of the 1967 Act and the subsequent abolition of abortion.

In comparing the abortion debate in the 1970's with that leading up to the passing of the 1967 Act, Simms has remarked that:

Both sides look to the Abortion Act as it is working out in practice, to confirm their initial attitudes, whether favourable or hostile. The movement in public opinion takes place at the centre, among the uncommitted. (Simms, 1970, p.573)

This is true of the debate in the late 1970's and early 1980's. There have been changes in the attitudes of some politicians and professional and medical groups, but the major pressure groups have maintained, or in some cases intensified, their hard line approach. The anti-abortion groups have supported Bills to restrict abortion as a means to achieving their ultimate goal of the abolition of abortion. By adopting such tactics they have

succeeded in attracting support from the moderates. In contrast, the members of the National Abortion Campaign have not been satisfied with merely protecting legal rights previously obtained but they have launched a campaign for free abortion on demand, a move which has lost them the support of some of the progressive reformers. The anti and pro-abortion factions are as far apart now as they have ever been. According to Simms the debate at the beginning of the 1970's was such that it was:

..... unrealistic to expect the two extremes of opinion to moderate their views since these are based on ethical not pragmatic foundations. (ibid)

It would appear equally unrealistic to expect any moderation of views in the 1980's; some observers, such as Greenwood and Young (1976), have suggested that polarisation of the debate has been enhanced by NAC pursuing 'abortion on demand' and thereby losing much support from less extreme reformers. The abortion issue has emerged as a fundamental feature of the politics of the Women's Liberation Movement.

### References

1. The full text of James White's Abortion (Amendment) Bill (1975) is reproduced in appendix 2
2. The full text of William Benyon's Abortion (Amendment) Bill (1977) is reproduced in appendix 3.
3. The full text of John Corrie's Abortion (Amendment) Bill (1979) is reproduced in appendix 4.

## CHAPTER II

The Sociology of Social Movements: A Study of Moral Protest

Both the pro and anti-abortion factions continued to play an active part in the campaign throughout the 1970's. As documented in the previous chapter this decade witnessed several mass demonstrations; a continued increase in media coverage; a reported rise in group membership; a growth in the output of pamphlets and pressure group publications and attempts to consolidate support by establishing national co-ordinating committees. The campaign for legislative reform became dominated by a number of highly developed pressure groups with a readily identifiable national network of support. If these groups are to be the subject of sociological analysis then it is necessary to outline the salient theoretical issues within the field of collective behaviour.

Excluding the trade unions, a recurrent finding in the research on social movements is that they overwhelmingly rely on support from the middle classes (Reid, 1977). Bottomore, in an early study, has commented on the correlation between the degree of participation in voluntary associations and occupational status (Bottomore, 1954, p.380). The higher the social class the greater the participation in voluntary groups. Similarly, Wilkinson remarking on the predominantly middle class membership of pressure groups has stated that: 'Both the voluntary association and the pressure group are par excellence agencies of middle class mobilisation and influence' (Wilkinson, 1971, p.117). Such is the under-

representation of the working class among the membership of voluntary associations of any kind that one sociologist has referred to this as a 'truism of contemporary sociology' (Wallis, 1976a, p.282).

Middle class involvement in voluntary groups has been, and to some extent still is, particularly marked in the sphere of moral and social issues as distinguished from economic ones. Not all protest movements are motivated by the possibility of material advancement or economic gain. Parkin has criticised the tendency of many political sociologists to focus on those social divisions created primarily by material interests. In his study of middle class radicalism he stated that:

Less attention has been paid to the possibility that groups and individuals may be as deeply concerned about the defence or propagation of secular moral values which are quite unrelated to material and economic interests. (Parkin, 1968, p.33).

This aspect of protest activity had earlier been commented on by Gusfield and worked into his theory of middle class moral indignation and status discontent (Gusfield, 1963). In accounting for the emergence and growth of the American Temperance movement, Gusfield propounded his notion of moral crusades as a form of status defence. For some years this work provided an important theoretical base for studies of middle class participation in moral protest movements. Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (1976) subsequently drew heavily upon Gusfield's theoretical framework in their study of two anti-pornography campaigns in the United States of America. Meanwhile, in Britain, Wallis in his early investigations into the

Nationwide Festival of Light (Wallis, 1972) and the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association (Wallis, 1976a) acknowledged the relevance of Gusfield's analytical approach. A general overview of the above mentioned research studies will provide a useful insight into the theoretical issues central to the moral crusade thesis.

### The American Temperance Movement

Gusfield begins by observing that some social movements are centred around issues of moral reform and cannot be satisfactorily analysed by sociological models of economic class conflict. Following Weber's multi-dimensional approach to social stratification he asserts that classes and status groups are by no means equivalent and that the 'two dimensions of class and status make up two analytically separate orders of social structure' (Gusfield, 1963, p.15). His acceptance of, and reliance on, Weber's notion of status is evident from his statement that:

Status groups are communal. They share a common culture in the form of standards of behaviour, including patterns of consumption and work orientations. The culture or style of life is normative for members of the group. It constitutes the 'canons of decency' by which group members live. For those outside the group, who are potential prestige-givers, these items of behaviour become symbols of the status of members, who are potential prestige-receivers. (ibid. p.16).

The diversity of socio-cultural attitudes and beliefs, coupled with differences in life style, are such that communities and societies are characterised by a myriad of status groups. Social prestige is not equally distributed amongst them. Thus,

perceived inequalities in the distribution of social honour can give rise to feelings of status deprivation. This may be particularly pronounced in times of social change when the status expectations of individuals and groups are not fulfilled; producing, according to Gusfield, resentment and discontent.

Status discontents are likely to appear when the prestige accorded to persons and groups by prestige-givers is perceived as less than that which the person or group expects. (ibid. p.17).

In some cases the experience of such discontent can give rise to collective action in an attempt to raise or maintain the status position of a group. In other words, a status movement is formed. In pursuing this line of analysis Gusfield is adopting the notion of status struggle which is implicit in the distinction between class and status politics. Referring to the work of both Hofstadter (1955) and Lipset (1955) he discusses the relevance of this distinction. Whereas class politics is viewed as incorporating conflict over the allocation and distribution of goods and resources; status politics is seen as dealing with conflict stemming from status expectations and frustrations. In brief, members of status movements feel that their status position is threatened and by way of moral entrepreneurialism they attempt to secure public acceptance and official re-affirmation of their strongly held values and beliefs. They actively seek formal recognition of some aspect of their life style, usually through legal enactments, so as to publicly announce the dominance of their way of life and social position. As Gusfield has

proclaimed: 'Status movements are orientated toward the enforcement of the prestige of groups' (Gusfield, 1963, p.20).

In order to appreciate fully Gusfield's theory of symbolic crusades as a mode of status politics it is necessary to understand his use of the term 'symbolic'. This can be achieved by distinguishing between instrumental and expressive (or symbolic) social action or behaviour. For Parkin, instrumental behaviour is that 'which is directly geared to the attainment of concrete and specific goals generally of a material kind' (Parkin, 1968, p.34). The emphasis being firmly on the end result rather than the means adopted in its pursuit. In contrast, symbolic behaviour is seen by Gusfield to refer to action which 'is ritualistic and ceremonial in that the goal is reached in the behaviour itself rather than in any state which it brings about' (Gusfield, 1963, p.21). This is a definition which Parkin appears to have in mind when he refers to expressive activity as being 'less concerned with specific achievements than with the benefits and satisfactions which the activity itself affords' (Parkin, 1968, p.34). As Wilkinson has indicated, Parkin adopts Blau's notion of expressive politics in which actions can be seen as having expressive significance in that they are '..... wertrational rather than zweckrational, that is, oriented to the pursuit of ultimate values rather than to the pursuit of immediate rewards' (Blau, 1964, p.5). Whilst this categorisation is advantageous for analytical purposes, it must be remembered that these two types of political activity are ideal type constructs, for in reality they may be found in

different combinations in different social movements.

However, it may be assumed that the expressive political style predominates in moral protest movements as such groups are fighting to defend what were once dominant values. In this way, Gusfield associates class politics with an emphasis on instrumental activity and status politics with an orientation towards expressive action.

In his analysis of the American Temperance movement, Gusfield considered that there was a conflict in life style between the old, largely rural, Protestant lower middle class and the newer urban middle classes who were composed mainly of Catholics and recent immigrants. The sentiments and behaviour characteristic of the rural and small town Protestants were favourable towards abstinence; alcohol was more readily viewed as socially acceptable by the urban middle classes. In a sense abstinence came to be seen as being symbolic of a whole style of life. Consequently, a value and ethical system evolved around abstinence; drink was interpreted as sinful and the consumption of alcohol as an indication of a defective moral character. In this way Prohibition represented a status struggle between 'two divergent life styles'. Gusfield viewed the passing of the Prohibition Laws as marking the public affirmation of the positive qualities of the Protestant way of life in rural and small town America. The symbolic nature of alcohol and the importance of abstinence were seen, by the Temperance supporters, as being approved and officially confirmed by the action of the legislature.

From the point of view of the reformers in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union the success of their campaign lay not solely in the subsequent legal enforcement of anti-drink legislation but also in the very fact that the significance and superiority of their value system had been formally acknowledged. In the words of Gusfield:

The legislative victory, whatever its factual consequences, confers respect and approval on its supporters. It is at once an act of deference to the victors and a degradation to the losers. It is a symbolic rather than an instrumental act. (Gusfield, 1963, p.23),

The very nature of the moral protest was seen as being such that although the Prohibition Law might be frequently broken, or not strenuously enforced, this was of relatively little concern to the reformers. This point is suitably clarified in the following statement: 'If the law was often disobeyed and not enforced, the respectability of its adherents was honoured in the breach. After all, it was their law that drinkers had to avoid' (ibid. p.8).

According to the status defence thesis, the Temperance movement adopted a position of cultural fundamentalism when confronted by changing social values. Active participants in the Prohibition lobby were seen as upholding traditional values and attempting to ensure that they became the centre-piece of their claim to status and respectability. This fundamentalist response had two major aspects, one being defensive and the other aggressive. The former was characterised by '.... a sense of estrangement from the dominant values and the belief that a return to the dominant values of the past,

based on religion, economic morality and familial authority, will solve social problems' (ibid. p.144). This defensive attitude was interpreted as one response to a state of perceived moral degradation. Reformers, thrown on the defensive, called for moral regeneration and a return to the values of the past. The general decline in moral and cultural standards was viewed as extremely regrettable, with obvious serious implications for the future well-being of society. In comparison, the aggressive aspect of the fundamentalist reaction was evident in the apparent hostile attitude to anything modern. Having witnessed and documented the process of moral decay the reformers located the cause in the failure of established institutions, such as the school and the church, to provide the appropriate guidelines. A lack of firm leadership, increasing secularisation, modern child rearing practices and developments and trends within the entertainments industry, were all at one time or another cited as playing an instrumental role in the general decline in moral standards.

In order to understand and explain the movement's general orientation to reform and the nature and content of its campaign strategy, it is necessary to move beyond a mere consideration of this fundamentalist reaction. Gusfield firmly believed that the Temperance crusaders were attempting to assert the superiority of the normative patterns of conduct characteristic of their life style. The public acceptance of a framework of ideal norms would confer prestige and respect upon them. These campaigners, it will be remembered, were drawn mainly from the 'old middle class'; they were abstainers aiming to reform

drinkers. In this context Gusfield applied the term 'disinterested reform'. He implied that the reformers were not directly threatened by the drinker's departure from their normative code. The typical supporter of the campaign tended to originate from a family and social background in which abstinence was, and always had been, the norm. During the period analysed by Gusfield, the movement was not populated by reformed drinkers or individuals whose lives had been affected by the drunkenness of others. Consequently, the legislative changes proposed by the movement would have little, if any, direct impact on the personal lives of its members.

While the drinker was the object of reform the nature and style of the Movement's response to the consumer of alcohol was dependent upon factors other than simply his drinking behaviour. Gusfield considered that the image the reformers had of the norm violator and the motives they attributed to his behaviour played an integral part in shaping their response to his deviance. Clarification is provided by way of a distinction between 'deviants' and 'enemies'. Both are norm violators and rule breakers, the difference being that while the former recognise the legitimacy and dominance of the norms they violate, the latter do not. When the object of moral reform is depicted as a deviant rather than an enemy the social status of the reformer is assured. However, when the opposite is the case the dominant cultural position of the reformer is threatened. Under conditions such as these Gusfield postulated that two different styles of moral reform

would emerge. If the drinker is viewed as being part of a social system in which the reformer's culture is dominant then the trend will be towards assimilative reform. The deviant is seen as interpreting his behaviour as morally indefensible according to the social consensus and by repenting he is re-asserting the dominance and respectability of the social norms he has violated. As a result the reformer's values are not challenged and the energies of campaign participants can be safely directed towards converting the deviant to a morally superior way of life.

The assimilative mode of reform is replaced by a much more coercive approach when the object of reform is viewed as someone who is unwilling to change and openly rejects the crusaders' cherished values and life style. In such circumstances the cultural values and norms of the reformer are repudiated. The norm violator is no longer seen as someone who can be converted to the 'right way' but is viewed as an enemy, an intractable defender of another culture, one which directly challenges the reformer's social supremacy. Thus feelings of pity and sympathy for the deviant are replaced by expressions of anger toward the enemy. The reformers come to see themselves as being on the defensive, their position is no longer secure; in order to defend and uphold their own threatened position they are forced to resort to a repressive and coercive style of reform. The object of reform has ceased to be someone to be converted but has become someone who is hostile to their way of life and must be forced to accept their dominance. Such a repressive form of moral protest, in which social movements attempt to defend

or enhance their position by seeking the introduction of specific legal sanctions, is seen by Gusfield to be a method of status defence. A view which is summarised in the following passage:

The coercive reformer does not perceive the subjects of his reform with sympathy or warmth. They are not victims who can be assimilated into his communities or converted to his culture. Coercive reform is a reaction to a sense of declining dominance.  
(Gusfield, 1963, p.87),

Gusfield's contribution to the study of collective behaviour has been to draw together a number of existing strands of thought within the context of an original analysis of the Temperance movement and thereby formulate a seemingly cogent theory of moral crusades as a form of status politics. The fundamental elements of this theory have been outlined above and may be summarised as follows:

#### Status defence.

In times of social change some groups may find that their values and beliefs, which once held a dominant position in society, are being threatened. Thus efforts are made to preserve or enhance the social standing of their life style. The attack on their moral and normative standards produces feelings of status discontent, it is this which is seen as being the motivating force giving rise to the emergence of moral crusades.

#### Expressive politics and symbolic crusades.

In moral campaigns the expressive significance of political and social action is of primary importance.

Participants obtain substantial rewards from merely expressing their values and beliefs. As Parkin has commented, rewards of a psychological and emotional kind can accrue from 'expressing personal values in action' (Parkin, 1968, p.2). The object of reform has a symbolic quality, that is, specific behaviour, such as abstinence from alcohol, is viewed as a symbol of group morality. The symbols chosen by groups tend to be sufficiently general to serve as 'conceptual umbrellas' for individuals with a wide variety of interests. The Temperance movement appealed to the rural and small town Protestant middle classes of America; abstinence was a normal feature of their cultural environment. In this way, alcohol became a symbol differentiating between two life styles; the traditional and the modern.

#### Cultural fundamentalism.

The reformers responded to the perceived threat to their cultural values and normative standards by embarking upon what Becker has termed a 'moral enterprise' in which they concentrated on the 'creation of a new fragment of the moral constitution of society' (Becker, 1963, p.145). The fundamentalist response passionately defended the so-called traditional virtues by campaigning for moral rejuvenation. The defence of 'old fashioned values' was coupled with a savage attack on the supposedly responsible social institutions for failing to control the 'modernist'.

Orientation to reform.

Gusfield maintained that status groups in decline typically engage in a different style of moral reform to those status groups that are in a safe, well established social position. An assimilative policy which is designed to convert the transgressor, predominates when the values espoused by the campaigning group are strongly entrenched in the mainstream culture. However, when such groups are in decline, a coercive or repressive policy emerges. The rule breaker is viewed as being unresponsive to persuasion and posing a direct threat to firmly held values and beliefs.

Pornography, Permissiveness and Moral Protest.

A number of researchers have either uncritically adopted Gusfield's approach, in toto, as an appropriate framework for the analysis of other supposedly middle class moral reform movements, or have utilised suitably selected explanatory components to further their investigations of specific groups. Throughout the 1960's, and for the greater part of the 1970's, the notion of symbolic crusades, emerging as a consequence of the unalleviated moral indignation of a middle class showing the signs of status anxiety, occupied a central and influential position in the study of social movements.

In the United States of America, Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (1976) undertook a study of two anti-pornography campaigns, the Interdenominational Citizens' Council for Decency and the

Uprising for Decency. Using historical material and socio-economic and attitudinal data, collected from structured and unstructured interviews with campaign supporters, public officials, politicians and active opponents of the campaign, they present an analysis which is generally supportive of both Gusfield's original thesis and Smelser's explanatory model of collective behaviour (Smelser, 1963). The latter seeks to identify the developmental stages or sequencies in the evolution of episodes of social protest. In Smelser's view, 'the history of social movements abounds with agitations on the part of groups who experience a real or apparent loss of wealth, power or prestige' (Smelser, 1963, p.287). The experience itself engenders feelings of deprivation, social injustice or indignation; to employ Smelser's terminology 'structural strain' occurs. Eventually, within a social constituency, 'generalised beliefs' emerge. These function to mobilise people for collective action by creating a common culture and ideology conducive to concerted action. Such beliefs also serve to identify, locate, and label the source of conflict, thereby influencing the nature and scope of any group action.

In accordance with Smelser's definitional categories of social movements Zurcher and Kirkpatrick consider the anti-pornography pressure groups to be 'norm-orientated' movements in so much as they 'attempt to restore, protect, modify or create norms in the name of a generalised belief' (Smelser, 1963 p.270). In following Gusfield's example the researchers claim that pornography was to the active campaigners what alcohol was

to the Temperance supporters, hence their claim that

'... pornography had the potential to become an item the consumption or support of which indicated the social status of the user or approver' (Zurcher, Kirkpatrick, et al. 1971, p.221). Consequently, anti-pornography crusades were seen as emerging when traditionally dominant status groups had their social position challenged by ascending social groups proclaiming alternative value and normative systems. Thus there is a contrast of life styles; pornography, like alcohol, becomes a summary symbol for a challenging life style. Those joining the anti-pornography campaign become typified as 'status discontents' (Zurcher and Kirkpatrick, 1976, p.307), motivated by a desire to 'defend the prestige and power of their life style' (ibid. p.266). Identification with the anti-pornography campaign was seen as a kind of 'capsule statement' of a distinctive moral and social outlook (Parkin, 1968, p.108). Pornography provided a banner under which status discontents could rally in an effort to regain or enhance their status. As Zurcher and Kirkpatrick have remarked:

Pornography as an issue clearly is conducive to demands for normative change (in pornography laws, for example) without challenging (in fact, by serving) fundamental and traditional values concerning religion, sexual behaviour and other life style components. (Zurcher, Kirkpatrick et al. 1971, p.221).

Biographical and attitudinal data obtained from interviews with campaign activists was used to provide a general profile of the protesters. Those engaged in protest against the production and sale of pornographic material were predominantly middle class in origin, conservative in outlook, with firmly

held religious beliefs. In contrast, opponents of the anti-pornography movement tended to be less traditionalist in their views on family life and were portrayed as being more politically tolerant and less authoritarian. In protesting against the erosion of respectable values and norms the anti-pornography crusaders saw themselves as defenders of the very culture on which their society stood. A prominent belief frequently expressed by campaign members, was that the United States was going through a period of moral crisis and it was only the actions of 'good citizens' which could halt the perceived degeneration. Interestingly this decline in contemporary morality was viewed as an 'erosion from within' engineered by the 'conspiratorial efforts of communists and/or organised crime' (ibid. p.223).

During the first half of the 1970's Wallis undertook two studies of moral crusades in Britain; the Nationwide Festival of Light (NFOL) (Wallis, 1972, 1976b; Wallis and Bland, 1979) and Mrs. Whitehouse's National Viewers' and Listeners' Association (NVALA) (Wallis, 1976a). His early study of the NFOL was not designed to test the validity and applicability of Gusfield's model of symbolic crusades but was devoted to an examination of the structural and organisational features of the movement. Attention was focussed on movement mobilisation, the emergence and subsequent displacement of group goals and the co-existent tensions of charismatic and rationalistic conceptions inherent in the movement's leadership (Wallis, 1976b). However, no attempt was made to systematically assess the theoretical

relevance of Gusfield's propositions. This was to come later. But the potential for such an analysis is indicated by Wallis's occasional and tentative utilisation of Gusfield's concepts and terminology. For example, the distinction between assimilation and coercion, with regard to policy orientation, is made when discussing the aims of NFOL. According to Wallis the movement had two major aims, one to protest against moral pollution, which was believed to be particularly evident in the media and the arts and the other was to proclaim the Christian gospel as the positive solution to the perceived moral decline. In pursuing the former objective, Wallis saw the movement harnessing the forces of coercive reform, whereas the second objective demanded the adoption of a policy of conversion or assimilation. In making this distinction he pointed to the incompatibility of these two roles of the moral entrepreneur (Wallis, 1972).

The NVALA was formed in 1964 as an unofficial 'moral watchdog' over the activities of the broadcasting media. The primary aim was to combat the propagation and dissemination of what were believed to be subversive values and images of society. As such the group was not solely concerned with the issue of pornography but with the wider issue of social values. In his analysis of this overtly moral crusade and its ideological stance, Wallis explored Gusfield's theory of moral reform as a mode of status politics. The prevalent themes in the status defence hypothesis, which have been summarised above, and the accusations of conspiracy characteristic of the American

anti-pornography crusaders, are confirmed in Wallis's analysis of the NVALA. This movement is seen as:

... protesting against the erosion of norms and values to which its membership is committed as part of a broader way of life, and these norms and values have historically been linked to certain social groups. They adhere to and proclaim traditionally respectable norms and values which were dominant in British society in the late Victorian era, and which remained symbolic indicators of 'respectability' at least up to the Second World War. (Wallis, 1976a, p.282).

The 'Permissive Society' is castigated for having encouraged behaviour and conduct detrimental to moral stability and social well-being. This reaction to permissiveness may be viewed in terms of a commitment to a set of values linked historically to the traditional or entrepreneurial middle classes; these values Weber saw as being derived from the 'Protestant Ethic' (Weber, 1930). Responsibility, thrift, self-restraint and individual initiative are examples of such values. In Wallis's opinion this traditional morality has been eroded by a variety of changes in the social and economic order. With the rise of new dominant values and normative structures the older, more traditional values and beliefs underwent a process of 'differential erosion' (Wallis, 1976a, p.283). Contemporary codes of behaviour and conduct were such that the very legitimacy of the life style and culture of the traditional middle classes was undermined and repudiated.

The decline in society's moral order occupies a dominant place in the movement's ideology. According to Wallis:

There prevails in the NVALA the view that the social, political and economic ills to which the country is perennially subject, derive from a moral crisis which requires solution before any substantial change will occur elsewhere. (ibid. p.277).

Hence solving the 'moral crisis' becomes a panacea for all problems, whether economic, political or social. Only by arresting moral decay and returning to the essential values of British culture will social stability be achieved and future progress assured. This theme is by no means peculiar to the NVALA but can be found within the rhetoric and ideological formulations of most contemporary moral pressure groups. For example, the NFOL, in a pamphlet published in 1976, claim to uphold 'Christian community standards' and alert people to the 'destructive influences of contemporary culture' (NFOL, 1976). Some five years previously at its first national rally in London, attended by an estimated 35,000 people, numerous speakers referred to the responsibility of decent citizens to take steps to uphold public morality by fighting against moral pollution. Malcolm Muggeridge is quoted as saying that there was a need for 'a continuing process of moral and spiritual regeneration' (Wallis, 1972).

Not all moral reform groups organise mass rallies as part of their campaigning activities. There are a number of pressure groups with a small but national membership, as well as sundry community based associations, sometimes lacking a definite membership, which seek to have an impact through the dissemination of knowledge and ideas. Thus, while the groups are many

and varied and have fundamental differences with regard to structure, tactical action and religious affiliation, they are all engaged in a form of moral protest, either at national or local level, which attempts to reassert traditional values.

The majority of anti-permissive moral pressure groups have a strong and overt commitment to religious values. In fact, the most recent survey of the NVALA suggests that an ultimate desire to preserve religious values was, and still remains, the main motivating force behind the movement (Morrison and Tracey, 1978). Thus it is believed that the movement's reaction against the decline of traditional values can best be understood within the context of the growing secularisation in British society. However, in order to appreciate the nature and impact of the fundamentalist stance taken by moral reform movements it is not sufficient to merely view them alongside the social and cultural changes characteristic of the past three decades. As Cliff (1979) has shown, in his study of a number of national and local moral protest groups, primary importance is given to family life in the campaign rhetoric. Thus:

.... moral protesters tend to see a simple cause and effect phenomenon where the growth of permissive values is seen as straightforwardly leading to the undermining of the family. (Cliff, 1979, p.148).

Clearly the decline in moral standards is considered from the viewpoint of its effect on family life. Numerous policy statements, publicity leaflets and campaign pamphlets issued by the various groups readily display a family focus. The NFOL, as reported by Wallis, issued a 'statement of intent'

in which it was claimed that: 'There is a clear evidence that a determined assault is being made on family life ....' (Wallis, 1976b, p.83). Similarly the NVALA in their attack on the 'Permissive Society' have declared it to be 'a bitter and destructive thing' (Wallis, 1976a, p.277) that has served to 'undermine marriage and family life' (NVALA, 1966). Also, during a period when the 'Clean-up T.V. Campaign' was gathering momentum, Mary Whitehouse wrote: 'Men and women and children listen and view at the risk of serious damage to their morals, their patriotism, their discipline and their family life' (Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p.44).

Evidently, in its attack upon the media, the NVALA has not confined its activities to a simple condemnation of pornography; under the direction and guidance of Mrs. Whitehouse the Association has developed an ideology of moral protest which is thematically coherent and incorporates an overall view of broadcasting, along with an explanation of the impact of the media on the individual and society. The broadcasting industry is seen as being responsible for falling standards generally. The family and in particular children, are recognised as being highly vulnerable and in need of protection from decadent and subversive values portrayed in television programmes. The campaign to 'clean-up television' was not merely designed to remove scenes of violence and sexual behaviour from the screen but to question and denounce the social values proffered by such programmes and protect and reassert more traditional values.

The increasing 'moral normlessness' characteristic of the 'new permissive age' is interpreted as having a detrimental effect on family life, personal relationships and the whole moral order of British society. The views and arguments expressed by the reformers contain implicit assumptions as to the causes of the moral decline they appear to be witnessing. In typical crusading style the Association's rhetoric serves to identify certain groups and organisations as constituting the 'enemy' and suitable motives are attributed to their behaviour. Consequently the cause and effect of moral decline, is for the majority of supporters, non-problematic and forms an integral part of their world view.

A common factor in the emergence of moral crusades, and one which plays a major part in mobilising individuals for action is the 'generalised belief', whether accurate or not, that the leaders of established and influential groups in society have failed to uphold the fundamental social and moral mores and as such have neglected their responsibilities. In commenting upon the resurgence of pressure groups to defend norms and values Pym has stated that:

In the past the orthodox could depend on their values being defended by institutionalised groups such as the Church, the Conservative Party, social workers, teachers etc. without having to think about the matter, but in the current world none of these agencies is wholly reliable. (Pym, 1974, p.148).

This is particularly applicable to the NVALA. Tracey and Morrison (1979) in their study of Mrs. Whitehouse have illustrated how, for many years, she has expressed concern over the lack of leadership from the Church on a number of important

social and moral issues. She was bitterly disappointed and somewhat dismayed over the lack of support from this quarter when she launched her attack on what she considered was 'a blasphemous and obscene poem about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ' published in the June 1976 issue of Gay News:

'.... I was completely overwhelmed ... (by) the silence of the church. I couldn't believe that there was no member of the hierarchy of the church willing to speak up'. (Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p.13).

This notion of respectable groups and organisations failing to fulfil their duties and promote traditional values has provided the necessary impetus for much pressure group activity. The campaign participants come to see the onus falling upon themselves, and people like them, to secure a place for the once dominant values in contemporary society. The philosophical and ideological constructs characteristic of moral protest movements are such that stereotyped images abound; crusaders see themselves as defenders of public morality opposing an 'enemy' who is corrupt and determined to encourage moral decline in the pursuit of some calculated goal. According to Smelser what is of concern here, from an analytical point of view, are the 'negative components of ideology'. These are '.... great anxiety, which focuses on the decay of social and moral life and great hostility, which focuses on some individuals and groups in society' (Smelser, 1968, p.116). The anxiety has already been discussed therefore attention may be turned to a consideration

of the hostility which tends to be directed at clearly specified targets.

The evidence suggests that the hostile reaction of the NVALA cannot be viewed as spontaneous and haphazard but is a direct product of an internally consistent ideological framework. Within this framework the 'Permissive Society' is seen as being purposefully engineered, by both political and non-political groups, in order to undermine the socio-cultural system and destroy the conventional way of life in Britain. As Wallis has indicated, members of the movement perceive the threat to the value system as originating from outside, as well as inside, Britain. Mrs. Whitehouse has made numerous attempts to warn of the potential threat from external sources:

'After the last war, the enemies of the West ... saw that Britain was the lynch-pin of Western civilisation. She proved herself unbeatable on the field of battle because of her faith and her character. If Britain was to be destroyed, those things must be destroyed'. (Observer, 9 December, 1968).

The enemy has on many occasions been named as communism. Cliff (1979), Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (1976), Tracey and Morrison (1978; 1979) and Wallis (1976a) have all documented how a variety of moral protest groups consider communism to be a major evil and attribute some aspect of moral decay to communist influence. In some instances members and campaign leaders talk in terms of a deliberate and organised plot to destroy Britain being perpetrated by political extremists. In referring to the growth of 'permissiveness' in Britain, Mrs. Whitehouse has commented that: 'At the root of the trouble is something ... sinister,

a political and ideological conspiracy' (Observer, 9 December, 1968). The prevalence of this conspiracy argument has been noted by Wallis in his study of the NLAVA:

This view that the decline in contemporary morality is planned or encouraged by a communist conspiracy seems a common theme in a number of contemporary moral crusades ....; it also appears in the conversations of members of the Festival of Light whom I have interviewed. (Wallis, 1976a, p.277).

In their discussion of this anti-communist theme Tracey and Morrison have suggested that Moral Rearmament (formerly the Oxford Group) was a major force in influencing the thinking of Mary Whitehouse. They maintain that moral protest groups employ the term 'communist' as a kind of summary label encompassing a whole range of attitudes and beliefs of which they disapprove:

Frequent use of the term communist, as the embodiment of secularity, rests on its functionality as a summary statement, enclosing a variety of disparate groups and individuals ... (Morrison and Tracey, 1978, p.31).

Hence, the groups and individuals included under this heading, in the campaign literature and the conversations of members, do not always promote, support or adhere to this particular political philosophy.

Motives other than overtly political ones have been attributed to supporters of permissive legislation. According to the NVALA the Christian culture of British society is threatened, not only by a minority of firmly committed left wing political extremists, but also by a well meaning but misguided middle class intellectual elite. Participants in the

campaign for systematic scrutiny and closer official censorship of the media claim that the views and opinions of such individuals are not truly representative of the whole population. They believe that individuals holding permissive views have occupied influential positions in the broadcasting media or devoted considerable effort to the establishment of vociferous pressure groups thus conveying the impression that their beliefs and attitudes are positively endorsed by the majority of the people. This view is clearly expressed in the following extract from an early publication by Mrs. Whitehouse:

Permissive reforms are now being pushed through Parliament one by one. Although they command support from vocal minorities it would be a mistake to believe they represent the wish of the majority of ordinary people. And it is becoming more and more clear that the motivating groups behind them are the British Humanist Association, the National Secular Society, the Homosexual Law Reform Society, and the Abortion Law Reform Society. (Whitehouse, 1967, p.167).

The hostility and condemnation is generated not by the fact that such views are expressed by a middle class elite, but because such a minority should claim widespread support and that those people in positions of power and influence within broadcasting should abuse their position by disseminating their own minority values. The NVALA see these people as playing a fundamental part in the shaping of public morality. It is by way of legislation that the Association aims to curtail this manipulative potential. The introduction of such legislation is a necessary precursor to gaining access to, and control of, the means whereby normative and moral standards are established and enforced. This has been aptly summarised by Tracey and Morrison:

The conflict as she (Mrs. Whitehouse) sees it ... is one of different ideological groups within society, with the bulk of the God-fearing population having their way of life and real freedoms undermined by 'left wing, permissive liberalism'. It is the latter group which has captured the mechanics of consciousness, the means by which society's collective image - its sense of self - is formed. From this perspective the call for censorship becomes a means of recapturing the machinery and restoring to the people the capacity to fashion their own legitimate imagery, and it is to undermine that restoration that groups such as NVALA are vilified. (Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p.157).

The purpose of this chapter has been twofold. Firstly, to outline the initial influence of Gusfield's theoretical model of moral crusades in the study of anti-permissive pressure groups in Britain and the United States of America. Secondly, to identify the central features and fundamental aspects of these protest groups as a prerequisite to an analysis of the major pressure groups in the abortion controversy. In pursuing this second objective, three main observations attract special attention.

Firstly the attack mounted against the 'Permissive Society' by these pressure groups was largely founded upon a strong commitment to religious values and a firm belief in the need to protect the institution of the family from the destructive consequences of 'rampant permissiveness'. Secondly, the research studies reviewed suggest that the moral protest groups emerged partly as a result of a loss of confidence in the willingness and ability of orthodox and established institutions to protect and reinforce traditional moral codes and values. The feeling of having been deserted by responsible bodies provided the

major motivating force for collective action. Finally, the campaign rhetoric examined has given a clear indication of the tendency of anti-permissive pressure groups to depict the opposition as a minority group of 'misguided middle class intellectuals' or denounce them as a group of political extremists engaged in a conspiracy to destroy the social order. The relevance of these findings for the study of the anti-abortion movement will be considered in later sections.

The Anti-Abortion Movement as a Moral Crusade

This analysis of the abortion issue was first started in 1975, approximately seven years after the Abortion Act came into force and at a time when an Abortion Amendment Bill, sponsored by James White, was being heard in Parliament. Campaign activity was gaining momentum. While previously established pressure groups were fighting to enhance their position, newer socially and politically assertive protest groups, such as the National Abortion Campaign, entered the debate. The nature and extent of the national campaigns; the incidence of mass demonstrations attracting tens of thousands of participants; the existence of a co-ordinated network of grassroots organisations and the deliberations of various committees of enquiry, both within Parliament and the medical profession, provided an abundant source of material for the student of social movements.

Numerous publications concerning abortion in Britain were in evidence by the mid 1970's. On studying these as part of the initial literature survey three relevant and substantive areas of research were discernible. Firstly, there was a wealth of articles and studies dealing with the course of events leading up to the passing of the Act of 1967. The activities and influence of the ALRA had been well documented by two campaign participants (Hindell and Simms, 1971); the role of the medical profession in the development of abortion policy had been studied by MacIntyre (1973) and a general overview of the legal changes and their implications for medical practice commented

upon by Horden (1971). In addition questions relating to medical freedom under the new legislation had been raised and discussed by Simms (1974a; 1974b) and covered in the professional medical journals (Lewis, 1969).

A second area of research had developed around the actual workings of the 1967 Act. Assessments of the Act appeared at regular intervals (Simms, 1969; 1971; 1973; 1976). The focus was primarily on the official abortion statistics which were subjected to close scrutiny. The anti-abortionists had for many years drawn attention to the annual abortion rate and claimed that the new Act had made people more 'abortion minded' and consequently led to massive increases in the number of abortions. In reply, the pro-abortionists asserted that the Act had merely made abortion safer and the result was not an overall increase in the abortion rate but replacement of illegal abortions by legal ones. The evidence provided was by no means conclusive, largely because of the lack of accurate data concerning the number of illegal terminations before, and to some extent after, the passing of the 1967 Act. Considerable controversy surrounded the methods employed to calculate the numbers of illegal abortions, thus giving rise to widely differing estimates. Goodhart (1964; 1969; 1973) had expounded the view that the figure for criminal abortions prior to the new legislation had been grossly over-estimated by the pro-abortionists. He claimed that the figure was somewhere in the region of ten thousand per annum and not one hundred thousand. The validity of Goodhart's estimate had in turn been vigorously attacked by James (1971). Diggory et al. (1970) had also

strongly rejected the notion that the changing of the law had resulted in a large increase in the number of abortions.

At the time of reviewing previous research in preparation for the present analysis the debate over numbers was a central issue. Cavadino (1976) stated that there had been a 'five fold increase in illegal abortions between the years 1966 and 1972 and then a drop by 40 per cent in 1973'. This statement was discounted by Farncombe (1976) who also contended that illegal abortions were much higher prior to 1967 than previous analyses had suggested (1977a) and that the overall abortion rate was on the decline (1977b).

Finally, the provision and organisation of abortion facilities and the psychological and socio-economic characteristics of those women seeking abortions had attracted research interest. Abortion policy and the nature of the decision making process at local level had been examined in a case study of a Scottish health district. The emphasis had been placed upon the nature of the doctor-patient relationship (Horobin, 1973). Similar, if smaller, case studies had also been undertaken in other parts of Britain (Ingham and Simms, 1972).

This brief outline of research activity is not intended to be exhaustive. The large body of purely medical research into the clinical aspects of the termination of pregnancy has been omitted. The intention has been merely to give some indication as to the variety, direction and scope of research interest at the time the present study was planned, thereby illustrating the

opportunity for a research approach focusing on pressure group activity. However, before any empirical analysis of the abortion campaign and its participants could be embarked upon it was necessary to find out how far the anti-abortion pressure groups could be conceptualised as moral protest groups. A preliminary investigation into the aims, organisation, activities and objectives of the two leading groups, 'Life' and SPUC, was necessary in order to determine the relevance of Gusfield's explanatory model within the context of the abortion debate.

As indicated in the previous chapter, Gusfield (1963) had emphasised the symbolic quality of temperance by illustrating its relevance in representing a whole style of life. Similarly, studies of anti-pornography crusades had stressed how supporters were primarily motivated, not by the proliferation of what they saw as offensive material, but by a prevailing moral laxity that was seen as undermining conventional sexual mores. Pornography was a symbol of moral decline; to fight against the production, sale and consumption of such material was indicative of a firm adherence to respectable values. In the exploratory stages of the present analysis the extent to which abortion served as a summary symbol representing alternative, unacceptable and at times threatening ways of life had to be determined. Could identification with the anti-abortion campaign be viewed, alongside the acceptance of temperance or support of the anti-pornography crusade, as a 'capsule statement' of a distinctive moral and social outlook?

A characteristic feature of moral crusades is that their campaigns usually cover a myriad of issues and concerns; one of which becomes the focus of their activity in an effort to attract public support. The NVALA provides a good example. The Association strenuously attacked the vagaries of the 'Permissive Society'; the lack of a moral context in the teaching of sex education; the failure of the obscenity laws and the irresponsible portrayal of violence in the media. Interlinking these issues, a belief in the need to preserve and enhance traditional values can be discerned. In seeking to halt the decline in contemporary morality and promote and uphold Christian standards and beliefs the family and in particular children are viewed as 'victims' of permissiveness. The potential of the family unit as an integral social institution essential to the production of social harmony is clearly acknowledged. The protection of the family and the preservation of stable intra-familial relationships is a readily identifiable issue of central concern to the majority of moral protest groups. Thus, concerned with moral decline, such movements embrace a wide range of issues. In comparison the anti-abortion movement appears to have one specific cause and being concerned with a relatively narrow issue not warranting the label of a moral crusade. While such a conclusion may be forthcoming from a casual observation of the aims and objectives of the anti-abortion movement it is postulated here that a careful examination of the case against abortion, as propounded by the movement, reveals a number of implicit attitudes, beliefs and objectives which suggest that, on an ideological level, the anti-abortion campaign constitutes a moral crusade.

The Anti-Abortion Campaign: A Study of Moral Protest.

In an attempt to identify a moral dimension within the anti-abortionist stance and subsequently locate the pressure group activity within the wider context of moral protest the campaign literature and statements by official spokesmen and influential campaign supporters were studied. The general impression formed was that the anti-abortion movement possesses many of the fundamental attributes characteristic of a moral crusade, insofar as the campaign resembles a protest against what is seen as a gradual diminution of commitment to respectable middle class values and morality. Prior to the validation of this statement attention must be drawn to the problems inherent in identifying the values at stake in the abortion controversy. Caution must be exercised on two counts. Firstly, the actual identification of values is no easy task as moral crusades have their own modus operandi; emphasis is on expressing the importance of discrediting the opposition, selecting only those facts supporting their case and attempting as far as is possible to monopolise the discussion. Consequently, the polemical nature of the debate, in effect, serves to obscure the 'real' values and issues involved. Tactical imperatives placed upon reform groups by the very nature of pressure group politics are such that the differences in the value systems which are in conflict are not readily discernible. Secondly, it would be erroneous to assume that the values and beliefs expressed in the official publications of the respective pressure groups are universally accepted by campaign participants.

The following assessment of the abortion debate has been gleaned from a study of pressure group literature and public statements by anti-abortionists, the primary objective being to ascertain the relevance of a moral crusade perspective as an analytical framework for a study of the anti-abortion movement. In pursuing this line of inquiry two of the four theoretical issues examined by Gusfield will be stressed, namely, cultural fundamentalism and the orientation to reform.

#### Cultural Fundamentalism.

A recurrent theme in the anti-abortion argument is the threat to basic social values engendered by the apparent ambivalent attitudes towards abortion. When the Abortion Act had been in force for some thirteen months, Norman St. John Stevas M.P. believed it was 'facing the nation with an acute moral ..... crisis about the fundamental values on which our society is based' (Times, 27 June, 1969, p.11). In his opinion the respect for human life is a major 'prerequisite of a civilised society'. Other politicians have expressed similar feelings. Leo Abse has commented that: 'Abortion is about life and death, and a society that shrugged off as a triviality the decision to reject an unborn child would have allowed its values to be irreparably coarsened' (Abse, 1976). As regards the official stance taken by the pressure groups there are ample references to the threat to social values. In evidence to the Select Committee on Abortion (1975) Professor Scarisbrick, the national chairman of 'Life', claimed that the passing of the Abortion Act had been responsible for seriously undermining

some of our central values:

We submit that abortionism is corrupting us as a society . . . . . We are being corrupted into thinking that the small and defenceless are inferior and disposable, that the mentally and physically handicapped are morally second class and that we have the right to kill anything that is not 'perfect'. (Select Committee, vol. 2, 1975, p.15)

In the campaign rhetoric abortion is often equated with the 'sexual revolution' and the 'Permissive Society' and is condemned because it questions what, for supporters, are accepted secular and ecclesiastical concepts of sexuality. A pamphlet issued by the central office of 'Life' states:

Abortion is regarded as a condition of the contemporary sexual freedom, since it is a last defence against unwelcome consequences of permissiveness . . . . . the (sexual) revolution has . . . gone hand in hand with the dehumanisation of sex . . . sex is a source of individualistic gratification . . . . the cult of nudity and the outpouring of pornography all make abortion less abhorrent - because they tend to brutalise people and to pander to aggressiveness. (Scarbrick, 1971, pp.32-33)

Thus it is claimed that not only are the fundamental values, such as the right to life, under attack but the very nature and quality of interpersonal relationships have been adversely affected. The picture presented of the social order is one in which obligations and responsibilities are no longer of predominant importance, the new morality is one in which individual desire and satisfaction prevail. Changes in sexual conduct and behaviour throughout the 1960's and early 1970's are viewed as symptomatic of the gradual erosion of traditional norms and values; an erosion which is indicative of a general moral decline. In perceiving events in this way and reacting accordingly the anti-abortion movement appears to have adopted a position of cultural fundamentalism.

The dichotomy between the defensive and aggressive aspects of the fundamentalist reaction (Gusfield, 1963, p.144) is clearly discernible within the official anti-abortionist stance. The defensive attitude, consisting of a thorough condemnation of contemporary morality alongside a call for the reaffirmation of traditional values, pervades the campaign literature. The impression conveyed is that if once dominant values, such as individual responsibility, respect for authority and the like, could be re-introduced then a number of seemingly irradicable social problems would disappear. As one anti-abortionist has commented:

What is of vital importance is to return to the source of our values. Were we to dethrone the vogue word "permissiveness" and replace by the precepts held in Catholic countries and by the Church in our own, we should be taking the first step towards a fresher, saner climate. (Times, 15 July, 1969, p.15)

The continual condemnation of the 'rising tide of permissiveness', the negative reaction to what are seen as increasingly lenient sexual mores and a perceived threat of increasing moral laxity constitute the focal point of the anti-abortion crusade. This position has been eloquently summarised by the national chairman of 'Life':

..... all around us old values, habits and structures are being discarded or questioned ... The pervasiveness of existential and personalist ethics, a sense of the uniqueness of our present world, new concern with extra-moral dimension of life and the uncertainty and ferment about us - all these have made former dogmatism and certitudes seem anachronistic. People are unable to speak out not because they lack courage but because they do not know what to say. Puzzled and tongue-tied they shrug their shoulders and hope for the best. (Scarbrick, 1971, p.32)

This somewhat defensive approach can be compared with the aggressive attitude also observable within the fundamentalist response. These two themes are not mutually exclusive, proponents alternate between the two as part of their campaign strategy. With the aggressive mode the reaction towards the 'sexual revolution' and 'rampant permissiveness' is overtly hostile and one in which attempts are made to identify the causal factors in the moral decline and apportion blame accordingly. It is in this second component of cultural fundamentalism that the pertinent ideological features of the anti-abortionist position can be discovered. A major grievance often expressed in this context concerns the lack of moral leadership provided by those in positions of legitimate authority. The common belief is that respectable institutions are deserting their positions of trust and responsibility, a view commented upon by Pym (1974, p.148) and Wallis (1976, p.278). The anti-abortionists criticise many major institutions and established bodies for neglecting their duties as guardians of the public morality; the Church, the media and politicians come in for special attention.

A speech given by a consultant psychiatrist at the 1972 annual general meeting of SPUC singled out, among others, the Church as being largely responsible for failing to provide spiritual and moral guidance:

I accuse those churchmen who in their zeal to cultivate a "with-it" image have forsaken their Christian heritage and embraced pagan standards . . . . . Moralising has now become the cardinal sin of the Church and the sanctity of life is no longer venerated. As long as the Church is not accused by the Enlightenment

of the mass media of being reactionary it would appear satisfied. (SPUC, 1972)

The charge is that the Church has become over sensitive with regard to its public image and is devoting considerable energy to portraying attitudes compliant with the new morality rather than upholding the traditional values and providing a source of stability. Furthermore, the Church is accused of deserting its leadership responsibilities and adopting a passive role by merely following modern trends. The stand taken by the Church on moral and social issues has also attracted strong criticism from moral entrepreneurs. Firstly, the overall liberal line taken on such issues as divorce and homosexuality by certain sections of the religious community has been condemned. Secondly, adverse comment has been levelled at the lack of consensus within the religious hierarchy on a number of such issues. These internal divisions within the religious world have been interpreted by many moral crusaders as being detrimental to the wellbeing and influence of Christianity (Whitehouse, 1970, p.172). It is believed that the continued existence of a wide disparity of views on fundamental moral and social issues will only serve to weaken the authoritative position of the Church. In addition to being criticised for failing to display a unidirectional stance on moral issues the Church has been castigated for its silence on these topics. In the previous chapter it was noted how Mrs. Whitehouse was both surprised and angered by the failure of the Church to present a public and united front in the Gay News trial. Similar feelings have been expressed by the director of the NFOL who has outlined his organisation's attitude to the major religious institutions in the following way:

It was the silence that worried us so much. The church leaders right down to parish level seemed ignorant of or unwilling to face the facts of moral decay. Although they were the people who had the tools for identifying and combating it. That makes for a very serious responsibility. (Cliff, 1979, p.131)

Other bodies were attacked in the 1972 annual address not only for expressing and popularising permissive attitudes but for the so called irresponsible way in which they presented the abortion issue. Sections of the mass media were accused of heavily slanting their articles and programmes in favour of the pro-abortion lobby, thereby giving the public the impression that, by and large, intelligent people favoured more flexible abortion legislation while only 'ignorant reactionaries and Roman Catholics' wanted the law amended (SPUC, 1972). The British Broadcasting Corporation was singled out in the speech for special mention:

One has the right to expect that a corporation like the BBC would show sufficient responsibility to treat the subject of abortion with a greater impartiality .... We can no longer regard the BBC as scrupulously fair in these matters but it is now so arrogant that it publicly declares that it couldn't care less. It obviously feels it has the right to create news and opinions and it does. (SPUC, 1972)

An earlier NVALA pamphlet had attacked the BBC in a similar fashion:

The BBC has in general adopted an arrogant and patronising attitude towards its viewers, dismissing with contemptuous words those who do not 'go' with their policies ... (NVALA, 1964)

This attack on the Church and the mass media in the 1972 speech was nothing new, the speech represented a simple public statement of the official SPUC line. The central policy committee within the group officially endorsed the views expressed and distributed

the full text of the speech to the local branches throughout the country.

SPUC have not been alone in charging established institutions with moral negligence and professional irresponsibility. 'Life' have openly criticised various organisations for the manner in which they have administered, interpreted and enforced the Abortion Law. In presenting their case before the 1975 Select Committee on the Abortion Amendment Bill, 'Life' accused the Department of Health and Social Security of being partisan:

The DHSS is in our judgement strongly pro-abortionist and we would hope that could and should be corrected. We find the tilting towards abortionism repeatedly at present in schools, text books and the like and often with the Ministry's blessing .... (Select Committee, vol. 2, 1975, p.20)

Thus the underlying ideology of the anti-abortion lobby can be seen as one of cultural fundamentalism. Faced with changing social values and moral norms, an appeal is made for moral certainty in the form of a return to the essential values of British society. These values have been, and indeed continue to be, undermined by misguided disciples of 'permissiveness' who, having obtained positions of influence, have deliberately sought to change the character and shape of many conventional British institutions. A particularly noticeable feature of this fundamentalist response is the strong reaction against liberalism; a philosophy which is construed as being dangerous by the fact that it generates a feeling of complacency in the population. Individuals who accept such a philosophy are considered as being unable to think for themselves. Also many of the problems facing affluent societies are attributed to the

direct consequences of the advent of reformist social policies based on a liberal ideology.

The anti-abortion campaign literature presents a stereotyped image of a silent majority of ordinary citizens who want to speak out against the moral decay they witness around them but are afraid to do so. Social malaise appears evident and the decline in contemporary morality must be checked. A strong and determined leadership is required to ensure the successful reaffirmation of traditional values. If the Church and other central institutions are incapable of providing the necessary lead then it is, according to some supporters, the responsibility of the politicians. If the politicians are to act then:

.... they need more active support than they are getting from responsible private and quasi-public bodies, notably from the press and television and from citizens of standing. At present the majority of ordinary people, who are never publicly articulate, sit hypnotised, repelled and passive before the morally deathly gyrations of their new persuaders, waiting for a lead from those who could lead. But those who could effectively say something are also, for the most part, fearful to speak for fear of being devoured by ridicule. (Butt, 1970)

#### Assimilative and Coercive Reform

As previously indicated, Gusfield (1963) in his study of the Women's Christian Temperance Union made an important distinction between two types of reform, namely assimilative and coercive. A status group secure in the belief that it is acknowledged as espousing normatively approved moral values tends to regard those who fail to uphold such values with pity

rather than anger. Hence, moral protest is assimilative in character, that is, designed to change the conduct of the deviant by means of conversion. If, however, members of such groups do not perceive their status and value positions to be rightfully revered then proposals for reform take a more coercive form. More formal agencies of control are employed to ensure that what is regarded as respectable behaviour is encouraged, or conversely, unrespectable conduct positively discouraged and publicly condemned. In such instances protest groups aim to influence the legislature in order to have their moral values officially endorsed.

According to Gusfield both modes of reform can be identified within the American Temperance movement. In the early stages the primary orientation of the reformers was towards converting and assimilating the drinker, this later gave way to attempts at coercing the drinker into conformity. This transition from one style of reform to another is explained in terms of status politics. As the status position of the abstainers came to be seen as marginal rather than dominant more effective means of asserting respectable values were sought. The existence of this assimilative - coercive dichotomy characteristic of moral crusades has been acknowledged by Wallis in his observations of the NVALA. For Wallis the Association could be viewed as pursuing a policy of coercive reform. The supporters and active participants were seen as:

The bearers of an increasingly challenged culture turned to coercive reform, exhibiting their moral indignation through a protest movement, when they found themselves deserted by the groups and institutions which had traditionally supported

their values and been identified with them.  
(Wallis, 1976, p.288)

Although utilising Gusfield's terminology and identifying the two modes of reform as a feature of moral crusades in Britain, two aspects of his research warrant special mention in this context. Firstly, unlike Gusfield, Wallis does not appear to accept, without qualification, the idea that in the gestation of moral protest the assimilative mode of reform is simply replaced by the coercive. In his study of the NFOL he emphasised the co-existence of the two approaches. The protest against moral pollution in the arts and media, by calling for legal intervention in the form of censorship and obscenity laws, represented a coercive approach, whereas, the pronouncement that the Christian gospel provided the positive solution to moral decay was indicative of an orientation towards assimilation. While observing the simultaneous existence of these two modes of reform Wallis also commented on their incompatibility and the confusion and role conflict this created for moral entrepreneurs (Wallis, 1972).

In a later study of the NFOL during the mid 1970's, Wallis has shown how the ambiguity over which mode of reform should be prevalent was no longer a central issue (Wallis, 1979). He reports on how the mass rally which took place on 25 September, 1976 had all the flavour of a coercive approach; the focus of attention being primarily on the need for legislative changes, in which legal norms would be derived from a traditional conception of moral standards as founded on Christianity. Thus, it would appear that while the two orientations to reform may exist side by side eventually one will become dominant and

influential in shaping any crusade by determining a movement's overall strategy and campaign tactics.

A second feature of Wallis' research which is of particular interest in the present study, is the extent to which the mode of reform favoured by the policy steering committee of a protest movement is ratified and positively endorsed by the rank and file membership. Wallis undertook a sample survey of supporters of the NFOL attending the 1976 rally and discovered that; 'an overwhelming proportion of respondents saw evangelism, or assimilative reform, as having greater priority' (Wallis, 1979, p.202). Thus suggesting that the views and beliefs of supporters of a campaign are not necessarily a perfect replica of those espoused by the movement of which they are a follower. The literature disseminated by the NFOL and the statements forthcoming from its leaders indicated a policy of coercion, this was in contrast to the assimilative orientation which was given greater emphasis by a random sample of supporters. Therefore, Wallis' research suggests that not only can the two modes of reform exist simultaneously within one social movement but the position or policy advocated by the central office of an organised protest movement might not be truly representative of the opinions held at grassroots level.

#### Anti-abortion Reform Strategies

In examining the influence of assimilative and coercive reform strategies in the anti-abortion movement data has been drawn from the campaign literature and public statements made by

executive members of the major pressure groups and influential supporters. The question as to whether or not the official picture presented is totally adhered to at local level by supporters will be raised in a later section.

The primary objective of the anti-abortion lobby is the repeal of the 1967 Abortion Act; the ultimate aim being to restrict, if not completely eradicate, abortion. In attempting to achieve this end conventional pressure group tactics are employed. A tremendous amount of voluntary effort is expended in trying to mobilise support, shape public opinion and influence the voting of Members of Parliament on the abortion issue. As a result of the nature and level of this activity, with its emphasis on changing the law, a casual observer would be inclined to assume that the orientation to reform is purely coercive; abortion must be curbed by the introduction of prohibitive laws, constraint is required. However, such a simplistic assessment would be erroneous. From an analysis of the publicity material issued by the interest groups and an examination of the rhetoric of the anti-abortionists it can be concluded that both modes of reform feature in the crusade against abortion.

An insight into the fundamental features of the anti-abortionist argument will serve to clarify the relationship between the two methods of intervention. Both 'Life' and SPUC condemn abortion on numerous social, ethical and moral grounds. The whole movement is united in the task of fighting for a repeal of the 1967 Act. As stated by the chairman of 'Life':

'Life' is working for the day when the 1967 Act is repealed. It is not content with amendment or "tidying up" of the Act. It wants to see abortion repudiated as uncompromisingly as are, say, racialism and robbery with violence. (Scarisbrick, 1971, p.29)

Abortion is viewed as a negative response to social and personal problems, which by its very nature and consequences generates a sense of defeatism. This defeatism serves to aggravate, rather than cure, the very problems for which abortion was intended as a solution.

Every moral crusade distinguishes between victims and corrupters. Social movements tend to present an oversimplified view of social reality in which battle lines are clearly delineated, the enemy positively identified and the victims, whose case the group will defend, sympathetically represented. The recognition of a victim is an important feature in the ideological framework of moral protest groups. Take, as an example, the crusade against pornography. The 'victims' of pornography are not readily identifiable, the purchaser of erotic material can safely be assumed to be acting voluntarily. In his study of the NVALA Wallis has shown that by directing the campaign against the accessibility and availability of pornography protesters could easily identify groups of potential victims, for example, young children in danger of moral corruption and innocent shoppers who may experience embarrassment (Wallis, 1976). In this way protesters may be seen as defenders and protectors of vulnerable groups rather than as being primarily concerned with foisting their own values and beliefs on others.

The anti-abortion movement is no exception. **It** too

distinguish between the victims and corrupters or enemies. The latter attract the full force of the coercive style of response, whereas the former elicit a combination of the coercive and assimilative, depending on the personal and motivational characteristics attributed to them. However, this only holds when the woman seeking an abortion is viewed as a victim. When the debate is couched in terms of the 'right to life' and the unborn child seen as the innocent victim then a policy of constraint is favoured. Anti-abortion propaganda repudiates the 1967 Act for creating 'a new class of inferiors and a new kind of discrimination in our society by declaring subordinate and disposable the life of the unborn child' (Scarbrick, 1971, p.4). In a memorandum to the 1975 Select Committee on the Abortion Bill, 'Life' strongly rejected such discrimination which they claimed reduced the unborn child to the status of a second class citizen. An image of the unborn child as a victim in need of protection is contained in the following extract from a 'Life' campaign pamphlet.

.... abortion involves a third party who is defenceless and does not give his consent, and hence I cannot sit back and let his enemies get on with it - any more than I can ignore infanticide if I see it happening next door. True enough the 1967 Act is only permissive; that is, it does not force anyone to have an abortion. But the point is that it permits consenting adults to conspire against a helpless third party and to kill him ....  
(Scarbrick, 1971, p.22)

Consequently, nothing less than some form of legal protection for the unborn child is seen as being adequate. When the foetus is portrayed as an innocent victim then a policy of restraint rather than conversion becomes the favoured strategy for reform.

This defence of the principle of the right to life and the championing of the unprotected foetus is only one strand of the abortion issue. The propaganda claims to provide some insight into why women seek abortions. The stereotyped picture presented is based not so much on an objective appraisal of factual information but is constructed from a carefully selected sample of illustrative case histories and unfounded intuitive assumptions. Nonetheless, such images occupy a significant place within the ideological framework of the anti-abortion movement. They function, primarily, to justify the condemnation of abortion and bolster the campaign for restrictive legislation. An executive member of SPUC and vice president of the Anglican Mothers' Union, Dr. Margaret White, in submitting written evidence to the 1975 Select Committee, stated that if the James White Amendment Bill was successful then:

..... people would stop a) being forced into abortions; b) having abortions just because they are there and c) using abortion as a method of birth control ..... (Select Committee, 1975, vol. 2, p.62)

In a separate submission to the same committee 'Life' put forward a similar view:

Our belief is that a very large number of girls go for abortions because they are under pressure. A certain number go because simply it is there. We believe this is a classic case of supply creating demand. (ibid. p.19)

Thus it is inferred that there are three main reasons why women seek abortions; each explanation incorporates a specific stereotype expressing imputed motives and attributing responsibility. Each of these will be examined in turn. Firstly, it is claimed that some women are forced or pressurised into having

abortions; they are innocent victims of the 'Permissive Society', and in many instances they are more sinned against than sinning. According to this view they are not directly responsible for their actions, but have been demoralised and chosen abortion because of the external pressures applied to them. In 'Life's opinion:

.... many women have been pressurised into abortion from many different directions - husbands, boyfriends, G.P.'s, social workers. Perhaps the majority of abortions occur thus. (ibid. p.15)

The initiative in proposing abortion is increasingly taken by G.P.'s .... social workers, personnel officers, school teachers, student counsellors, family planning workers and the like - i.e. by persons who enjoy often considerable moral authority over clients. (ibid. p.9)

A similar line is taken by SPUC. At an annual conference in 1973 a social worker stated that doctors and social workers sometimes pressurise young girls into having abortions in an effort to solve social and personal problems (Times, 20 November, 1973).

Once designated as helpless victims the women seeking abortions are viewed with sympathy. It is believed that, if given the opportunity to choose for themselves, the majority of women would decide against abortion. Referring to those women who have had several abortions, Gummer has stated that they, 'would often like to have a child and it is the subconscious recognition of this that leads them continually to conceive despite their husbands' opposition' (Gummer, 1971, p.41). Thus women have abortions not because they want them but because they are forced to have them. So for the anti-abortionists having

an abortion does not necessarily indicate the acceptance of, or allegiance to, a permissive moral code which undermines the cherished values of the crusaders. Absolved of responsibility for their decision, women having their pregnancies terminated are viewed with compassion rather than anger. Coercive tactics are not considered appropriate especially as this group of women is not thought to be critical of, or hostile to, the way of life of the campaigners. The style of moral protest suggested in the literature is assimilative rather than repressive.

This orientation to reform is evident in the very organisation of the 'Life' group. Besides mounting a propaganda campaign designed to dispel what it sees as public ignorance concerning the details of abortion the group has also established a network of branches throughout the country where volunteers offer help and support to women and girls contemplating abortion. Advice is readily provided in these centres particularly with regards to the positive alternatives to abortion. Material help is also available for those women who decide to continue with their pregnancy. The organisation provides a number of bedsitters for single mothers and in many cases group members are willing to take pregnant women into their own homes until the baby is born. 'Life' states as one of its main objectives the establishment of, 'a network of groups covering the whole country to ensure that no woman or girl need be pressurised into abortion' (Scarisbrick, 1971, p.36).

Secondly, White has claimed that 'women have abortions because

they are there', the underlying notion being that supply creates its own demand. In the campaign literature it is implied that many women who consider having an abortion would not have done so prior to its being legalised. This is a counter attack on the position argued by the pro-abortion lobby, that the Act was necessary in order to remove the iniquitous practice of back street abortions which produced high maternal mortality and morbidity rates. Legalising abortion would make the operation safer and reduce the risk of infection and subsequent gynaecological problems. The overall abortion rate would not be affected; abortions performed in the private sector would be safer. The anti-abortionists strongly contest this assumption, maintaining that there has been a significant rise in abortions, thus indicating that by increasing the supply demand has grown. The solution is to introduce new and more restrictive legislation. This, they argue, is necessary on two counts. Firstly, to curtail the growth of attitudes favourable towards abortion, for according to 'Life':

Since the law does much to shape attitudes and values (as well as having been in turn partly shaped by them) amendment of the 1967 Act would itself tend to revive society's former respect for unborn human life and thus take some of the vigour out of current abortionism which owes much to the fact that a thing is moral because it is legal. (Select Committee, 1975, vol. 2, p.12)

Secondly, changes in the legislation are necessary to protect women from the corrupt few who use abortion for their own ends, either financial or political. A widely distributed publicity leaflet issued by SPUC gives some indication as to who the corrupt few are, when it states that:

.... abortion millionaires (for reasons of money-making) and political extremists (who do not uphold family life), have joined hands in a campaign,

backed by thousands of pounds to hoodwink the public and smash the (Abortion Amendment) Bill. (SPUC, 1974)

Not only are the corrupt identified, but a conspiracy is hinted at. Individuals motivated by financial greed and political ambition are seen to encourage abortion and fight for 'abortion on demand' as a means of achieving their own personal ends. Women are viewed as falling prey to the purveyors of promiscuity, they are casualties of the permissive era. Changing attitudes to sexuality, the 'cult of nudity' and the proliferation of pornographic material have created a social climate in which individualistic gratification has become paramount and traditional moral values ignored. Within such a climate abortion has come to be seen as less abhorrent and in fact attitudes favourable to abortion have been encouraged. For the protesters this is contrary to the feelings and beliefs which they attribute to ordinary women, whom they regard as viewing abortion with repugnance as it conflicts with their basic maternal instincts. Abortion is not something a physically healthy and emotionally stable woman would request or desire. Under these circumstances women undergoing abortions are either pressurised or are the victims of those who have set out to profit from the 'Permissive Society'. Many women are ignorant of the facts of abortion and misled into believing it is morally and socially acceptable merely because it is legal. A vivid picture of the plight of the weak at the hands of the corrupt has been provided by Litchfield and Kentish:

..... girls are often blinkered, blindfolded and fooled to enable affluent men to become richer. Pregnant and frightened girls are lured, coaxed and snarled into a net that holds so many dangers, both mental and physical. (Litchfield and Kentish, 1974, p.110)

Similarly, in an article condemning the 'abortion industry',

Leo Abse M.P., has stated that:

The Royal Assent was no sooner given than the predatory moved in and were able, with legal immunity, to exploit brutally the troubled woman hesitant in her pregnancy. (Abse, 1976, p.14)

Thus touts, profiteers and a 'minority of unscrupulous practitioners' (St. John Stevas, 1969, p.11) are the real enemies, the women seeking abortions are confused and vulnerable and therefore, provide easy targets for the 'abortion sharks'.

Understandably, on the basis of this representation, a coercive campaign is waged against the corrupt few, whereas aspects of assimilative reform are evident in the approach taken towards the weak victims. The plight of the abortion seeker attracts sympathy, such is the moral laxity of the modern world with traditional and respectable values being undermined and ridiculed that individuals are in need of help and guidance, hence 'Life's' advisory service. A more hostile attitude is taken towards the so called corrupters, for they are seen as rejecting the values espoused by the anti-abortionists, they are intractable defenders of permissiveness and do not want to reform. Thus in dealing with them the only recourse the anti-abortionists have is to fight for the introduction of prohibitive legislation. In Gusfield's terminology, the majority of women seeking abortions are 'deviants' while those actively involved in promoting abortion on demand, pressurising women into having abortions and profiting from the operations are the 'enemies'.

A third and final claim of White's is that women use 'abortions as a method of birth control'. Abortion is considered

a natural consequence of this 'sexual revolution' which anti-abortionists see as a characteristic feature of all modern affluent societies; it is 'a last defence against unwelcome consequences of permissiveness and final proof of an adult's right to use his or her body as he or she wills' (Scarisbrick, 1971, p.32). Thus the medical termination of pregnancy is associated with birth control and the pro-abortion pressure groups are accused of trivialising the operation. The ALRA has been charged with being 'engaged in an attempt to identify abortion and contraception as equally acceptable means of family planning' (St. John Stevas, 1971, p.14)

The decline in conventional sexual morality and the attendant rise in promiscuity have come in for serious criticism in the campaign propaganda. Those women seeking what have been termed 'cosmetic abortions' (Gummer, 1971, p.40) are criticised for their irresponsible attitude. They are seen as blatantly disregarding contraception, knowing that if the 'unfortunate' happens then an abortion is easily obtainable. For the anti-abortionists abortion is not seen for what it really is, that is, 'child murder' but is viewed as another family planning method. These women are neither seen as innocent victims nor weak and corrupted individuals, consequently assimilative reform techniques are inappropriate; they are supporters of the permissive society and adherents of moral and social codes which are antithetical to those cherished by those involved in the anti-abortion crusade. However, the anti-abortion movement is careful to acknowledge that not all instances in which abortion is used as a means of birth control are the women involved

aware of their rights and capable of articulating their demands. There are cases where abortion is suggested to the feckless and inadequate as a way of solving some immediate personal crisis or impending social problem. Here the blame is directed at persons in positions of trust, such as medical practitioners, social workers and the like. Criticism has been aimed, in particular, at family planning agencies and private pregnancy advisory services. Dr. Margaret White expressed the feelings of that section of the anti-abortion lobby which is in favour of contraception when she stated that family planning should be brought under the control of the Health Service and taken out of the hands of 'enthusiastic amateurs far more interested in promoting their own organisations than in the welfare of the people of this country' (Times, 29 December, 1971, p.2).

This identification of innocent victims vulnerable to external pressures; corrupt individuals motivated by financial greed; negligent and unscrupulous professionals; misguided counsellors and misinformed politicians; feckless and irresponsible women and a permissive elite ceaselessly promoting abortion facilities, is a prime example of pressure group stereotyping. In developing and presenting their case protest groups organise, interpret and channel information in such a way that the emergent typifications serve to validate and verify the case against abortion and denigrate the opposition. The importance of social typifications in the manufacture of deviant identities has been commented upon by Gusfield (1963) and Young (1971, 1973) among others. The latter mainly in connection with the question of societal reaction to drug taking. The fundamental aspects of

stereotyping and 'victim building' outlined in these studies have been borne in mind when analysing how the anti-abortion movement categorises and interprets the actions, behaviour and conduct of individuals and groups involved in the abortion controversy. Similar conclusions to those reached in the present analysis have appeared in a study by Greenwood and Young (1976). For example, they have suggested that, for SPUC, the rise in the number of abortions is largely attributed to corrupting influences. As far as SPUC is concerned:

There is no deeply felt need for abortion amongst the majority of women, it is the pernicious effect of the legislation and the agencies that it gave rise to that has created the problem. (Greenwood and Young, 1976, p.89)

The three main reasons advanced by SPUC as to why women should choose abortion are noted as, demoralisation, corruption and promiscuity. (ibid. p.86). Also, in a more recent analysis of the 'permissive' legislation of the 1960's, Greenwood and Young (1980) have illustrated how a simple bifuscation of the social world into normals and inadequate was superceded by a a four-fold social categorisation consisting of the inadequate, innocent, wicked and normal.

#### The Case Against Abortion: A Summary.

In documenting the position expounded by the anti-abortionists the pertinent points in their case for a repeal of the 1967 Act have been stated, these may be suitably summarised. The reasons why abortion must be restricted or prohibited are:-

a) To prevent further moral decay

Reference is made by opponents of the Act to the moral degeneration which has resulted from, or been accelerated by, the legalisation of abortion. Malcolm Muggeridge addressing a rally, organised by SPUC, in Liverpool in April 1972 and attended by an estimated 40,000 supporters, expressed this view when he stated that:

.... the growing promiscuity of the young, with its hideous register in the VD statistics, has received a great new impetus. (Times, 1 May 1972, p.1)

He urged the supporters to continue protesting against the Act for he saw it as 'a curtain raiser to another even more degrading piece of legislation - an euthanasia Act' (ibid.). At a rally approximately two years later, in London, he stated before a crowd of over 50,000 people, that a future Labour Government would be likely to introduce the practice of euthanasia (Times, 29 April 1974, p.4). Thus the Act was accused of encouraging promiscuity, undermining conventional sexual mores and promoting anti-life attitudes. The permissive law on abortion marked the beginning of a slippery slope to moral decay. As Leo Abse has commented:

.... if the strident life - deniers shape our laws, so that implicitly motherhood is declared to be a curse, not a blessing, we shall have yielded to the prevailing doomsday school'.  
(Abse, 1976, p.14)

b) To save the unborn child

Anti-abortionists portray the foetus as an innocent victim in need of protection. This line of argument was particularly noticeable in the formative stages of SPUC's campaign. At the launching of their attack on the Steel Bill, Professor James Scott,

Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Leeds University, maintained that if the Bill became law then the human infant in this country would not have the protection accorded to laboratory animals used for experimentation (Times, 12 January, 1967, p.10).

c) To liberate women

Critics of abortion claim that the current legislation does not in any sense liberate women and neither would even more permissive legislation. The official line is that women have been the victims of a confidence trick played by men. Abortion is presented to them as a solution to their personal and social problems. They are encouraged to see their pregnancy as the cause of their difficulties; when in reality it is the selfish and irresponsible men who push them into having abortions in order to avoid facing up to the real problems. Consequently, men are denying women the safety and security of a stable human relationship. Only by the repeal of the Act will women be liberated, not by the introduction of a woman's right to choose. According to 'Life':

For the women who are ... victims ... amendment of the Act in such a way as to reduce the availability of abortion would be a true liberation and would give them back dignity and autonomy which abortionism has eroded. (Select Committee, 1975, vol. 2, p.12)

d) To halt profiteering and malpractice

A strenuous campaign has been waged against those seen to be exploiting women and making large sums of money by providing abortion facilities. A Bishop, condemning the consequences of the 1967 Act, speaking at the end of a day of atonement for abortion, called for an end to the 'lucrative trade of middlemen

of death who tout abroad for clients' (Times, 29 December, 1971, p.2)

These appear to be the main reasons why the anti-abortionists seek changes in the law. The relative significance attached to each is difficult to ascertain. The aim of the movement is not only to mould public opinion and gain support for their cause but also to challenge and discredit the case put forward by the pro-abortionists. The case propounded by the anti-abortionists has to be seen as part of an ongoing dialogue with the opposition, it is both a reaction to, and condemnation of the stance taken by those in favour of abortion. The issues on which stands have been taken have fluctuated throughout the campaign, the mood and content of the debate has undergone significant changes with certain topics being temporarily at the forefront of the debate. For example, at the outset SPUC drew attention to the need to protect the innocent foetus and the controversy was centred around the sanctity of life, many moral, philosophical and theological points were contested concerning the status of the human foetus and whether or not life began at conception. However, as the 'abortion on demand' campaign gained momentum through the 1970's the focus of the debate shifted. The pro-abortionists, rather than fight to consolidate a position which had already been won by the ALRA, developed a new militancy. Abortion became a symbol of women's liberation, the NAC demanded that women be allowed to control their own fertility by having abortions on request. To deny them this right was to make them vulnerable to discrimination. As indicated above, 'Life' responded by arguing that true liberation could only be achieved by prohibiting abortion and protecting

women from external pressures to have abortions they did not want. As the last decade progressed the fundamental issues which had dominated the discussion in the late 1960's gave way to arguments surrounding the implementation of the Abortion Act. The anti-abortion movement publicly criticised what they saw as a blatant abuse of the spirit of the 1967 Act, claiming that they wished to tighten up many of the existent loopholes rather than prohibit abortion.

#### Summary.

Of the four theoretical issues raised in Gusfield's thesis, namely, status defence, expressive politics, cultural fundamentalism and orientation to reform, only the latter two have been covered in this chapter. The two former issues are of such a nature that they can only be satisfactorily explored by obtaining data from actual campaign participants, for they are concerned with what motivates an individual to join a social movement and the rewards obtained from engaging in this form of collective behaviour. These two aspects of Gusfield's thesis will be examined in a later section. A useful insight into the fundamentalist response of moral protest groups and their attitudes toward reform can be obtained from a study of the official campaign literature and the public announcements of the movement leaders. Such an analysis has been presented.

The analysis has shown that the anti-abortion movement is ideologically oriented. In simplistic terms an ideology may be viewed as a collection of beliefs about the structure and function-

ing of the social world. According to one observer:

Ideology.....serves both as a clue to understanding and as a guide to action, developing in the mind of its adherents an image of the process by which desired changes can best be achieved. (Wilson, 1973, p.92)

This would appear characteristic of the anti-abortion movement.

The ideological formulations outlined above contain assumptions as to the nature of the reason for the existence of abortion and its wider implications for life in general and the well being of society. The majority of women do not desire abortions or view them favourably. Those who undergo the operation are typified as victims under pressure. On the basis of this understanding action tends to be coercive towards the corrupt with a policy of conversion and assimilation advocated for the unfortunate victims.

Thus the anti-abortion movement can be likened to a moral crusade. The rhetoric employed by the movement has all the characteristic fervour and crusading spirit of other moral campaigns. The opposition are cast as villains and the crusaders as participants in a campaign to defeat evil. This is adequately summed up in the following extract from a speech given at an annual conference of SPUC:

We have a duty to look forward to cleaning up this mess. We shall not be popular. We shall be abused and ridiculed but we have the deep satisfaction of being in the right. We bear the responsibility of our generation to think and act as human beings and not as hedonists for whom life is no longer sacred. That is our privilege. (SPUC, 1972)

The Roots of Social Activism.

With regard to the study of social movements the sociologist is specifically concerned with uncovering the sources of discontent and examining the circumstances in which dissatisfaction is expressed. Ultimately the aim is to identify the antecedent conditions which precipitate organised forms of collective behaviour, describe how protest groups are formed and identify the motivational factors pertinent to individual mobilisation. So far, in the present analysis, the emphasis has been on the descriptive rather than the explanatory. The salient pressure groups have been identified and described and an analysis of the anti-abortion campaign literature has provided evidence of the existence of specific elements primarily associated with moral crusades. However, before further investigation is possible a number of theoretical and methodological points are in need of clarification.

As outlined in the second chapter, Gusfield (1963), Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (1976) and Wallis (1972, 1976a) have all contributed to the 'moral reform as a mode of status politics' thesis. If the explanatory powers of this theory of status discontent are to be assessed within the context of the abortion issue, then the theory needs to be subjected to a closer scrutiny than that provided in the earlier chapter. This will entail the examination of three major concepts, all of which are prominent in sociological explanations of moral protest and have been used to account for the recruitment of individuals to moral

reform movements. The three concepts are; relative deprivation, status inconsistency and moral indignation. Although in the final analysis they are interconnected for purposes of clarification they will be dealt with separately.

#### Relative Deprivation.

The term 'relative deprivation' was first introduced into sociological literature by Stouffer (1949) and has subsequently been used in an explanatory capacity in a multitude of studies covering a wide range of social behaviour. The concept does not simply refer to an objective comparison between the material conditions and circumstances of various individuals and groups, but emphasis is placed on the relationship between expectations and achievement. As Aberle has claimed, relative deprivation refers to the conscious experience of 'a negative discrepancy between legitimate expectations and actuality' (Aberle, 1962). A state of envy or dissatisfaction is produced provided that, contained within the conscious experience of discrepancy, there is a sentiment or feeling that the inequality is also inequitable. Thus prime consideration is given to the feelings of deprivation relative to others and not the conditions of deprivation relative to others. In other words there is a large subjective element in the concept. To describe relative deprivation it is therefore necessary to identify both an individual's membership group and his reference group to see how he defines himself and with whom he compares himself. It is insufficient to infer discontent solely from objective indicators;

actual material conditions of an individual or group are less important than the attitude of mind taken towards the conditions.

Relative deprivation denotes a perception of the social world. It is this emphasis on the 'actors definition of the situation' which is largely responsible for the popularity of the concept in the accounts of the formation of, and affiliation to, social movements. Structural analysis, with its social systems type approach, concentrates on identifying the sources of structural strain within economic, political and social institutions, and has been criticised for many shortcomings, among them being an inherent disregard for the importance of subjective data in the explanation of individual mobilisation. According to Wilson, '... structural analysis alone is inadequate as a full account of social movements because it does not furnish the conceptual tools to extract motivational data' (Wilson, 1973, p.66). Furthermore, he has claimed that by adopting the notion of relative deprivation it is possible to obtain a fuller and more accurate account of protest group affiliation. This is not to deny the significance of objective factors but to stress the importance of the part played by perceptions and interpretations of objective circumstances in determining responses to discontent. Consequently this approach has been employed in the analysis of a wide variety of social movements and a myriad of types of deprivation have been noted, these range from the easily definable material deprivation to the more ambiguous and obscure 'deprivation of total worth' (Allan, 1974).

For the exponents of this theoretical model, the contribution of relative deprivation to the study of the generation of discontent and the formation of moral reform movements stems from the fact that individuals can feel deprived with regard to their status position. Runciman (1966), drawing upon Weber's notion of class, status and power, has distinguished three types of deprivation. One of these he has termed 'status deprivation'; this is seen to occur when deprivation is felt in terms of social estimation and prestige. In other words, one group may feel deprived vis à vis another group on the basis of a comparison of life-styles.

Gurr (1970) has strongly advocated the utilisation of the relative deprivation thesis in the analysis of collective behaviour. He defines feelings of discontent as occurring with an 'actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities' (Gurr, 1970, p.24). Individuals and groups are seen to set 'value standards', in that, they identify with a particular reference group or status category. Collectivities and groups develop a conception of the world which forms an integral part of the group ideology, in which reference is made to what they consider to be their legitimate expectations or worth. Gurr describes these as 'value expectations'. Such expectations are formed on the basis of a belief in social justice; individuals expect only what is rightfully owed to them. This sense of rightness and legitimate entitlement originates from a number of sources. Individuals may substantiate their claim to 'just rewards' by referring

to their relative social position or past circumstances. Value capabilities of a group are the average value positions its members perceive themselves capable of maintaining or achieving; in this sense they refer to both present circumstances.

The analytical importance of these two components, value expectations and value capabilities, becomes obvious when they are viewed in conjunction with Gurr's classification of relative deprivation. He has propounded a three-fold categorisation, two components of which are of concern here, namely, decremental and aspirational status deprivation. Decremental deprivation is seen to occur when a group's value expectations remain relatively constant but value capabilities are seen to decline. Aspirational deprivation exists in situations where capabilities remain static while expectations increase or intensify. The former condition involves a comparison of the present with the past and represents a regressive attitude which may often give rise to resentment or indignation. In contrast, the latter involves a comparison of the past and present to future possibilities and is characteristic of a progressive attitude.

This model could provide a framework for an analysis of the major pressure groups engaged in the abortion debate. It could be postulated that members of the anti-abortion groups can be identified as experiencing decremental status deprivation. In the face of changing social mores and values their value

capabilities may be seen to have declined while their expectations have remained unaltered. Thus, by means of pressure group activity, they are attempting to reassert and reinforce those traditional values which are associated with a 'respectable' way of life. Examples of the regressive attitude associated with this form of status deprivation abound.

Consider, for example, the nature of the reaction to changing sexual mores, documented in the previous chapter, and the concern expressed over perceived moral degeneration. On the whole, a number of social changes and developments are viewed with repugnance; the recent past is viewed as an era in which strongly articulated moral standards served to ensure social stability and promote 'respectable' values. This traditional morality is seen as having been eroded. Essential cultural values are no longer dominant and moral decay has set in. The only solution to such a state of affairs is to encourage a return to the traditional values. By comparison, it could be hypothesised that the concept of aspirational status deprivation is applicable to the position of sections of the pro-abortion movement actively engaged in feminist politics. Much has happened in the last two decades to intensify expectations and aspirations. The prevailing attitude is progressive. Many of the social changes condemned by the negativistic approach of the regressive perspective are positively encouraged, for they are seen as introducing greater personal freedom and the potential for increased self determination. This will be expanded in Chapter Ten.

Considerable care needs to be exercised when applying the idea of relative deprivation to the study of movement formation and affiliation. In their eagerness to establish a monocausal explanation of this type of collective behaviour proponents of this approach appear to have neglected a number of important theoretical and methodological issues. Wilson (1973) acknowledges that the original need for the concept stemmed from a growing concern with the part played by perceptions and interpretations of objective circumstances in determining discontent, yet he expresses surprise at the fact that the concept is so frequently employed without reference to these subjective accounts. Wallis (1975), in a cautionary note on the use of the term, has made a similar criticism. In his view, deprivation theorists obtain their evidence from the objective conditions affecting groups and the ideological formulations produced by social movements. Relative deprivation is applied '... in an essentially positivistic way by seeking evidence in factors external to the actor. While paying lip-service to the individual's interpretation of his environment and social circumstances ...' (Wallis, 1975, p.361). In previous studies too much emphasis appears to have been placed on the objective indices of deprivation with the consequence that inferential statements are made which cannot be substantiated by empirical evidence. For example, such a charge can be levelled at Newton's study of the differential support given to the Communist Party by one occupational group in Great Britain (Newton, 1969). According to Newton, differences in the degree of relative deprivation account for the differences in the

nature and form of political activity observed in the British coal industry. It is claimed that the greater degree of radicalism observed in the South Wales coalfield was due to the fact that Welsh miners experienced a post war boom and the Durham miners did not. Wilson has commented that: 'The concept of relative deprivation is used here only in the loosest, descriptive sense and the analysis relies on a considerable inferential leap from the structural conditions to political attitudes' (Wilson, 1973, p.73). Such inferential leaps are usually part of an attempt to develop a motivational schema which posits a causal connection between structural conditions and social activism. Unfortunately, the concentration on objective referents practically make redundant any analysis of the role perceptions and interpretations play in influencing attitudes and shaping behaviour. Hence, the resultant measure of deprivation is indirect because 'states of mind are being inferred from aggregate measures' (Geschwender, 1964, p.253).

Thus, what appears to be lacking is any motivational rationale for the causal connection postulated between objective circumstances and the social action towards which they are supposed to dispose people. It follows, therefore, that if the concept of relative deprivation is to be used at the level of causal analysis then a concerted effort must be made to elicit the actors' interpretations of the situation. Following such a procedure and examining members' accounts as to why they joined a particular pressure group, avoids the practice of simply deducing motives from movement ideologies, or inventing

plausible types of deprivation from the observation of objective conditions. In addition it also makes it possible to determine whether or not relative deprivation is a sufficient, necessary or merely an optional condition for the origination of, or affiliation to, a protest movement.

#### Status Inconsistency.

Status discontent has been viewed by some researchers as an integral explanatory variable in the study of the forces motivating individuals to participate in moral crusades. However, before an accurate evaluation of the contribution this concept has made to the study of collective behaviour is possible, it is necessary to examine the relevance attached to status by theorists of social movements. The fact that status is a multi-dimensional concept is widely accepted, as is the notion that an individual's position on one social ranking may not agree with, or match, his location on another (Sorokin, 1947; Weber, 1970). It is the resulting anomaly in status profiles which is focused upon. Although numerous terms have been employed to describe this phenomenon, for example, status inconsistency (Kelly and Chambliss, 1966; Geschwender, 1968; Segal, 1969), status crystallisation (Lenski, 1954), status discrepancy (Lipset, 1962; Gurr, 1970; Hunt and Cushing, 1970), rank disequilibria (Galtung, 1964), status equilibration (Benoit-Smullyan, 1944) and status congruence (Brandon, 1965), the underlying principle is the same. The common assumption is that persons who occupy social positions of different statuses ultimately experience

discontent and dissatisfaction. According to Geschwender: 'A group which possesses a number of status attributes which are differently ranked on the various status hierarchies will be dissatisfied and prone to rebellion' (Geschwender, 1964, p.249). Education, income and occupation are examples of the criteria used in the construction of status hierarchies.

Within the status inconsistency paradigm an analytically important distinction is made between 'over rewarded' and 'under rewarded' status inconsistency (Geschwender, 1968). The former applies when individuals are of high status with regards to income but ranked relatively low on the education and occupation status hierarchies. Conversely, the latter describes instances in which individuals rank low on the income scale but occupy high positions according to educational attainment and occupation. It has been postulated that when an individual's social qualities or status attributes are in some way inconsistently evaluated then feelings of frustration and discontent can ensue (Smelser, 1963, p.287). In a study of the McCarthyite movement in the United States of America, '... status incongruities were presumed to have created sharp resentments about general social developments, which predisposed individuals to welcome McCarthy's attack on the elite and on the New Deal' (Lipset, 1962). A study of this movement by Sokol, quoted in Lipset (1962), strongly professed that a 'conscious concern with status inconsistency and McCarthyism were related'. In an empirical examination of the hypothesised tendency for those individuals experiencing status inconsistency to be predisposed to participate in social movements, Geschwender concludes that: 'The

data supported the hypothesis predicting the under rewarded inconsistencies and high occupational - low income inconsistencies would exhibit symptoms of individual unrest' (Geschwender, 1968, p.483). Thus the propensity to participate in social movements does not, for Geschwender, apply to all types of inconsistency; the tendency is viewed as being entirely accounted for by under rewarded inconsistencies and those with highly rated occupations but relatively low incomes.

While there is a general consensus within the status inconsistency model that persons holding inconsistently ranked social positions will exhibit symptoms of individual unrest, there is no such consensus evident with regard to the nature, extent and direction of the responses to such status discrepancy. The literature contains six possible responses which various researchers claim to have identified. These are, that individuals, display psychosomatic symptoms of stress (Jackson, 1962; Hornung, 1977); show a preference for those social movements aiming to change the social order (Goffman, 1957; Kornhauser, 1959); become socially isolated (Lenski, 1954); strive for upward social mobility (Segal and Knoke, 1968); have political attitudes towards liberalism (Lenski, 1954) and have unfavourable and preconceived opinions about minority groups (Geschwender, 1968). However, the research evidence is by no means conclusive, Rush (1967) has claimed that some status inconsistencies have political attitudes characteristic of right wing extremism and not liberalism as observed by Lenski. Furthermore, Laumann and Segal, in a study of status inconsistency and ethno-religious

group membership as determinants of socio-political attitudes and degree of social participation, conclude that: 'Our data clearly provide a basis for rejection of a general status inconsistency phenomenon such as that proposed by Lenski' (Laumann and Segal, 1971, p.55). Controversy also surrounds the association of prejudice and status inconsistency, see for example, Trieman (1966, 1970) and Geschwender (1970). Nevertheless, the concept has continued to be used and over the past few years there has been a new interest shown in the concept. This revival stems from the attempts by Hope (1975) to encourage a serious reconsideration of Lenski's original thesis. Some of his suggestions have subsequently been incorporated in research studies (Wilson, 1979; Zurcher and Wilson, 1979).

As regards the study of moral crusades, Zurcher and Kirkpatrick have attempted an appraisal of Gusfield's thesis by utilising status inconsistency as an independent explanatory variable. They hypothesised that supporters of the anti-pornography crusade would 'tend toward an over-rewarded status inconsistency pattern of higher income and lower education and far lower occupation' (Zurcher and Kirkpatrick, 1976, p.266). It was further postulated that those actively supporting and advocating changes in social and sexual mores, and directly challenging the stance taken by the crusaders, would present individual profiles characteristic of the 'under-rewarded status inconsistency' pattern. The socio-economic and attitudinal data collected indicated a diversity of status inconsistency and consistency configurations among both groups. Thus the original

hypothesis was not confirmed. Commenting on this research, Wallis has stated that it contains '... little evidence that a particular pattern of status inconsistency provides the motivation for moral indignation' (Wallis, 1979, p.200). Being unable to substantiate some of Geschwender's earlier work and unwilling to reassess the analytical significance of the concept of status inconsistency, Zurcher and Kirkpatrick conclude that the perception of status threat is a more significant variable in the study of individual mobilisation than configurations of status inconsistency or consistency.

It has been noted above how some caution is necessary when applying the notion of relative deprivation to the study of protest groups. Similar care needs to be exercised with the use of social status as an independent variable. Three points are worthy of note in this context because of their methodological implications. Firstly, a satisfactory and operational definition of status needs to be obtained. It has been observed that status is sometimes used synonymously with prestige and at other times as a generic term whereby prestige becomes a criterion of status (Runciman and Bagley, 1969). Consideration must be given to the multi-dimensional nature of status and the chosen objective measures of status attributes must be clearly outlined. A second, and in fact, related point concerns the use of objective criteria. It is not sufficient merely to locate and identify inconsistencies in objective measures, but these inconsistencies have to be seen to be perceived by the subjects, and the statuses concerned regarded as salient by them. A major criticism of previous

research is that objective observations have been made and, on the basis of these, motives have been imputed to group members. Very little evidence is provided to substantiate the claim that campaign participants perceive their status to be threatened. It is far from adequate, and indeed not methodologically sound, to make inferences from data relating to the positioning of individuals on a number of status hierarchies, based for example on occupation or educational attainment. It is possible that perception of the same status threat may exist among individuals with quite diverse status configurations. Also individuals sharing the same status configurations (according to objective criteria) may have different views regarding status threats. The subjective aspects must not be overlooked. Finally, care must be taken when interpreting the causal significance of status inconsistency. In a study of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Parkin observed a certain status inconsistency among members, that is, they tended to be high on educational attainment and low on income. However, he concluded that:

The correlation between these particular occupations and political radicalism is to be explained not in terms of the strains created by status inconsistency, nor as a result of individuals adopting the humanistic values generated within the profession, but rather as a result of the tendency of individuals who are already radical to enter these fields of employment rather than others. (Parkin, 1968, p.185).

In short, the status inconsistency observed was not so much a cause of the members' political radicalism as an effect. Thus, for Parkin, Lenski's theory of status crystallisation only partly accounts for middle class radicalism.

If status is considered a relevant variable and supporters of moral crusades are identifiable as status discontents what needs explaining is not only the emergence of such feelings but the way in which they can lead to a tendency to accept, or view sympathetically, certain moral reform ideologies. This requires an understanding of the origins and nature of moral indignation.

#### Moral Indignation.

The speeches and publications of most moral reform groups clearly display the moral indignation of their members. This indignation is directed against the 'permissive morality' which is viewed as an increasingly prominent feature of modern society. The relative deprivation and status consistency theorists have argued that a particular type of relative deprivation or pattern of status inconsistency provides the motivation for moral indignation. Prior to evaluating this claim a little needs to be said about those studies which have concentrated on the character of this concept and attempted to identify its theoretical roots and determine its analytical and explanatory properties. Such an exercise will provide a firm basis from which to appraise the problems encountered when trying to apply the notion of moral indignation to the study of moral crusades in general, and the anti-abortion movement, in particular.

Max Scheler (1961) professes to have provided the foundation for the development of a sociological theory of moral indignation

with the introduction of his concept of resentment. He considers resentment to be a 'self poisoning of the mind' caused by a purposeful and systematic repression of specific emotions. Such forced repression is responsible for predisposing individuals to indulge in what he terms 'value delusions' and 'value judgements'. The primary emotions involved in this process are identified as 'revenge, hatred, malice, envy (and) the impulse to detract and spite' (Scheler, 1961, p.45). When these emotions cannot be freely expressed and persons experiencing them are prevented from releasing them against chosen target groups or individuals a sense of powerlessness develops. If this situation continues unabated resentment arises; characteristic of the resultant reaction is a tendency to denigrate and degrade selected values and value holders. No attempt is made at constructing an alternative value system for it is held that a fundamental feature of resentment imbued persons is that 'they secretly crave what they publicly denounce' (Closer, 1961, p.21).

To appreciate fully Scheler's reasoning here it is necessary to understand how he comes to perceive resentment loaded attitudes and beliefs as being socially determined. Resentment is viewed as being diffused throughout society and capable of flourishing in circumstances where 'strong pretensions must remain concealed' because they are 'coupled with an inadequate social position' (Scheler, 1961, p.50). This is to suggest that structural factors have an important role to play. In fact, Scheler's sociological 'law' states that resentment increases

'with the discrepancy between the political, constitutional or traditional status of a group and its factual power' (ibid.). Thus the competitive nature of modern society with its unequal distribution of status attributes is acknowledged. An individual's chances of competitive success are judged as being partly dependent upon their initial position in the social structure. Hence, people in the lower strata have their aspirations frustrated and come to feel out of touch with dominant trends. According to Scheler, it is those very individuals whose particular location limits their chances for success, who are inclined to engage in conduct motivated by resentment. Ressentiment is seen as being prominent in 'the disappearing class of artisans, in the petty bourgeoisie and among small officials', in other words, among the lower middle class (ibid. p.66).

Ranulf (1964) has also made a contribution to the moral indignation thesis. He is understood to view moral indignation as 'a kind of disguised envy, if "envy" is understood not in a pejorative but in an ethically neutral sense ...' (Lasswell, 1964, p.1). In developing his theory he acknowledged the similarities which existed between his work and that of Scheler. Johnson and Newmemer (1975) have outlined how Ranulf saw both moral indignation and resentment as two dimensions of the same phenomenon. Both arise because of individual repression which in itself is a result of situational factors. For Scheler, resentment is based on a belief in the virtue of self control and involves a desire to impose similar restraints on others.

According to Ranulf, moral indignation is associated with a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment on others, even if not directly threatened by them. He interprets the latter as a motive rooted in self denial.

Moral indignation is considered 'a distinctive characteristic of the lower middle class' (Ranulf, 1964, p.198). The rationale for this is seen as lying in historical as well as contemporary conditions of social structure. This class, Ranulf claims, has been forced to adopt puritan virtues because of the material conditions and economic circumstances of its existence. Such enforced moral rigidity is identified as being responsible for engendering feelings of resentment. Once the group or class acquire a certain level of wealth and prestige the indignation is dispelled.

In his study of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Gusfield considers the relevance of moral indignation. He refers to the existence of 'disinterested anger' and the process whereby hostility is directed at an individual whose transgression is purely of a moral nature. Thus he views moral indignation as '... the hostile response of the norm - upholder to the norm - violator where no direct personal advantage to the norm - upholder is at stake' (Gusfield, 1963, p.112). The conduct of the norm - violator, which is responsible for attracting a hostile reaction, is such that it 'does not impinge upon the life or behaviour of the morally indignant judge' (ibid.). Thus, the crucial factor is not the behaviour itself but the possible threat the behaviour

has for the status of the norm.

Whilst utilising the concept in this way Gusfield maintains that the Ranulf-Scheler formulation is not directly applicable to the study of the Temperance campaign. For instance, he questions the belief that individuals expressing indignation and resentment 'secretly crave what they publicly abhor' (Coser, 1961, p.129). He states that:

If we argue the indignation is a reaction to behaviour we would like to follow this reasoning is inconsistent with the fact of assimilative reform. (Gusfield, 1963, p.113).

Assimilative reform, it will be remembered, refers to a policy of reform based upon conversion rather than coercion. Its emotional orientation is such that sympathy and pity are shown toward the deviant. A response which is primarily attributed to those social groups that are in a secure ascendent position in the social system. To quote Gusfield:

A social group that perceives its culture as defining the ideal and publicly valid norms of the society will approach the deviant as someone to be helped in attaining the habits which can assure improvement in his social condition. (Gusfield, *ibid.* p.68).

This approach was seen to characterise the Temperance movement in the early stages of its campaign. Only when supporters came to view their status as being threatened and their once socially dominant values challenged did a coercive policy of reform emerge. Gusfield argues that if the supporters secretly craved drink then all violations of the norm would have been responded to in a similar fashion. As he makes clear this did not occur. Wallis has supported this view by stating that:

There is no evidence that supporters of the Woman's Christian Temperance Movement did envy the drinker, or that they secretly craved the alcoholic liquors for the consumption of which they proclaimed distaste. (Wallis, 1976a, p.273).

While envy or secret craving might not have been at the root of the moral indignation experienced by the Temperance crusaders there is evidence that self control, in the form of abstinence, was regarded as a virtue and members desired to see similar restraints imposed upon others. Thus, Scheler's notion of resentment is partly applicable in this context.

A similar analysis may be applied to the anti-abortion movement. As outlined in the previous chapter, certain of their campaign activities and pressure group tactics have all the characteristics of the assimilative mode of reform. Those who are seen as being pressurised into seeking abortions are shown sympathy and the primary orientation is towards conversion. However, those who are understood to be irresponsibly and selfishly encouraging women to have abortions are seen as the 'real' deviants and coercive methods are considered necessary to curb their activities. Consequently, all violations of the norm are not responded to in the same way by the crusaders. There is sympathy for the innocent, pity for the inadequate and condemnation of the corrupt and wicked. If the supporters of the anti-abortion lobby secretly craved what they publicly castigated then all violations of the norm would be responded to in a similar manner; a point emphasised by Gusfield with regard to the Temperance supporters (Gusfield, 1963, p.113).

Another aspect of the moral indignation thesis which warrants comment concerns the structural location of those groups predisposed to developing feelings of resentment. Ranulf, in discussing the rise of Puritanism, has suggested that once the upper bourgeoisie had reached a position of wealth and prestige the emphasis placed upon puritan values ceased. In other words, certain values were abandoned once an economic position was reached which rendered the function of such values useless. Indignation is seen to be located in 'that social class which may be loosely described as the "small bourgeoisie" or the "lower middle class"' (Ranulf, 1964, p.2). However, the concept is considered to be particularly applicable to those groups from this stratum experiencing upward mobility. According to Lasswell, Ranulf failed to give sufficient thought to the 'defensive indignation of declining social formations' (Lasswell, 1964, p.1). As a result of this omission, the application of this concept to a study of moral crusades, in which middle class groups are understood to be defending their status position, has been neglected in some theoretical circles. Unlike Ranulf, Scheler is not guilty of the same oversight. He does not appear to associate resentment solely with the rising power of the middle classes. He in fact claims that resentment is likely to be found among those people who are alienated from the social order, that is 'those individuals or groups who are frustrated in their strivings' (Scheler, 1961, p.29). Resentment 'can never emerge without the mediation of a particular form of impotence, it is always one of the phenomena of "declining" life' (ibid. p.60). However, there are still difficulties in applying Scheler's

approach to the study of moral protest. These difficulties become evident, for example, when considering the assumption that persons expressing resentment secretly crave the values they publicly condemn.

As the above criticisms imply, Ranulf and Scheler did not provide a full-blown theory of moral indignation. Nonetheless, they have, in their separate ways, made a significant contribution to our understanding of the concept. Numerous theorists have adopted, expanded and modified various aspects of their original formulations, especially in connection with the study of contemporary moral protest movements and the analysis of societal reactions to deviant behaviour. For example, Albert Cohen has made the following comment:

The dedicated pursuit of culturally approved goals, the adherence to normatively sanctioned means - these imply a certain self restraint, effort, discipline, inhibition. What is the effect of others who, though their activities do not manifestly damage our own interests, are morally undisciplined, who give themselves up to idleness, self-indulgence, or forbidden vices? What effect does the propinquity of the wicked have upon the peace of mind of the virtuous? (Cohen, 1964).

The essence of this statement is that although certain activities may have no direct effect on the interests of observers, they may be condemned because they are seen to represent a disregard for the cherished values and attitudes of a specific social group. In this sense, moral indignation is seen to bring into play the quality of 'disinterested anger' (Gusfield, 1963, p.112), that is, it incorporates a 'disinterested tendency to inflict punishment'. Such an analysis appears to be immediately

applicable to the anti-abortion campaign. In the late 1960's and early 1970's references to 'legalised rackets' and widespread abuses of abortion legislation served to generate and maintain feelings of moral indignation. London was reputed to be the 'abortion centre of the western world' (Butt, 1969, p.9) and the 'abattoir of the world's unborn' (Times, 10 July 1969, p.11). The critics themselves are not directly affected or endangered by the behaviour they condemn. Nonetheless, a disinterested tendency to inflict punishment is evident in the campaign literature. The pressure groups not only seek the repeal of the Abortion Act but want this to be '... accompanied by comprehensive legislation which declares illegal all abortion and imposes suitable penalties for anyone who seeks abortion, performs it or in any way assists in providing it' (Life, 1974). This forceful statement appears to suggest that the orientation to reform has moved towards a coercive approach. However, care should be taken not to interpret this one statement as a summary of the anti-abortion movement's campaign strategy.

In the literature moral indignation is frequently associated with status loss and anxiety and its origins are discussed within a socio-historical context. According to contemporary social theorists the last two decades have witnessed a rise in moral indignation. It is maintained that the 1960's was a time of relative affluence and a period in which aspirations and expectations escalated in the prevailing ethos of affluence. Emphasis was placed firmly on personal initiative and individual merit

and large sections of society experienced a rising standard of living. However, the perceived changes in society's value structure were not viewed positively by all and in some quarters growing concern was expressed as to the desirability of the new morality. There was a backlash of moral indignation against what was seen as the 'permissive era'. According to some contemporary British sociologists the situation was such that:

Significant social groups in society felt abandoned by the scramble of some of the affluent, 'progressive' middle ground and threatened by rising materialism below; amidst the 'never had it so good society', they yearned for a finer moral purpose. They provided the backbone for the entrepreneurs of moral indignation. (Hall et al. 1978, p.233).

A clear and concise presentation of the argument has been put forward by Greenwood and Young (1976). They have asserted that the lower middle class provides a suitable milieu for the generation of resentment and indignation, individuals within this social category are particularly prone to attempts at reaffirming conventional values when their social position is threatened. Drawing on data from Westergaard and Resler (1975) they outline how the position of the lower middle class in Britain has been eroded. Taking such indicators as income levels and occupational mobility, the experiences of clerical workers and those in the lower professions are such that they no longer compare themselves favourably with managerial and higher professional groups. Thus they have experienced a relative decline. According to Greenwood and Young:

It is people like these who form the backbone of a series of backward looking organisations imbued with a notion of a golden age when traditional virtues were rewarded. The National Viewers and Listeners Association with Mary Whitehouse at its head, the Festival of Light, certain tendencies within the National Front, and the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child - often with interlinking membership - represent, we believe, this stratum. At a time of crisis, such lower middle class groups react by reaffirming values which have long ceased to have any viability. (Greenwood and Young, 1976, p.122-3).

Thus it is assumed that, for some, status discontent is channelled into moral reform campaigns; a partial acceptance of Gusfield's status defence theory is implied. These conclusions are not supported with data collected from individual participants in mass movements. The present study of the anti-abortion campaign will provide an opportunity for exploring some of these conclusions.

In summary, the above chapter has outlined how the three concepts, relative deprivation, status inconsistency and moral indignation, have featured in studies of social movements, largely to account for individual mobilisation. Data from an empirical investigation of participants engaged in the abortion campaign may be used to assess the explanatory and theoretical significance of these concepts.

PART TWO.

'Witness One Million' and 'A Woman's Right to Choose':

A Study of Participants in the Abortion Campaign.

Research Strategy and Tactics.

The theoretical issues surrounding the emergence of moral crusades and the motivational forces behind individual participation in such collective enterprises have been discussed in some depth in the first four chapters. This section reports the results of a survey of both participants in the anti-abortion movement and the campaign to make abortion more easily obtainable. Prior to a presentation of the data and an analysis of the results the preparatory stages of the field work will be outlined and reference will be made to some of the methodological issues and research questions which arose during the preliminary stages of the project.

Perhaps an appropriate starting point would be to explain why abortion was chosen as a suitable topic for analysis in the first place. There were, in fact, several reasons for this choice. Firstly, in 1975 the issue of abortion was once more drawn to the forefront of public attention with the discussion of James White's Abortion (Amendment) Bill which received support from the anti-abortion movement and attracted hostile criticism from supporters of abortion on demand. As documented in the first chapter, 1975 also saw the emergence of NAC which served to consolidate the campaign for less restrictive abortion laws. Thus, the period was one in which pressure group activity was on the increase. The situation which presented itself was potentially very promising from a

social research point of view. The social scientist is prevented in some cases from undertaking experimental manipulations in the testing of hypotheses. The subject matter with which he deals is often of such a nature that advantage must be taken of 'natural' events as and when they occur. In the present example, the abortion debate began to attract increasing media and public attention towards the middle of the last decade. Numerous national demonstrations took place, a new mass movement emerged and there was a significant increase in pressure group activity. These events all served to suggest that the debate over abortion was appropriate for further sociological investigation.

A second reason for studying the abortion issue was to attempt to fill a gap in the literature. According to Wilkinson:

There is a serious dearth of published research dealing with grassroots organisations, structures and processes of pressure groups with mass memberships. And until such time as this is rectified a disjunction between social movement theory and pressure group theory is likely to remain, to their mutual detriment. (Wilkinson, 1971, p.117).

Thus at the outset it was envisaged that the study would provide some useful data on the activity of national pressure groups at grassroots level. Thirdly, the survey would be the first of its kind to study participants in the abortion campaign. Previous publications, for example, Hindell and Simms' (1971) study of the ALRA, had examined the initial growth and development of abortion protest groups, or like Pym (1974) had

concentrated on general issues surrounding the social and political influences of pressure groups.

The purpose of sociological research is not merely to provide new factual material but also to explain or account for what has been observed and thereby add to our knowledge of social behaviour either by supporting or refuting earlier hypotheses and suggesting areas for further analysis. In this sense the anti-abortion pressure groups were seen to provide an ideal opportunity for the examination of a number of tentative hypotheses relating to moral crusades.

A final reason for choosing the abortion campaign as the focus of analysis was that two easily identifiable and directly opposed movements could be discerned. The methodological implications of this feature will become apparent in due course.

#### Aims and Objectives.

The original aims and objects of the study were:-

1. to provide some data on pressure group activity at grassroots level;
2. to identify the social base of support for two local campaigns, one anti-abortion the other pro-abortion;
3. to undertake a survey of both anti and pro-abortion campaign participants with a view to evaluating the theory of moral reform as a form of status defence;

4. to investigate the factors influencing individual mobilisation, explore patterns of individual recruitment and examine the nature and extent of the rewards associated with active participation in pressure group campaigns and also assess the degree to which the anti-abortion crusade can be seen as a form of expressive politics;
5. to ascertain to which mode of reform campaign participants attach the greatest significance;
6. to determine the extent to which individual participants accepted and reiterated the views and opinions expressed in the official campaign literature and by the movement leaders and spokesmen.

#### Organisation of the Research Project.

Five major stages may be identified in the organisation of the present study:

1. Literature survey and background study.
2. Exploratory fieldwork.
3. Questionnaire design.
4. Data collection.
5. Methods of data analysis.

These will be considered separately.

#### 1. Literature survey and background study

During the first three months of the research project, from October 1975 to January 1976, time was spent reviewing the appropriate literature in order to obtain a complete

understanding of the theoretical issues involved. The material studied has been presented in Chapter Two. In addition to this literature search it was necessary to acquire an understanding of the nature of the abortion controversy at national level in general and local level in particular. Information regarding the national situation was obtained from a content analysis of media coverage. Each edition of the Times newspaper was examined for the period immediately prior to the passing of the 1967 Act to January 1976, for references to abortion and the activities of pressure groups and other interested parties. Other national newspapers were referred to on a less systematic basis. While this approach may be seen to be highly selective it should be pointed out that the primary aim was to obtain some factual information concerning the activities of the major pressure groups involved in the abortion debate. The exercise was not intended to constitute a comparative analysis of media coverage of the abortion issue. For information concerning parliamentary debates on the subject reference was made to Hansard. Additional material was also obtained from radio and television documentaries and current affairs programmes.

Evidence concerning the level and degree of pressure group activity in the East Midlands was obtained from reports in local newspapers of meetings and demonstrations and from programmes appearing on local radio stations, especially BBC Radio Nottingham and Radio Trent. Tapes were obtained of local 'phone in' radio programmes and studio debates in which

representatives of the local branches of the main pressure groups took part. The local evening newspaper also provided material relating to pressure group activity. Editions of the paper covering a five year period were examined for relevant material.

Another valuable source of information was the Community Health Council for South Nottingham, who had set up a working party in August 1975 to consider the impact of White's Bill on abortions in South Nottinghamshire. The working party comprised representatives from numerous interested parties, such as, 'Life', the Family Planning Association, NAC, local women's groups, business and professional associations and church societies. Permission was obtained from the Community Health Council to study the minutes of the meetings held by this working party. The data obtained from this source and from the radio programmes were extremely valuable in that they came from situations in which the opposed parties were engaged in a face to face dialogue.

## 2. Exploratory fieldwork.

Taking Nottingham as the centre for the study contact was made with the local branches of the three major pressure groups; 'Life', SPUC, and NAC. The primary intention was to seek the permission of the organising committees of these groups to interview their members. This initial contact was also intended to provide an opportunity to conduct a few

preliminary interviews with campaign participants as a pilot for the main survey. Basic data were sought on group size, the extent of their activities and aspects of their organisational structure.

The names and addresses of the local campaign organisers were obtained from the national headquarters of the three groups and a letter of introduction was sent to each one. The letter expressed the researcher's interest in the abortion campaign and requested an interview in order to discuss the possibility of collecting material for a thesis. The first group contacted was SPUC. After an initial meeting with the president of the local branch an invitation to attend one of their committee meetings, in order to outline the proposed study, was received. The meeting was duly attended and the fifteen committee members informed as to the nature of the research. Their initial reaction was a mixed one. The members questioned various aspects of the study and it soon became apparent that one or two members had misconceived ideas as to the nature of social science investigation and research. This reaction was not totally unexpected. Recent publications have commented on the difficulties experienced when approaching certain sections of the community in the pursuit of academic research. For example, Cliff has observed how: 'Social scientists themselves are often seen as amongst the main propagators of permissiveness' (Cliff, 1979, p.138). Not only have they been seen as promoting potentially harmful values and conduct but as contributing little if anything, to the understanding of

behaviour. In commenting on the effect of television programmes on children, Mary Whitehouse has stated quite categorically that the effect is of an adverse kind and sociologists have no useful contribution to make to our understanding of this phenomenon.

I would not have sociologists coming into this at all ... I'm simply saying that when you get evidence directly from people like teachers, doctors and the rest, then for pity's sake don't let's have that go to sociologists who will start interpreting it so that it doesn't prove anything. (Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p.77).

The initial suspicion shown towards the present project by some committee members appears to have been encountered by other researchers investigating social movements. Relating his own fieldwork experiences with the Scientology movement Wallis has remarked how:

The more strongly committed the actors are to the norms, values and beliefs at issue, the more threatening the attentions of social researchers are likely to prove. Those who believe they possess the truth complete and undefiled do not need a sociologist to tell them what is going on. (Wallis, 1979b, pp. 193-4).

Nonetheless, although a couple of the SPUC members expressed some doubt as to the need for such an exercise, permission was obtained for the researcher to attend committee meetings as a non-participant observer. At this time a campaign in support of White's Bill was underway and planning and co-ordinating meetings were held fairly frequently in the homes of committee members. In the first three months of 1976, some ten meetings of the group were attended as well as two public meetings, one held jointly with a local 'Life' group.

Thus a useful insight was gained into the procedures followed at branch level in the organisation of a local campaign.

A similar approach was made to a second SPUC group based in a small Leicestershire town close to the border with Nottinghamshire. Permission was obtained from the committee to approach their supporters with the view of gaining an interview. A list of the names and addresses of some fifty members was provided. A number of informal discussion groups, committee meetings and other functions were attended in order to maintain and reinforce contact prior to starting the data collection.

Contacting and eliciting the support of the pro-abortion group proved to be more difficult. Unlike the two anti-abortion organisations they did not appear to have a clearly articulated organisational structure. The Nottingham branch of NAC was formed, towards the end of April 1975, from within the local women's movement, which had been in existence for approximately six years. Although the movement was actively engaged in campaigning for abortion on demand, group organisation was a somewhat ad hoc affair. A less formal approach was adopted towards this group in the early stages of the research.

Few research projects are completed without encountering organisational and administrative problems. The impact of such events can vary greatly, from the total abandonment of

the project to minor alterations in the research design. Some difficulties were encountered in the present study. In July 1976, approximately ten months into the project, with the questionnaires ready for distribution, the Nottingham branch of SPUC withdrew their support and refused access to their membership list. A potential sample of over 150 respondents was thus lost. Information of the group's decision was received in writing. A number of committee members were contacted in an effort to establish the reason for the refusal to co-operate. Apparently, the local branch had undergone a major re-organisation and a number of committee members had been replaced. A new chairman/president had been appointed and strongly believed that any research activity might draw unfavourable attention to the group. Particular concern was expressed at the fact that the project necessitated a simultaneous study of both anti and pro-abortion factions.

This feature of the research had previously given rise to difficulties in developing and maintaining the trust and confidence of group members. Non-participant observation at committee meetings revealed how members viewed the opposition with a certain amount of distrust and hostility. When planning local events, such as public information displays, open meetings and the like, emphasis was placed upon the need for secrecy so that the opposition would not have sufficient time in which to mount a counter demonstration or take other disruptive action. In one committee meeting reference was made to the partial failure of a public information exercise

held in one of the city's shopping arcades. The group had displayed some publicity posters and were distributing leaflets. The pro-abortion group had somehow heard of the event in advance and responded by eliciting the help of friends and supporters who, expressing an interest in the display, gladly accepted the leaflets offered, only to deposit them in a convenient litter basket thus preventing their wider dissemination.

Having lost the support of the local SPUC group and with only a possible 50 SPUC members as a source of data, an effort had to be made to contact other groups around the Nottingham region. An approach was made to the Derby branch of 'Life' and two visits made; one to discuss the matter with the local organisers and the other to present an outline of the project to the committee. After considering the matter for a couple of weeks the committee declined to offer any assistance.

Contact was established with a 'Life' group whose members lived in and around a small town in Leicestershire, approximately twenty miles from Nottingham. An introductory visit was made and a positive response received. Permission was granted to approach group members and names and addresses were supplied.

### 3. Questionnaire design.

A questionnaire was designed for distribution to all members

of the three local pressure groups. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in appendix 5. The usual questions concerning such sociographic information as occupation, age, marital status, educational background, voting intentions and religious denomination were included. It was envisaged that the data obtained would enable a comparison to be made between anti and pro-abortion supporters. A primary objective was to locate the social bases of support for the two movements. In addition the information could be used to construct various indices of status consistency in order to evaluate the status inconsistency or status defence hypotheses.

A large portion of the questionnaire was devoted to attitude statements, forty eight in total, with Likert type response categories ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. These statements were presented in random order but in fact, formed a number of attitude scales. These are described below:

#### Attitude scales.

##### a. Traditional Family Ideology (TFI).

The TFI scale was originally a forty item scale developed by Levinson and Huffman (1955). A shorter form consisting of twelve items, previously tested for reliability, was adapted in the present study. The items are numbered on the questionnaire as follows: 7, 10, 16, 20, 22, 24, 26, 29, 35, 41, 43 and 45.

b. Dogmatism (DOG)

This scale was designed by Rokeach (1960) to measure a broad personality/attitudinal factor termed 'dogmatism'. The scale, it is claimed, measures individual differences in what may be termed the 'openness and closedness of belief systems' (Rokeach, 1960, p.71). The statements have been designed not to portray any particular ideological position. Thus, individuals adhering dogmatically to quite diverse viewpoints would have similar scale scores and would be at the opposite end of the continuum from those individuals holding equally diverse yet undogmatic viewpoints. The ten items chosen from this scale are numbered on the questionnaire as follows: 3, 8, 12, 14, 23, 28, 32, 34, 39 and 42.

c. Politico-economic ideology (PEI)

d. Conventionalism (CON)

The majority of items in the above two scales were adapted from the politico-economic conservatism scale and the 'F' scale as developed in the Authoritarian Personality (Adorno et al. 1950). The PEI scale comprised five items numbered 6, 15, 21, 40 and 44 on the questionnaire. The CON scale incorporated questions 2, 4, 11, 18, 25, 33, 37 and 38, a total of eight items.

e. Status concern (SC)

The four items used for this scale were selected from Kaufman's ten item status concern scale. He defined status

concern as 'the value placed on symbols of status and on the attainment of higher status' (Kaufman, 1957. p.380). The items were chosen specifically with the status defence thesis in mind. If as earlier research has suggested, status discrepancy and status discontent were major motivational forces behind individual mobilisation, then the intervening variable linking an individual's objective circumstances of status inconsistency to his subjective view of the social world must be the degree of status awareness. Mention has already been made of the fact that objective data such as educational attainment, occupational category and level of income can be used to provide indices of status. However, for a truly satisfactory test of the hypothesis the existence of status consciousness must be determined. Before status discontent can be seen as a motivational force behind protest activity, subjects must be aware of their status position. Clear evidence that campaign participants have a desire for status improvement needs to be presented. Previous studies have failed to provide such evidence. The status concern scale was represented on the questionnaire by questions 5, 9, 17 and 30.

f. Non-scale items.

A number of individual attitude statements were included in the questionnaire. These did not form part of a scale, but were used to elicit attitudes on a variety of issues. A total of nine statements were used, these are numbered on the questionnaire as follows: 1, 13, 19, 27, 31, 46, 47 and 48.

#### 4. Data collection.

Data was collected by means of postal questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with campaign participants. Although it is generally accepted that the response rate for postal questionnaires is not very high, in this instance it was assumed that the commitment of members to a particular cause would be an important factor in influencing their response to the questionnaire. Understandably, advocates of social or moral reform quickly seize every opportunity to present their case. Also a covering letter was sent with each questionnaire stating that the respondent's name and address had been supplied by the organiser of the local branch of their pressure group. Samples of the letters sent to the pro and anti-abortion groups may be found in appendix 5.

The questionnaires were distributed to the 'Life' and SPUC members in February 1977. A total of ninety four questionnaires were sent out to the two anti-abortion pressure groups and sixty four were returned giving a response rate of 68.1 per cent. As previously stated, contact with the NAC group proved more difficult to establish. However, a meeting was eventually arranged with an active participant in the local women's movement who supplied the names and addresses of known supporters. An official membership list was not available. Sixty questionnaires were distributed and forty two returned producing a response rate of 70 per cent.

Data were also collected from semi-structured interviews conducted with active campaign participants, that is, those who regularly attended meetings and held positions of responsibility within the group.

#### 5. Methods of data analysis

The sociographic and attitudinal data were coded for analysis using the SPSS programme (Nie et al. 1975). The appropriate statistical tests were applied wherever necessary and the significant findings have been presented in the text and appendices in both tabular and graphical form. As will be illustrated, techniques such as cluster analysis (Everitt, 1980) were employed in the search for distinguishing features between the two opposed groups. In addition, material was obtained from semi-structured interviews with local campaign participants and pressure group activists.

Group Profiles 1 : Sociographic Data.

Before presenting the survey findings relevant to the theoretical issues surrounding moral crusades and status politics a few descriptive observations will be offered in order to provide background information on the respondents. As the respondents were selected on the basis of their membership of one of three local organisations representing national pressure group interests the data collected may be used to construct group profiles. By identifying, in this way, the individual and social characteristics of campaign participants it is possible to acquire an insight into the cultural and social roots of the groups.

Main characteristics of respondents.

Data from one hundred and six respondents were used in the final analysis. Of these, sixty four were members of the anti-abortion movement; thirty two belonged to 'Life' and thirty two supported SPUC. The remaining forty two respondents were members of NAC. The characteristic features of the anti and pro-abortion groups are outlined below.

(i) Age.

As indicated in Table 1, a significant difference in age distribution was observed between the two movements. Members of NAC tended to be younger than those of SPUC and 'Life'.

Table 1. Age distribution of respondents.

<u>Age band</u>	<u>Group</u>			
	<u>Anti-abortion</u>		<u>Pro-abortion</u>	
	n	per cent	n	per cent
Under 20	2	3.1	0	0
21 - 30	6	9.4	24	57.2
31 - 40	26	40.6	10	23.8
41 - 50	14	21.9	4	9.5
51 - 60	<u>16</u>	<u>25.0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9.5</u>
	64	100.0	42	100.0

Eighty one per cent (34) of the NAC members were below the age of forty and over half (57.2 per cent) were within the age range 21 to 30 years. In contrast, 46.9 per cent (30) of the anti-abortionists were between the ages of 41 and 60. Figure 1 clearly illustrates that the modal age group was different for the two groups; for NAC it was 21 to 30 years and for the combined SPUC and 'Life' groups it was 31 to 40 years. The significance in the age distribution becomes apparent if the data presented in Table 1 are regrouped. There was very little difference between the two anti-abortion groups so these have been combined. As only two members were under the age of twenty the first two age bands have been combined to produce Table 2.

Figure 1. Age distribution of respondents in ten year age bands.

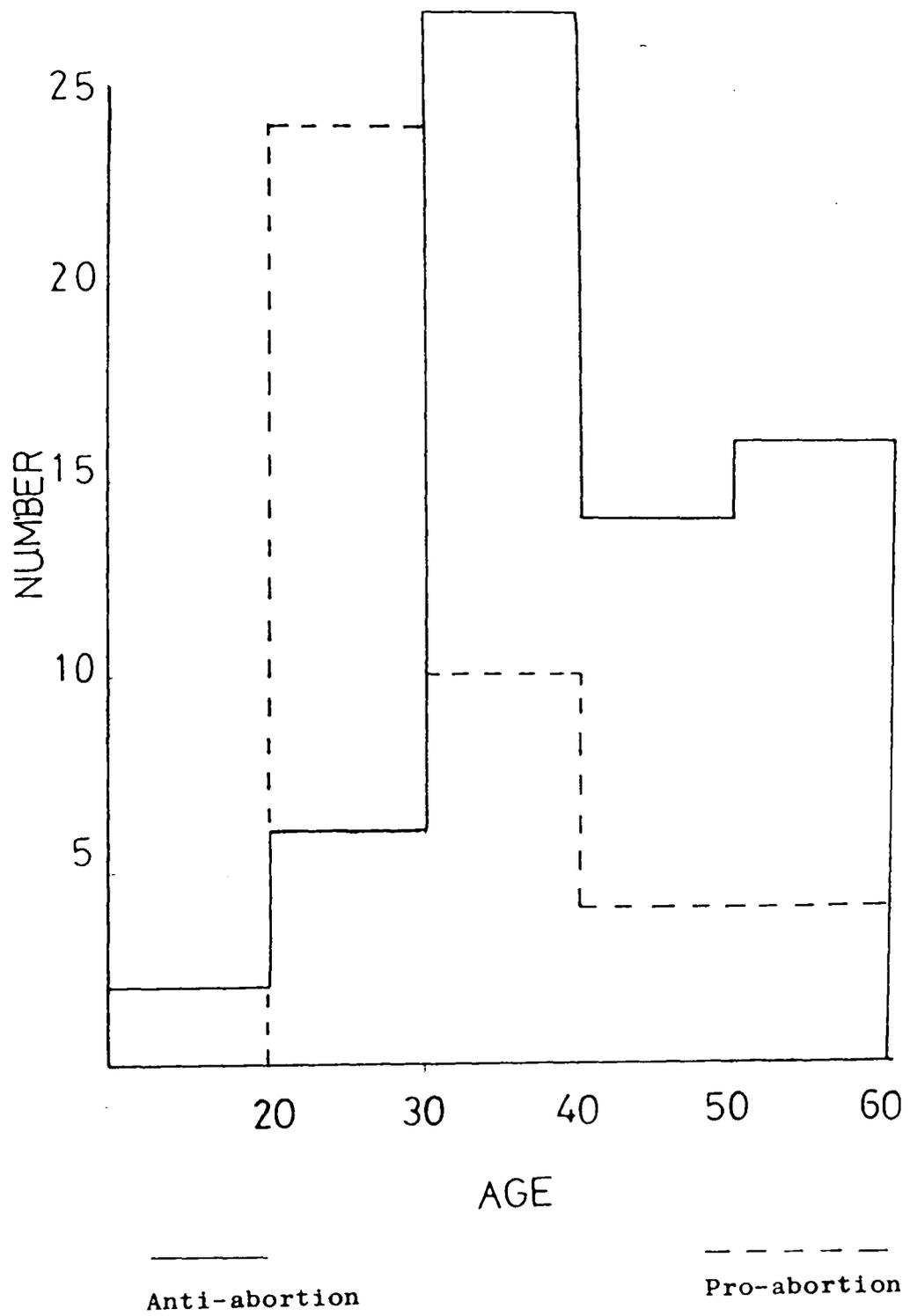


Table 2. Age distribution of campaign members.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Under 30</u>	<u>31 - 40</u>	<u>41 - 50</u>	<u>51 - 60</u>
Anti-abortion	8	26	14	16
Pro-abortion	<u>24</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
n =	32	36	18	20

$$\chi^2 = 24.35 \quad 3 \text{ df } p < 0.0001$$

(ii) Sex.

Table 3 illustrates how respondents were divided between the sexes. Only 24.4 per cent (10) of the NAC supporters were male compared to 40.6 per cent (26) of the anti-abortionists. Although this distribution is not statistically significant at the five per cent confidence level some useful observations were made. All the male members of NAC were married to female members and had been recruited by their wives. This pattern of recruitment is not surprising considering the campaign is founded within the women's movement. With regards to the anti-abortion groups men held a disproportionate number of administrative and organisational posts. The posts of chairman, secretary and treasurer in the local SPUC group were held by men. Similarly the president, chairman and treasurer in the 'Life' group were men. The energies of the female members of 'Life' were channelled into organising and maintaining the practical side of the group's activities. They co-ordinated and provided a telephone and personal counselling service,

ran a baby minding service and organised support for young pregnant girls who were facing social, emotional or family problems.

Table 3. Sex of campaign members.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
SPUC	14	18	32
Life	12	20	32
NAC	<u>10</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>41*</u>
n =	36	69	105

\* One NAC member refused to answer question 1 and stated: 'I am a person in my own right'.

(iii) Marital status.

As Table 4 shows there was no significant difference between the groups with regard to marital status. The majority of members in all three groups were married.

Table 4. Marital status of pressure group members.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Married</u>	<u>Single</u>	<u>Divorced/ Separated</u>	<u>Total</u>
SPUC	24	6	2	32
Life	32	0	0	32
NAC	<u>29</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>42</u>
Total	85	11	10	106

(iv) Religious denomination.

In presenting the case against abortion both 'Life' and SPUC have avoided over-stressing the religious and theological issues when presenting their arguments to the public. As indicated in the opening chapter, when SPUC was formed, shortly before the passing of the 1967 Act, Roman Catholics were not elected to any posts on the national committee as the campaign was publicised as being non-denominational. The claim that the campaign is non-denominational is emphasised in the pressure group literature. 'Life' considers itself to be 'an association of men and women of all sorts and conditions, and of all denominations and none. It has no particular political or religious affiliation' (Scarisbrick, 1971, p.34).

Table 5 below illustrated the responses to question 11 concerning membership of a religious group. It can be seen that all participants in the anti-abortion groups considered themselves to be active members of a religious group.

Table 5. Denominational attachments of anti-abortion respondents.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Church of England</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
SPUC	26	3	3	32
Life	<u>29</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>32</u>
Total	55	5	4	64

Catholics were by far the most predominant, accounting for 86 per cent of supporters. In comparison none of the NAC respondents assigned themselves to any religious denomination. In reply to the question concerning religious belief a third referred to themselves as humanists. The full breakdown is given below in Table 6.

Table 6. NAC respondents' response to question 11.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Humanist	14	33.4
Agnostic	12	28.6
Atheist	8	19.0
No response	<u>8</u>	<u>19.0</u>
Total	42	100.0

(v) Social class.

The concept of social class has received a great deal of attention in sociological studies. There is a whole body of literature covering the various aspects of grading occupations according to status and prestige and identifying social class categories. The methodological and conceptual problems raised in such works are numerous. One feature which has particular relevance in the present context is the distinction made between the objective and subjective aspects of social class. If the status defence thesis is to be evaluated, then data are required concerning the social class position of

individual campaign participants. Objective criteria alone are insufficient for the purposes of such an analysis as the respondent's views of his or her social position have also been seen to be relevant to any explanation of individual mobilisation. Any theory attempting to account for motivational factors must acknowledge the importance of the individual's definition of the situation. This information had to be obtained concerning both objective and subjective aspects of class assignation.

Occupation was taken as an initial indicator of social class position. Housewives were classified according to their last full-time occupation, or if this information was not available then the occupation of the husband was used. Using the Registrar General's classification of occupations (Appendix 6) the following social class distribution was obtained.

Table 7. Respondents' distribution by Registrar General's social classes.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Social Class</u>							<u>Total</u>
	I	II	IIIa	IIIb	IV	V	UC*	
SPUC	16	10	4	0	0	0	2	32
Life	4	12	2	10	2	0	2	32
NAC	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>42</u>
Total	30	42	12	10	2	0	10	106

\* Uncodable

Respondents were overwhelmingly located in the non-manual sectors of society (i.e. social classes I, II and IIIa). Among the pro-abortionists 86 per cent were associated with non-manual occupations. The comparable figure for the two anti-abortion groups was 75 per cent.

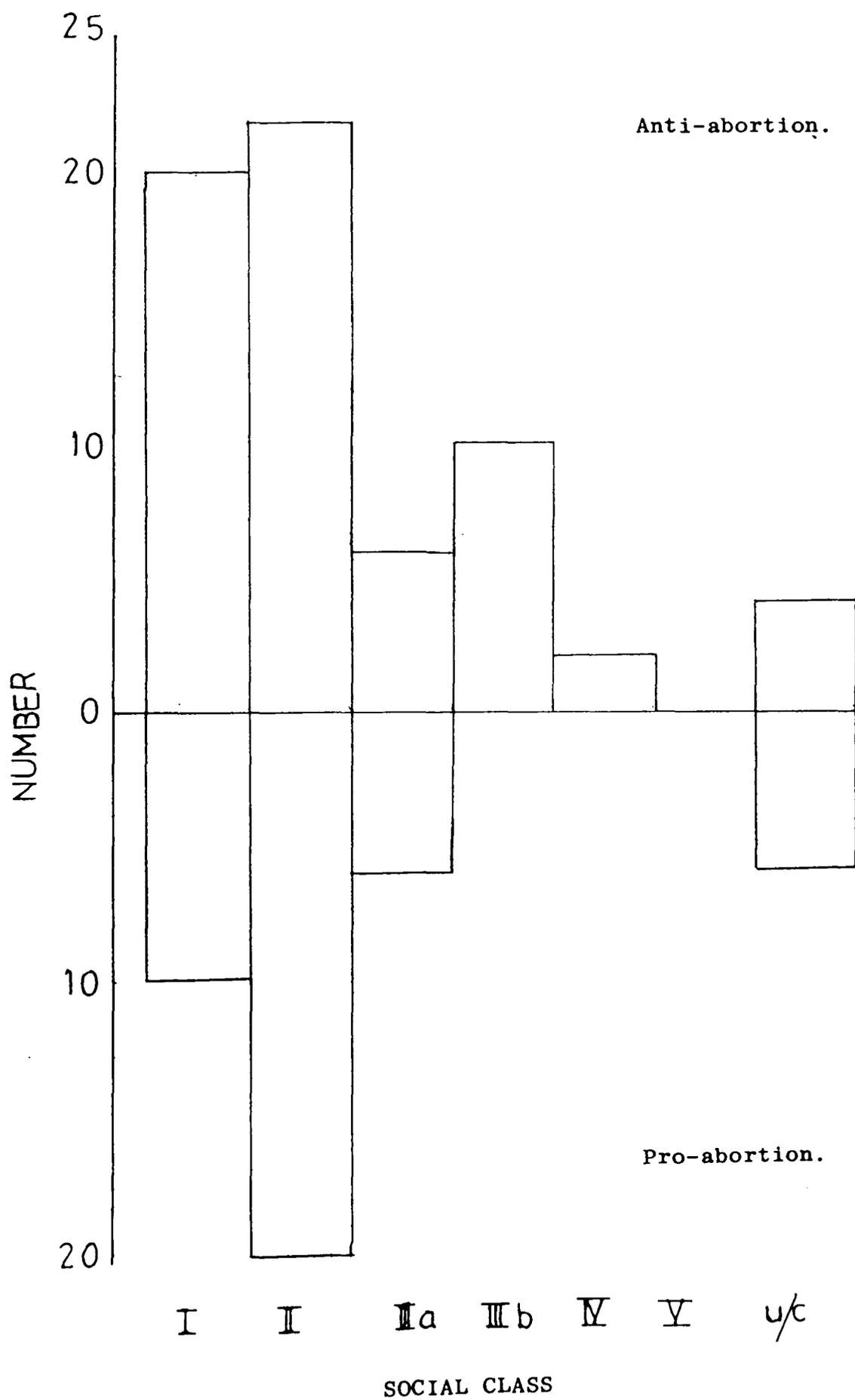
Two points deserve particular mention here. Firstly, the social composition of the 'Life' group is easily distinguishable from that of SPUC in that over a third of the 'Life' members were drawn from manual occupational backgrounds. This difference in the social base of support for the two groups is interesting and worthy of further investigation. A number of tentative explanations may be offered by way of a guide to a much wider investigation. The activities of 'Life' may be such that the group attracts support from particular sections of the community. For example, by contrast SPUC is a fairly conventional pressure group actively pursuing a change in the abortion law by employing standard pressure group tactics and procedures. They petition Members of Parliament and use all the means available to influence and shape public opinion. The activities of 'Life' are somewhat different. They aim to provide a caring service for the woman needing support during her pregnancy. The overall stress in their work is on practical help and support. It is possible that the very nature of the involvement in this group is more attractive to some individuals than others. Different rewards might be obtained from certain kinds of involvement. Alternatively it

might be the case that the differences in social class distribution between the two groups is merely a reflection of the differences in social class distribution characteristic of the wider communities from which the samples have been drawn.

A second point of note is that the majority of respondents had occupations falling into Occupational Order 25, that is, professional and technical workers. Members of the teaching profession were predominant in both the pro and anti groups. Sixteen members of NAC were employed as school teachers as were fourteen members of the two anti-abortion groups. In addition, twelve members of the latter were polytechnic or university lecturers; six of the NAC participants fell into this category. The social class distribution of campaign members is illustrated in Figure 2.

In order to explore the subjective aspects of social categorisation respondents were asked if they described themselves as upper class, middle class or working class (question 17). The responses are presented in Table 8. A comparison of Table 7 with Table 8 indicates that self assignment to class was not highly correlated with occupational class. None of the SPUC members fell into the skilled or semi-skilled manual categories yet one third (12) considered themselves to be working class. Of the participants in the pro-abortion campaign slightly over a half (22) described themselves as middle class when according to the Registrar General's Classification of

Figure 2. Social class distribution of respondents by Registrar General's classification of occupations.



Occupations 85.7 per cent (36) were within Occupational Order 25. Data from Table 8 are presented in Figure 3 in the form of a histogram.

Table 8. Respondents' self rated social class.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Upper</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>Working</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
SPUC	0	18	12	2	32
Life	0	10	14	8	32
NAC	<u>0</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>42</u>
Total	0	50	34	22	106

In response to question 17 nearly a quarter of NAC members (12) and ten anti-abortion campaign members did not assign themselves to one of the three social class categories. A closer examination of their replies reflects the conceptual problems associated with defining social class. The following are examples of replies categorised as 'other':

Anti-abortionists.

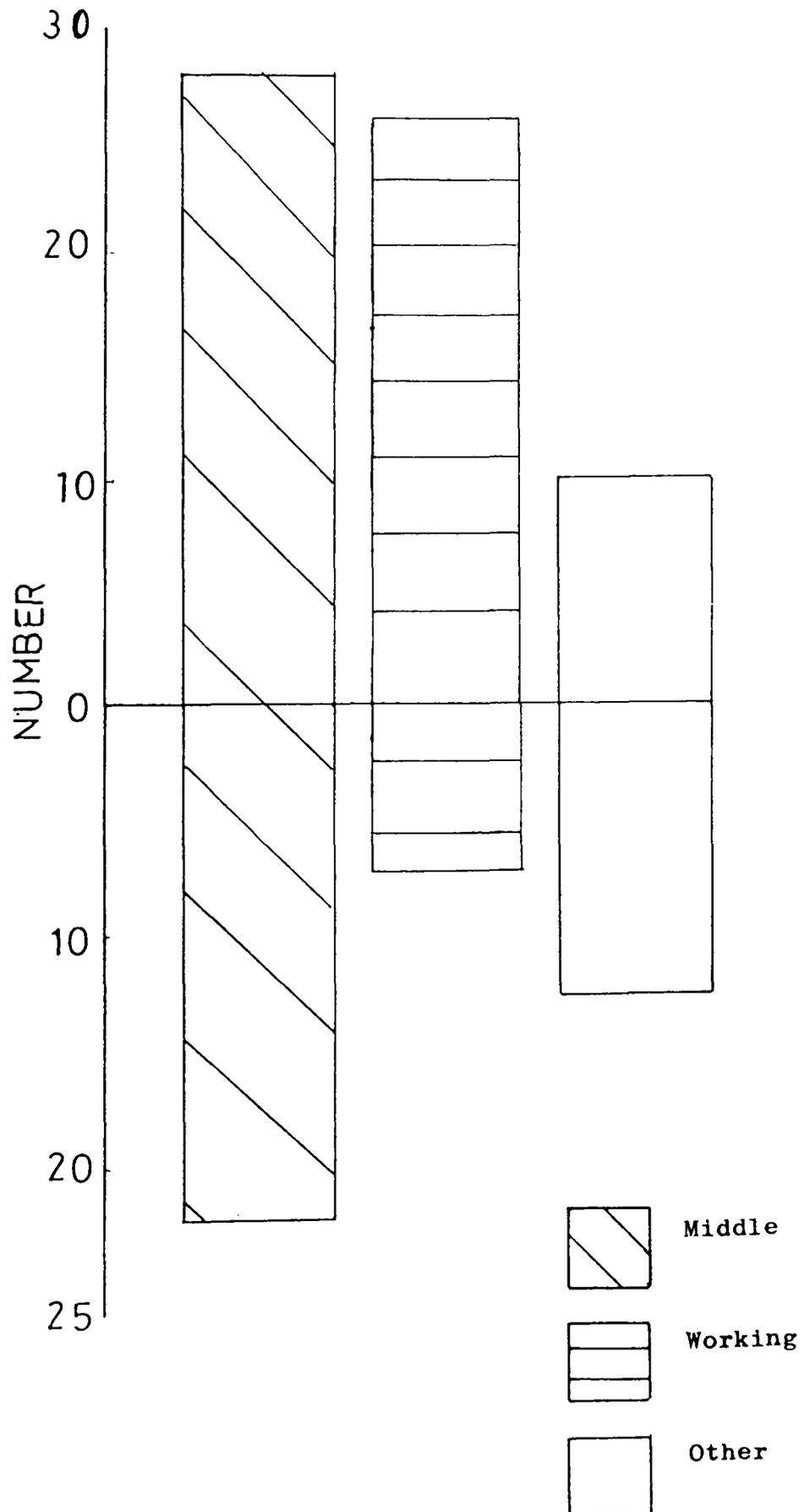
"Middle class in 1930, now uncertain". (SPUC respondent 1)

"Originally working class, now declassified". (SPUC respondent 4)

"Member of the human race, independent". ('Life' respondent 27)

"No idea to which class I belong - never heard a satisfactory definition". ('Life' respondent 31)

Figure 3. Respondents' self rated social class.



Pro-abortionists.

"Middle class by job definition, working class by birth and preference". (NAC respondent 2)

"Middle class socially, working class financially". (NAC respondent 19)

"Classless". (NAC respondents 17 and 35)

The above examples serve to illustrate the relevance of both objective and subjective criteria in studies of social class. By and large the anti-abortion group members displayed a tendency to express uncertainty with regards to their social class position and the overall image of the class structure. In contrast the pro-abortionists presented a multi-valued model of the class system in which they acknowledged their 'middle classness' in terms of objective criteria (such as occupation) yet simultaneously expressed an affiliation to the working class. The implications of these findings will be discussed later with reference to the status defence hypothesis.

(vi) Political party preference.

When asked which political party they would vote for in a forthcoming general election the respondents replied as follows:

Table 9. Political party preference of pressure group members.

Group	Con.	Lab.	Lib.	Other	Don't know	Total
SPUC	18	1	1	-	12	32
Life	16	6	4	-	6	32
NAC	<u>-</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>42</u>
Total	34	41	5	2	22	106

Of the combined SPUC and 'Life' groups 53.1 per cent (34) stated that they would vote Conservative, 11.0 per cent (7) Labour and 7.8 per cent (5) Liberal. A total of eighteen respondents, over a quarter of the anti-abortion sample, were not sure how they would vote. One SPUC member commented that his vote would go to whichever party incorporated a policy to restrict abortion as a part of its electoral manifesto (respondent 7). Another member of the same group stated that he would support "a party of Christian principles" (respondent 35). As regards NAC, 81.0 per cent (34) indicated that they would support the Labour Party at the next election.

(vii) Educational background.

Data was collected concerning the educational background of pressure group members. The results are printed on the following page.

Table 10. Educational background of respondents.

Group	<u>Educational Attainment</u>		Total	Sample size
	Degree	Certificate of Education		
SPUC	12	4	16	32
Life	4	4	8	32
NAC	24	14	38	42

It can be seen that 90.5 per cent of pro-abortion group members possessed a university or polytechnic degree or certificate of education. This compares with a figure of 37.5 per cent for the anti-abortionists. When considering this information the age difference between the two groups should be borne in mind. It would be erroneous to interpret the figures as reflecting differences in individual ability and application, for the relatively younger members of NAC had benefited from the expansion in higher education during the past two decades.

Summary of sociographic data.

From the above presentation a number of conclusions may be drawn concerning the composition of the anti and pro-abortion groups. Members of SPUC and 'Life' tended to be older than those of NAC. They were also regular church attenders, with Catholics outnumbering all other denominations. In contrast, none of the pro-abortionists admitted to having any religious affiliations. Another significant difference was observed

with regard to voting intentions. The anti-abortion supporters showed a tendency to favour the Conservative Party while the pro-abortion group overwhelmingly expressed support for the Labour Party.

Group Profiles II : Attitudinal Data.

As indicated in Chapter Five, five attitude scales were utilised in the survey along with nine individual attitude statements. Likert type summated rating scales were scored according to the following weighted response categories:

6 - strongly agree, 5 - moderately agree, 4 - slightly agree, 3 - slightly disagree, 2 - moderately disagree and 1 - strongly disagree. To minimise systematic error resulting from possible acquiescence response sets the scales were constructed to include both negatively and positively keyed items. Thus, in order to maintain overall internal consistency of the scales it was necessary in some cases to reverse the scoring key. For example, the five item Politico-Economic Ideology scale was composed of both conservative and liberal statements, agreement with the former and disagreement with the latter received a high score.

In Tables 11 to 15 below, data are presented on the relative responses of anti and pro-abortion group members on the five attitude scales.

Table 11. Traditional family ideology scale scores of anti-abortion and pro-abortion groups in the form of a grouped frequency distribution.

Class interval	Frequency	
	Anti.	Pro.
1 - 12	-	11
13 - 24	6	31
25 - 36	25	-
37 - 48	18	-
49 - 60	6	-
61 - 72	9	-
	n	64
		42

Table 12. Dogmatism scale scores of anti-abortion and pro-abortion groups in the form of a grouped frequency distribution.

Class interval	Frequency	
	Anti.	Pro.
1 - 10	-	-
11 - 20	4	13
21 - 30	9	28
31 - 40	32	1
41 - 50	11	-
51 - 60	8	-
	n	64
		42

Table 13. Politico-economic ideology scale scores of anti-abortion and pro-abortion groups in the form of a grouped frequency distribution.

Class interval	Frequency	
	Anti.	Pro.
1 - 5	-	4
6 - 10	4	21
11 - 15	4	13
16 - 20	22	1
21 - 25	24	3
26 - 30	10	-
	n	64
		42

Table 14. Conventionalism scale scores of anti-abortion and pro-abortion groups in the form of a grouped frequency distribution.

Class interval	Frequency	
	Anti.	Pro.
1 - 8	-	4
9 - 16	-	20
17 - 24	3	12
25 - 32	14	6
33 - 40	25	-
41 - 48	22	-
	n	
	64	42

Table 15. Status concern scale scores of anti-abortion and pro-abortion groups in the form of a grouped frequency distribution.

Class interval	Frequency	
	Anti.	Pro.
1 - 4	10	17
5 - 8	15	19
9 - 12	16	4
13 - 16	17	1
17 - 20	6	1
21 - 24	-	-
	n	
	64	42

The information contained in the above Tables is presented in the form of frequency graphs in Figures 4 to 8 inclusive in order to facilitate a clearer and more immediate comparison of the two campaigning groups.

What is immediately apparent from the frequency graphs is that the distribution of scale scores for the anti-abortion

Figure 4. Frequency graph showing the Traditional Family Ideology Scale scores for anti-abortion and pro-abortion campaign groups.

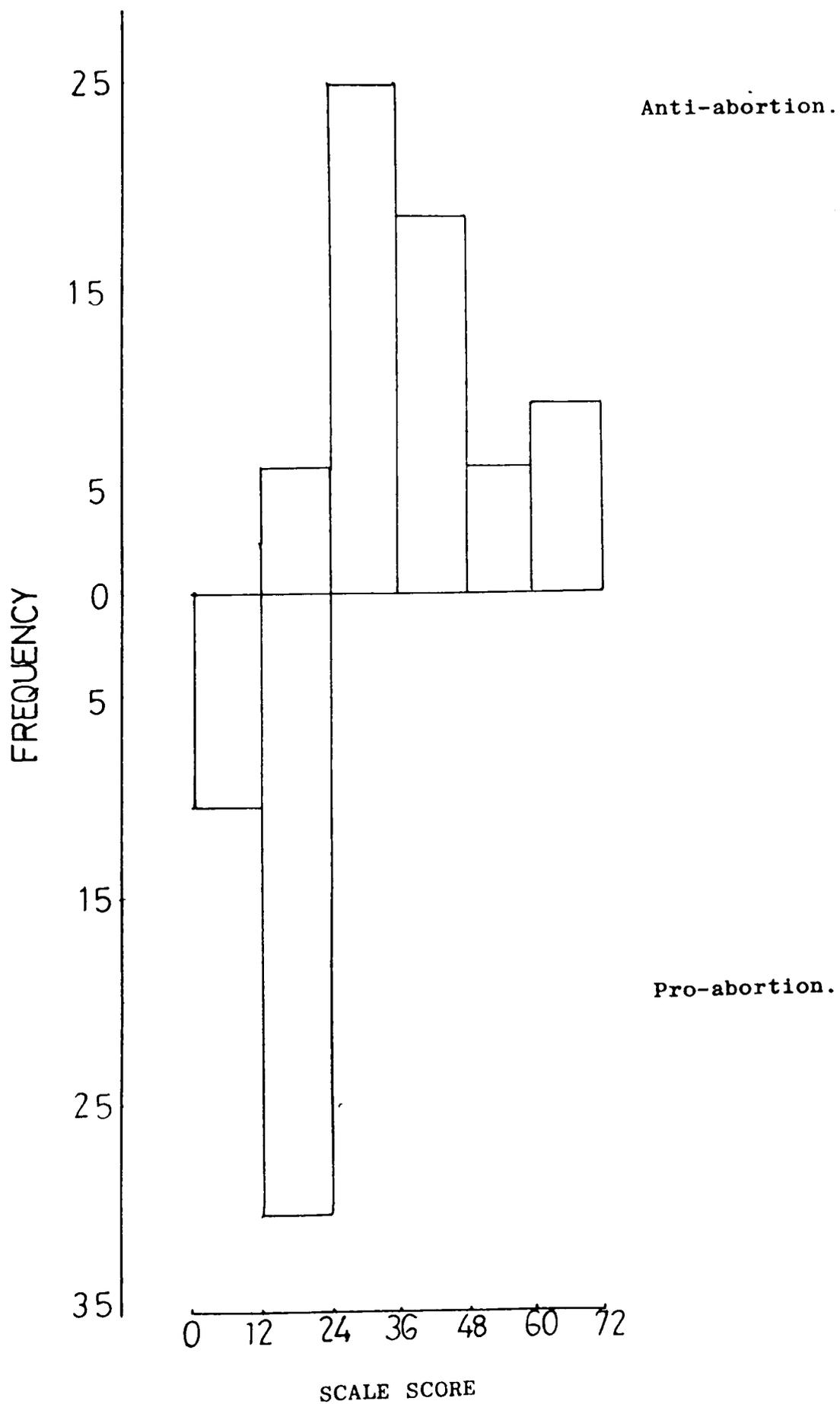


Figure 5. Frequency graph showing the Dogmatism Scale scores for anti-abortion and pro-abortion campaign groups.

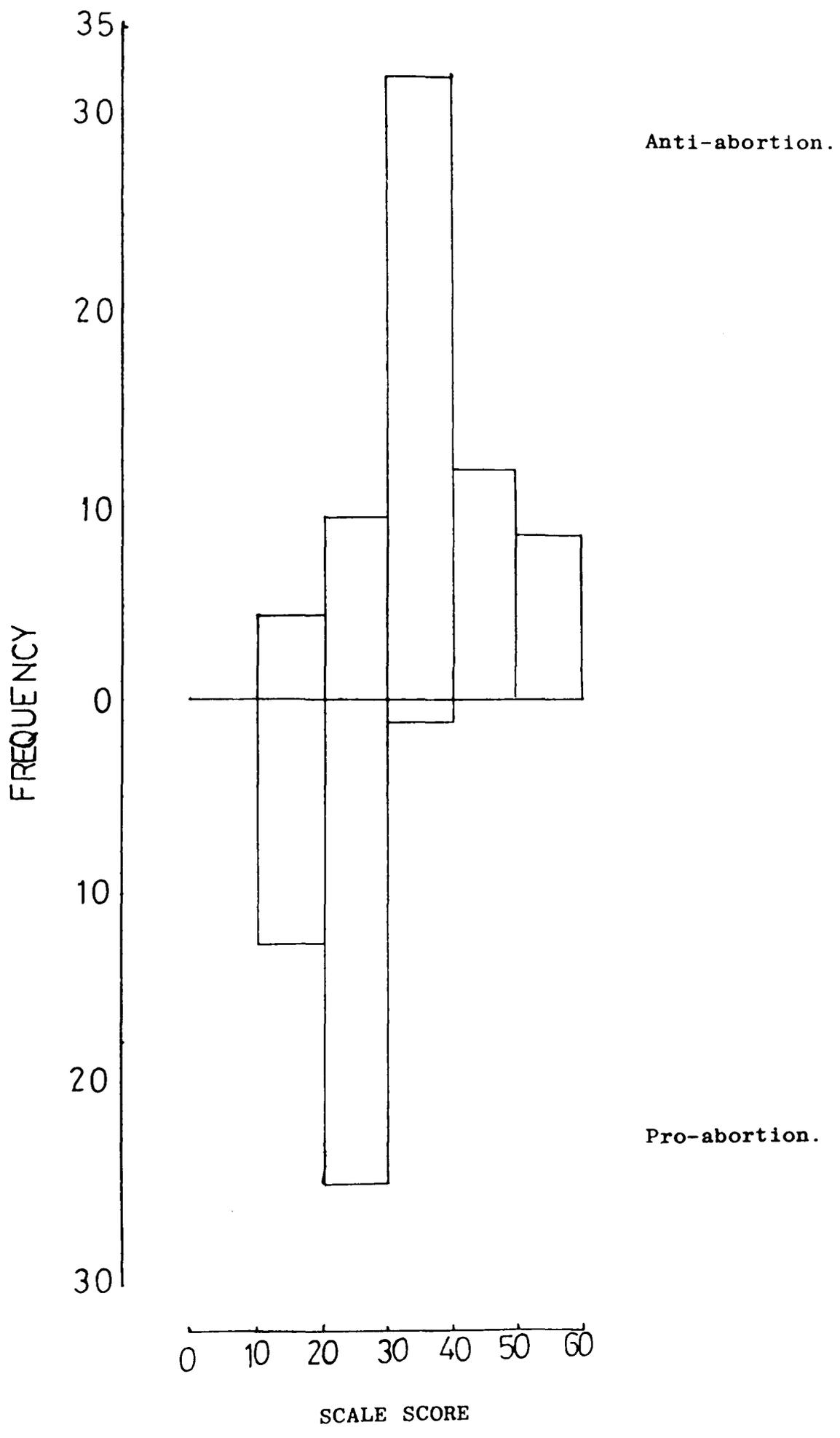


Figure 6. Frequency graph showing the Politico-Economic Ideology Scale scores for anti-abortion and pro-abortion campaign groups.

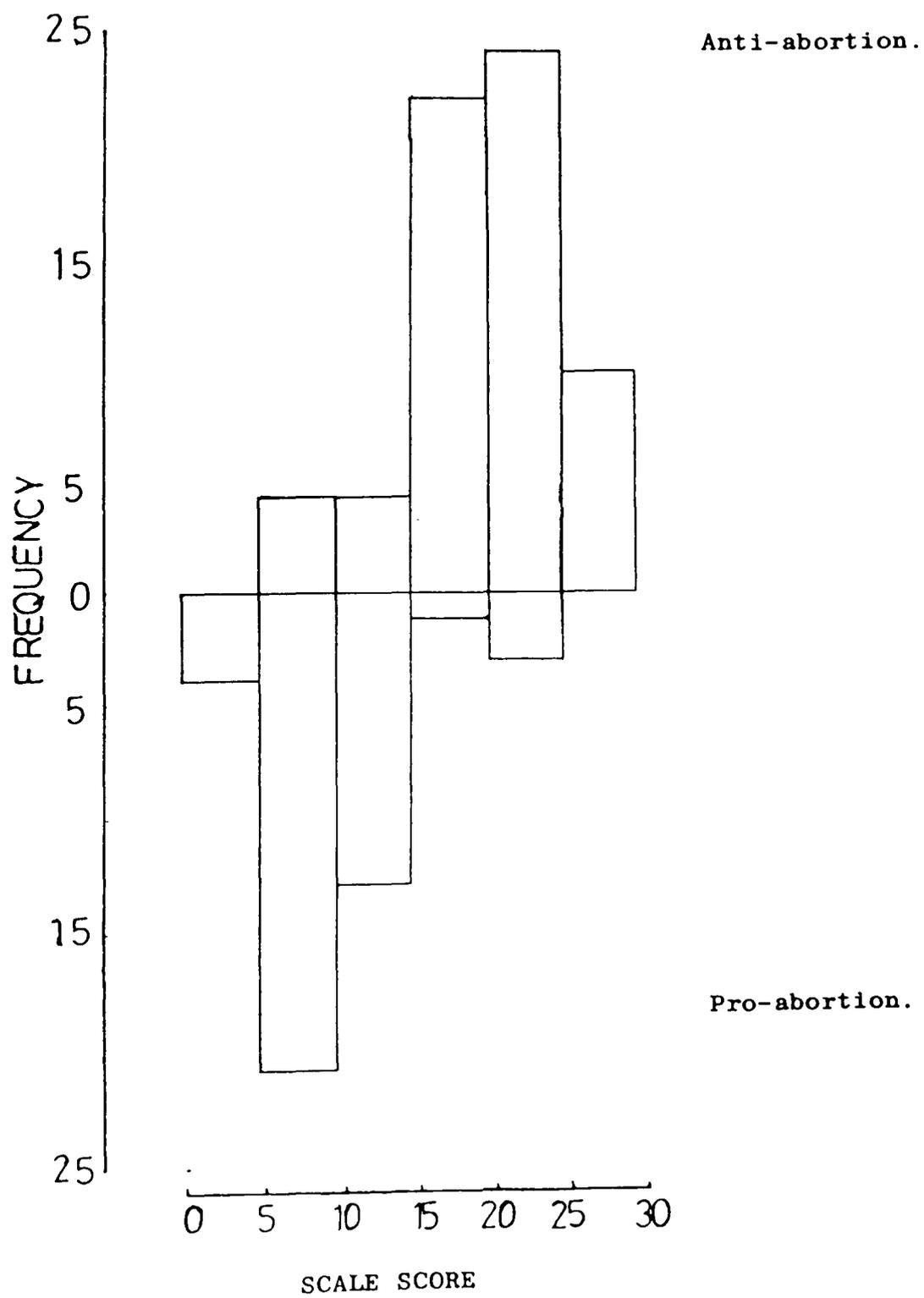


Figure 7. Frequency graph showing the Conventionalism Scale scores for anti-abortion and pro-abortion campaign groups.

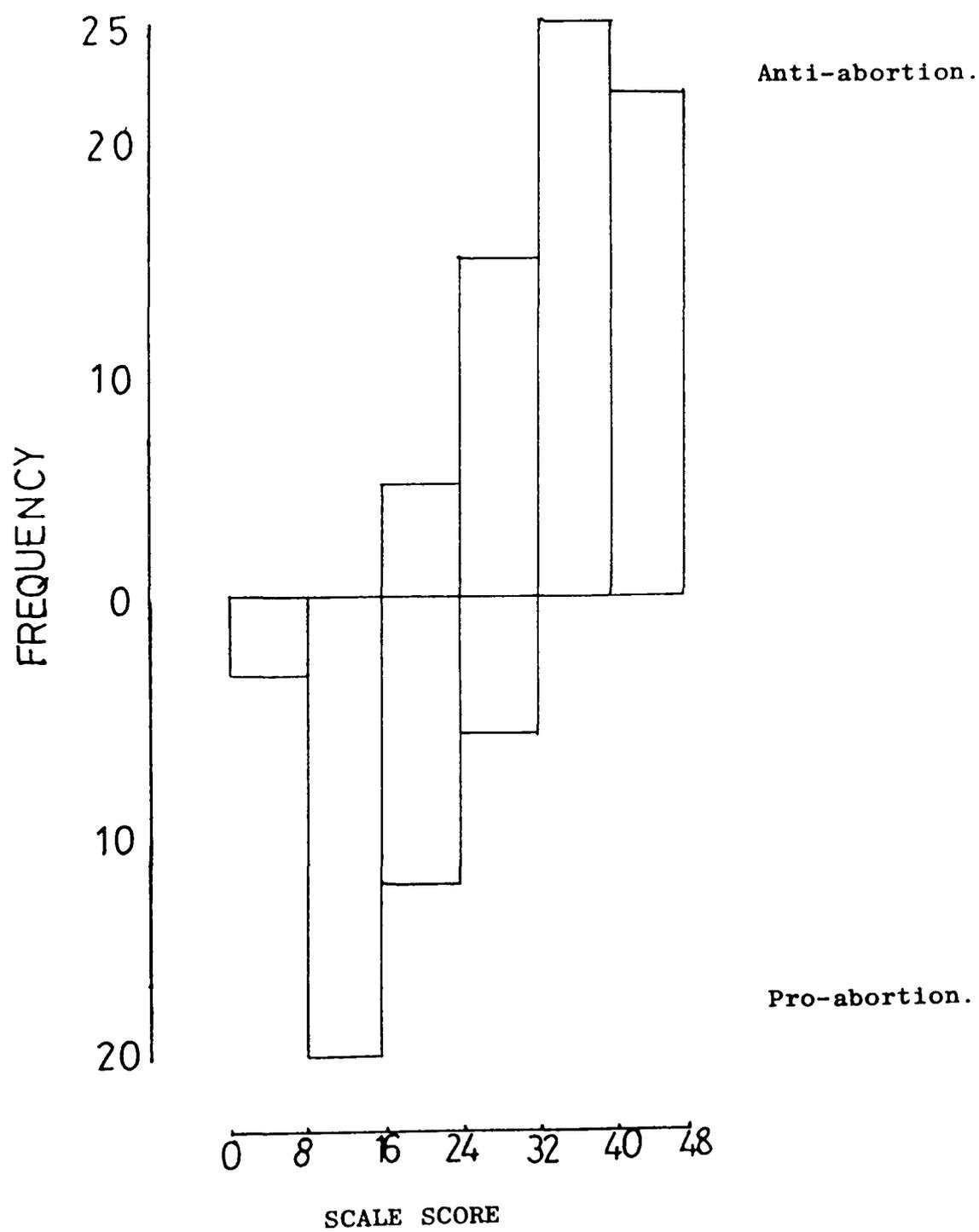
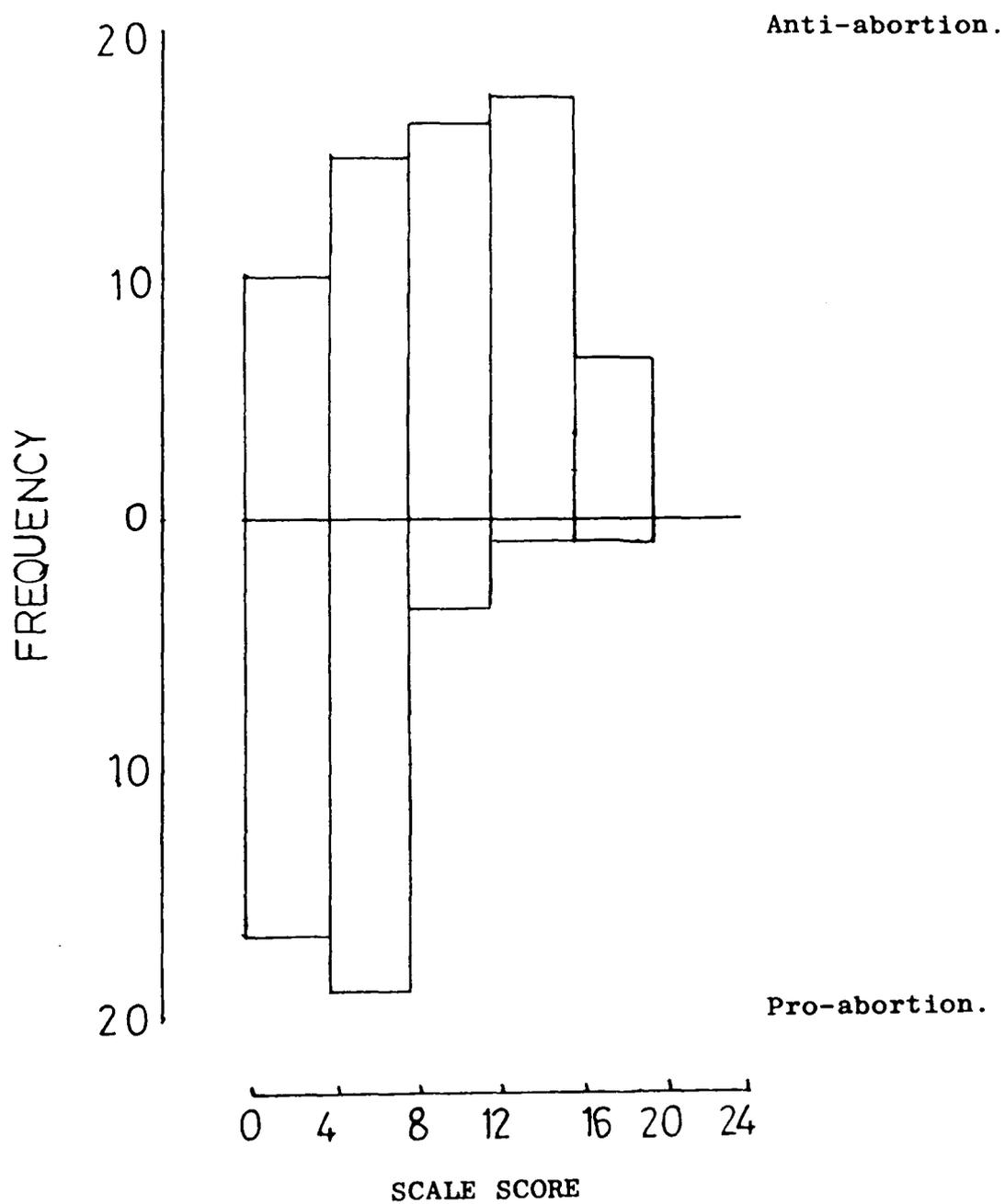


Figure 8. Frequency graph showing the Status Concern Scale scores for anti-abortion and pro-abortion campaign groups.



and pro-abortion groups are markedly assymetrical. In order to extract the maximum amount of information from the data the important features may be summarised by the use of elementary descriptive statistics. The relevance and applicability of the summated attitude scales can be appreciated by examining the mean, median, mode, range and standard deviation. These are reproduced in Table 16.

In order to identify inter-group differences when comparing grouped data on attitude scale scores, certain features of each set of responses need to be ascertained. Firstly, information is needed as to whereabouts on the scales the majority of individual scores are located. In other words, the central tendency of the data needs to be determined and this can be achieved by simply quoting the representative score for the whole set. The arithmetical mean is commonly used in such instances. However, this statistic is particularly insensitive to extreme scores and is therefore not a good indicator of the typical or central value in skewed distributions. When dealing with such distributions the median provides a more accurate representation of central tendency. As can be seen from the frequency graphs and the contents of Table 16 the nature of the data is such that, in the majority of cases, the mean provides a suitable measure of central tendency.

By comparing the mean scores of the anti and pro-abortion groups on the five attitude scales a number of important differences can be highlighted. The mean score for the anti-

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Possible</u>		<u>Group</u>	<u>Actual</u>		<u>Median</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Mode</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Range</u>
	Min	Max		Min	Max					
TFI	12	72	Anti	20	72	37.3	40.5	43.0	14.4	52.1
			Pro	12	23	14.3	15.3	12.0	3.3	11.0
DOG	10	60	Anti	17	59	35.1	36.8	39.0	9.8	42.0
			Pro	11	34	23.1	22.8	20.0	5.1	22.5
PEI	5	30	Anti	9	30	21.1	20.7	17.0	5.3	21.0
			Pro	5	22	8.3	10.4	7.0	4.6	17.0
CON	8	48	Anti	18	48	36.8	36.6	45.0	7.2	30.0
			Pro	8	30	15.2	16.9	15.0	6.2	22.0
SC	4	24	Anti	4	21	10.3	10.7	4.0	4.9	17.0
			Pro	4	17	5.1	6.1	4.0	3.0	13.0

Key to attitude scales: TFI Traditional Family Ideology  
 DOG Dogmatism  
 PEI Politico-Economic Edeology  
 CON Conventionalism  
 SC Status Concern

Table 16. Summary of attitude scale scores obtained by anti-abortion and pro-abortion groups on the five attitude scales.

abortion group appears to be higher than that for the pro-abortionists on all of the five scales. This is particularly marked in the case of the TFI scale (40.5 compared to 15.3) and the CON scale (36.6 compared to 16.9). The full theoretical implications of these findings will be explored in a later section.

From the point of view of comparative analysis a second feature of the scores requiring exploration concerns the overall dispersion of individual scores within the two groups. The first column of figures in Table 16 gives the possible range of scores for each scale. As indicated earlier a Likert type response set was used in which the response to each statement was given a numerical value within the range 1 to 6. For example, with a twelve item scale such as the TFI the lowest possible score obtainable is 12 and the highest 72. The column headed 'actual' gives the lowest and highest individual scores obtained by members of the two groups. It can be seen that in three out of the five scales (TFI, PEI, and CON) maximum scores were obtained by some anti-abortion group supporters. In addition, the maximum obtained on the DOG scale (59) was only one short of the possible 60. However these figures tell us very little about the group characteristics. It is possible that the maximum scores are obtained only by one or two group members. In order to achieve a more realistic figure of group properties the most frequently occurring individual scale score within the group can be determined. This is the mode. Again referring to Table 16 the mode is higher for the anti-

abortion group on every attitude scale but that for status concern.

The range has been included in the final column in Table 16 in an effort to indicate the spread of the data. As the range is sensitive to the two extreme values in any distribution it conveys nothing about the variability of the scores in between. The amount of variation or dispersion in the scores is indicated by the standard deviation quoted in the penultimate column.

The attitudinal data has been suitably summarised and clarified by the use of basic descriptive statistics. Certain group differences have been discovered and illustrated. However if the survey findings are to form the basis of a sociological study then the data collected needs to be subjected to a much more fundamental analysis. Inferential statistics need to be utilised in order to ascertain the actual differences in the attitude scale scores obtained by the pro and anti-abortion groups and their significance.

When selecting the appropriate statistical tests to employ, two factors were borne in mind. Firstly, the study consisted of two independent groups. The two samples were not related in that no effort had been made to equate the subject characteristics influencing each set of scores. Subjects were selected purely on the basis of their membership of a pressure group actively involved in the abortion debate. Secondly, by their

very nature attitude scales assume only an ordinal level of measurement. Responses to attitude statements are scored on a numerical scale from 1 to 6 according to the extent of agreement or disagreement. Hence, it is therefore unlikely that the points on the scale are separated by equal increments as found with interval scales. As such, any comparison of group means is inappropriate. With data of this type it is necessary to employ non-parametric statistical tests in order to detect significant group differences. In the present analysis use was made of the Mann - Whitney U test and the Kruskal - Wallis test. The former will be commented upon here.

The Mann - Whitney test is not used to determine whether two sets of scores differ specifically in their means but is used to test whether one set of scores are significantly higher or lower than another set. Thus by ranking the individual attitude scale scores of group members and calculating the sum of the ranks of one of the samples, the Mann - Whitney test makes it possible to determine the probability that a given separation between the two ranks could have arisen by chance. It can be seen from the results presented in Table 17 that this probability is very low. The ordering of ranks does not appear to be random but there is strong evidence of a significant difference between the two groups.

Table 17. Mann - Whitney U test applied to attitude scale data.

Scale	Anti mean rank	Pro mean rank	U	2 tailed P*
TFI	74.23	21.90	17.0	$\leq 0.0001$
DOG	71.05	26.76	221.0	$\leq 0.0001$
PEI	71.13	26.64	216.0	$\leq 0.0001$
CON	73.40	23.18	70.5	$\leq 0.0001$
SC	65.27	35.56	590.5	$\leq 0.0001$

\*corrected for ties

From the foregoing it is apparent that there are significant differences between the anti-abortion and pro-abortion groups particularly at the level of attitudes, values and beliefs. In order to emphasise the existence of such widely differing group profiles, use was made of cluster analysis techniques. The term cluster analysis is simply a generic term for a set of techniques which enable classifications to be produced. Taking the attitude scores of the total sample (n=106) it was decided to adopt this method of data handling to identify any natural groupings within the data. If such differences did appear then it would be possible to determine the extent to which they were a reflection of group membership. In other words the attitude scores of individuals were computed and classified and the clusters obtained were examined to see if any anti-abortion and pro-abortion group members occupied easily distinguishable and distinct clusters.

A number of different types of cluster analysis techniques exist. In the present analysis hierarchical techniques were used. These may be subdivided into agglomerative and divisive methods, the former were used here. In particular the furthest neighbour and group average methods were employed. The dendrograms presented in Figures 9 to 12 inclusive are representations of the former method, or as it is otherwise known, the complete linkage method. A full explanation of the various cluster analysis techniques and their application to data analysis in the social sciences can be found in Everitt (1980).

In each of the four dendrograms (Figures 9 to 12) the numbers 1 to 106 refer to respondents. The anti-abortionists are numbered from 1 to 64 and the pro-abortion group members are numbered from 65 to 106. In order to ensure that the diagrams are readily understandable the pro-abortionists have been outlined and labelled. Numbers not emphasised represent anti-abortion group members.

The first cluster analysis performed was on the responses to the total 48 attitude items contained in the questionnaire. The findings are illustrated in Figure 9. It can be seen that 36 of the pro-abortionists fall within one distinct cluster. Of the 6 remaining group members, subjects 70, 98, 82 and 89 fall outside the main pro-abortion cluster on both the Traditional Family Ideology Scale (Figure 10) and the Dogmatism Scale (Figure 11). Nonetheless in both these dendrograms the pro and anti-abortion movements form clearly distinct clusters.

Figure 12 illustrates the responses to items in the Conventionalism Scale. A significant clustering of respondents is clearly

visible. All 42 of the pro-abortionists are grouped together.

Thus from an analysis of the attitudinal data it can be shown that natural groupings exist. The denerograms were constructed on the basis of responses to the attitude statements. When the clusters had been identified and the anti and pro-abortion group members distinguished it was discovered that the clusters very closely conformed to group membership.

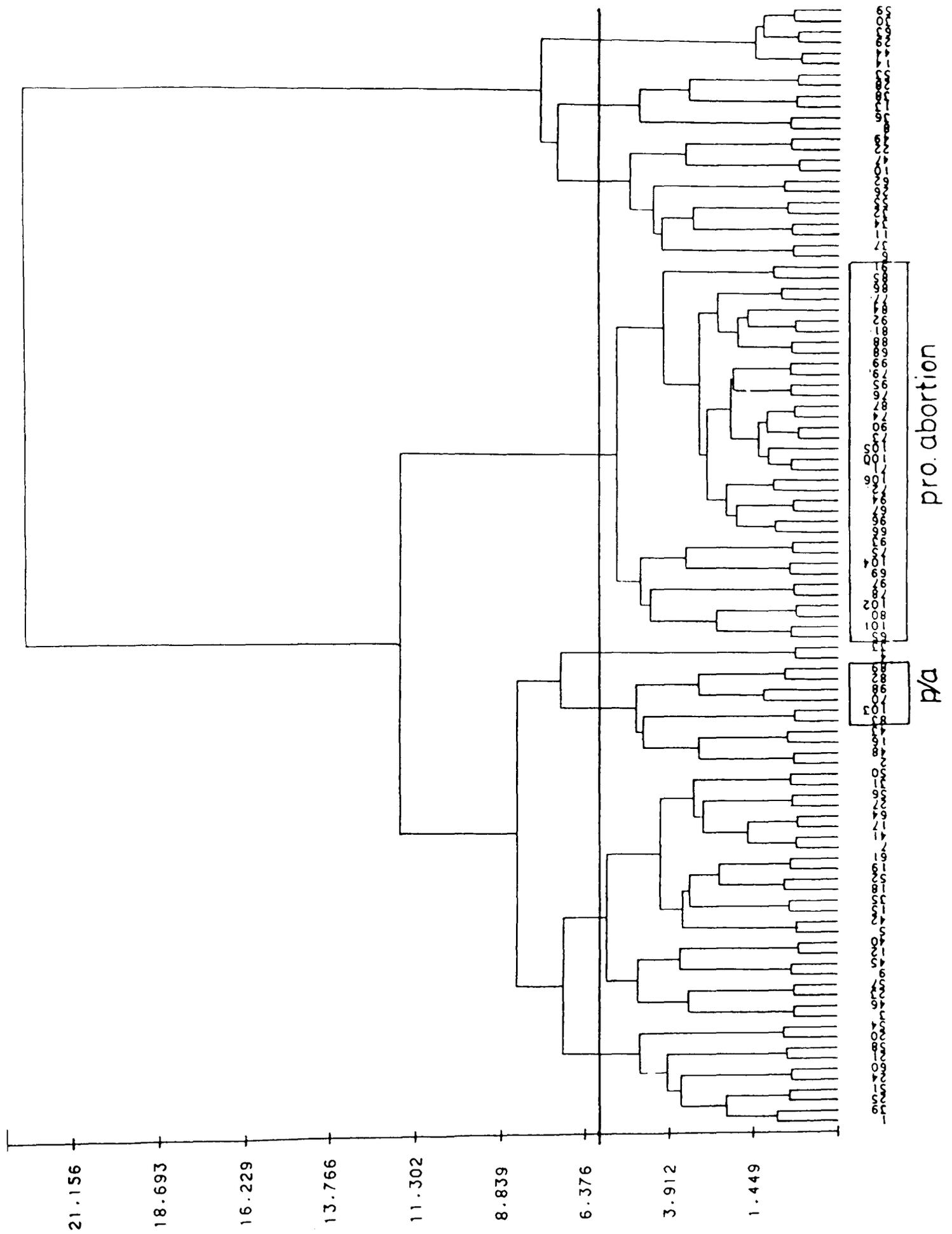


Figure 9. Furthest neighbour analysis of attitudes.

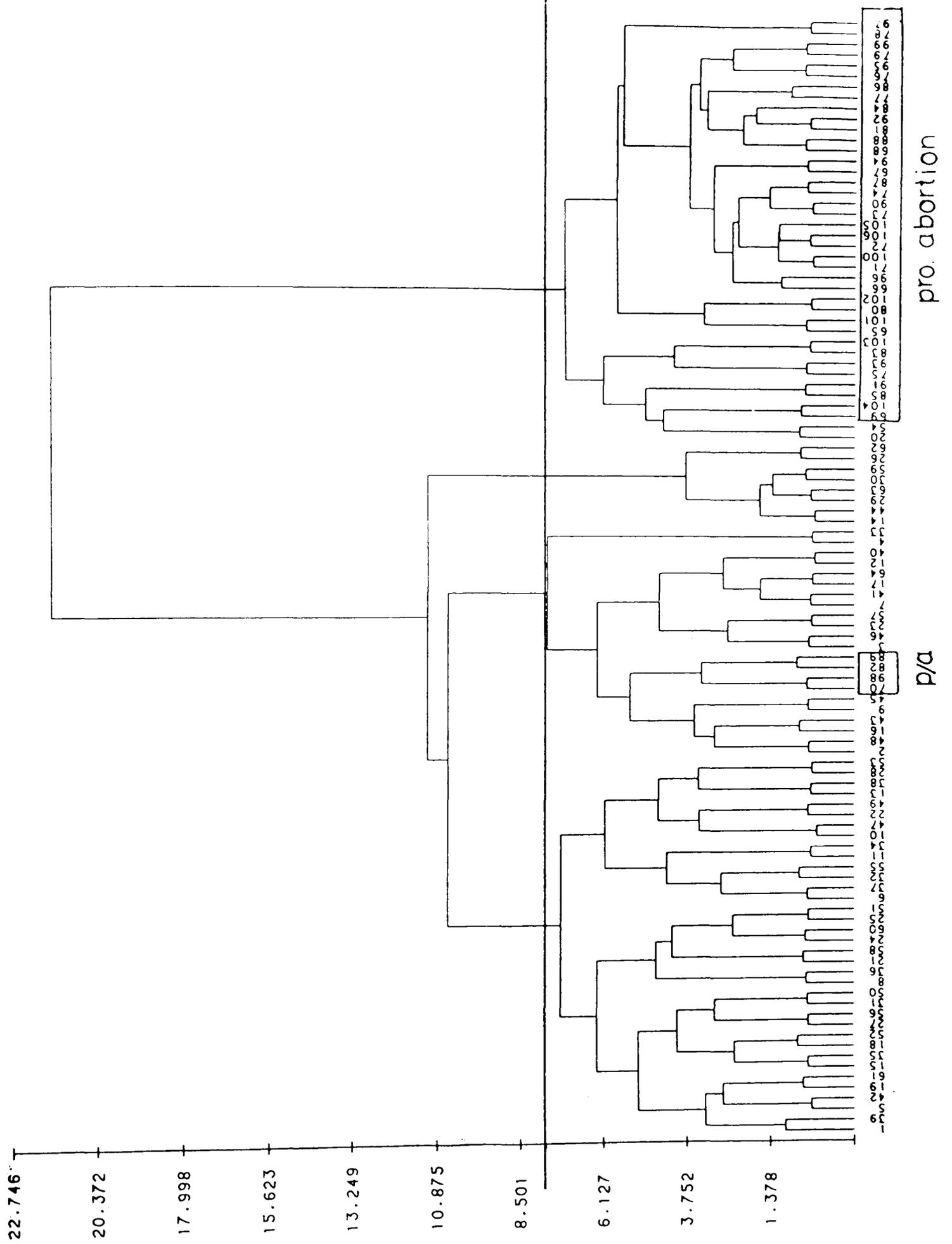


Figure 10. Furthest neighbour analysis of attitudes  
TFI variables.

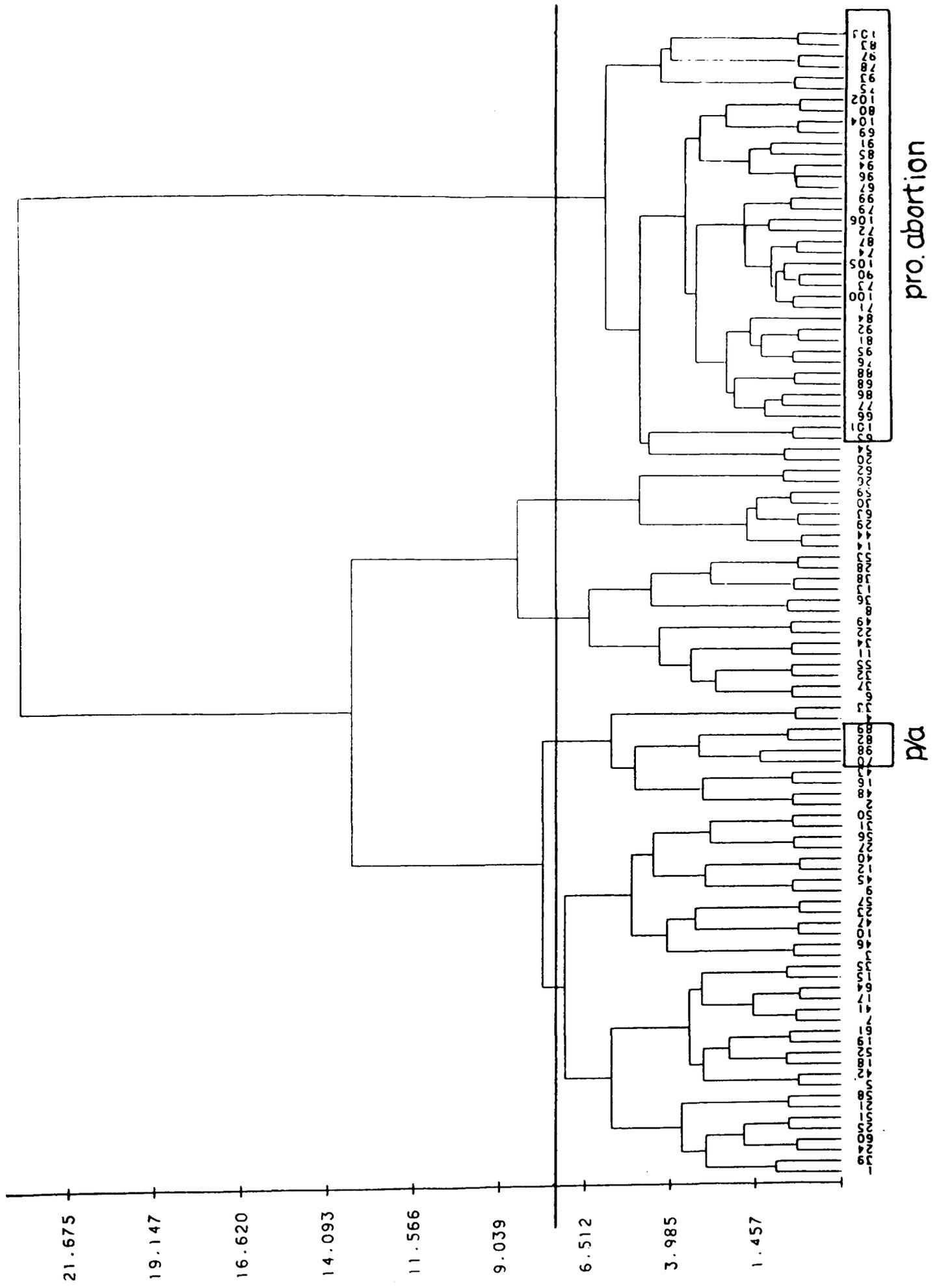


Figure 11. Furthest neighbour analysis of attitudes  
DOG variables.

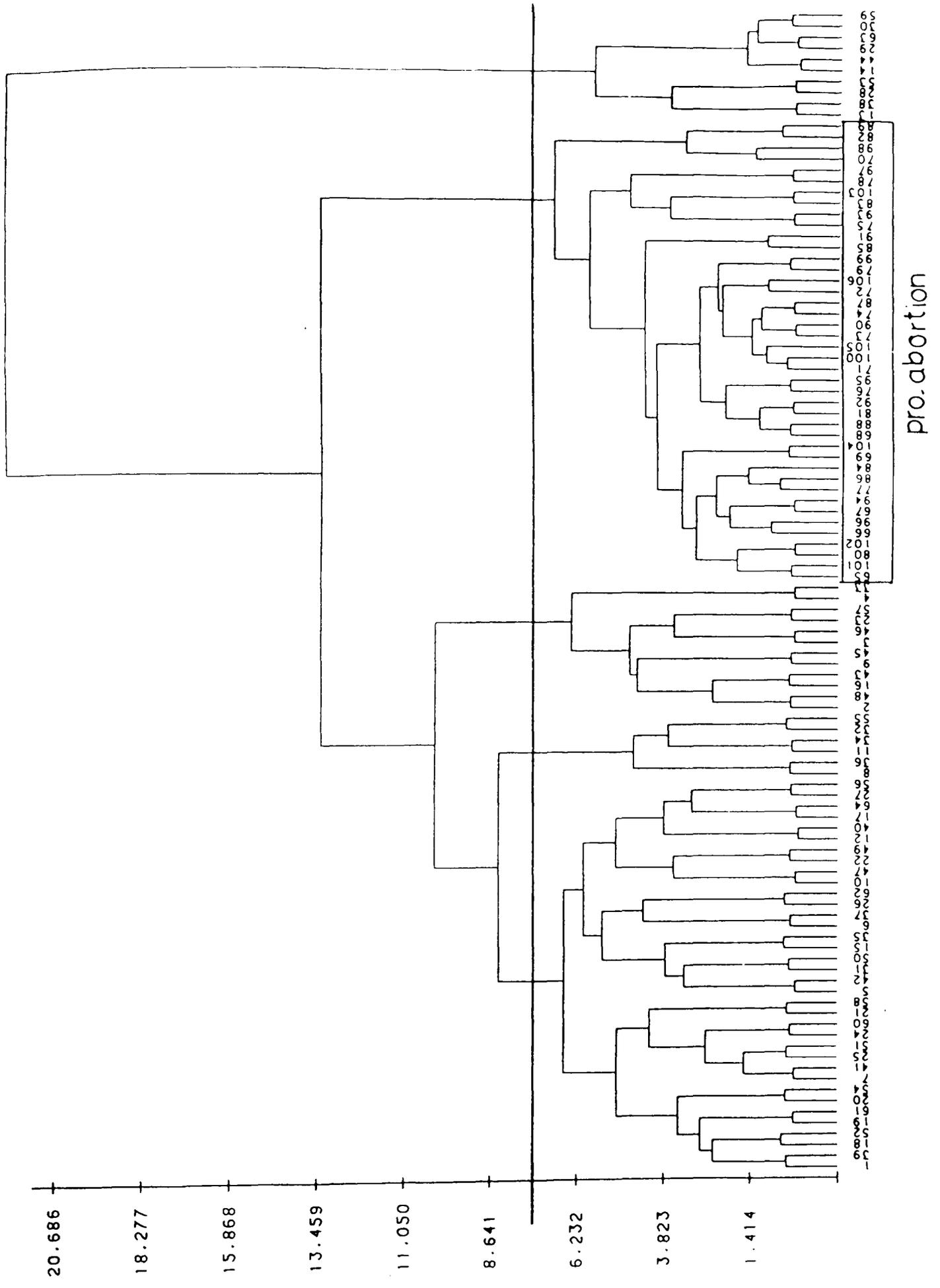


Figure 12. Furthest neighbour analysis of attitudes  
CON variables.

A Study of Active Participants in the Anti-abortion Campaign

In the discussion in Chapter Three of the four theoretical formulations utilised by Gusfield, namely, status defence, expressive politics, cultural fundamentalism and orientation to reform, the focus of attention was primarily on the latter two. It was suggested that the two former issues related directly to individual motivational factors and could therefore not be suitably explored by merely examining secondary source material. The comments made concerning the latter two issues were based on an analysis of pressure group literature, public pronouncements of campaign leaders and activists and statements made by representatives of religious institutions and self styled moral entrepreneurs. It was concluded that a certain cultural fundamentalism prevailed and a specific reform strategy predominated. What requires exploration here is the extent to which these two facets of the campaign are endorsed by active participants at the grass-roots level. In other words, do so-called rank and file members of pressure groups with a national base necessarily accept and reiterate the views and beliefs perpetrated in the official campaign literature.

The purpose of this section is to assess and evaluate the relevance of the four analytical components of Gusfield's main thesis to the study of the anti-abortion movement. Both questionnaire data and information gleaned from semi-structured interviews will provide the foundation for such an analysis; cultural fundamentalism and orientation to reform will be dealt

with initially. The notion of status defence will be examined in the following chapter.

Cultural fundamentalism.

As previous discussion has shown an element of cultural fundamentalism can be identified within the campaign material disseminated by the anti-abortion movement. This fundamentalist reaction is based upon a firm belief in, and commitment to, particular social and moral values. Disregard for such values and the rise of permissiveness are seen as part of the moral decline of society. Data from self-administered attitude questionnaires and in-depth interviews were compiled in order to ascertain the extent to which such an analysis accurately reflected opinion at the grass-roots level. It was necessary to identify the central value system characteristic of anti-abortion campaigners and to determine to what extent, if any, participants held the belief that the basic social values were being eroded and that a moral crisis was imminent.

The attitudinal data outlined earlier clearly depicts a value system capable of producing and supporting a fundamentalist reaction. A traditional and conventionalist perspective can be discerned especially with regards to the social and moral precepts respondents saw as surrounding family life, social conduct in general and interpersonal relationships. An indication as to the perceived erosion of values is provided by the replies to question 38. Respondents were asked for their opinion to

the following statement: 'Unfortunately the virtues of thrift and diligence have lost their prestige in today's society'. Well over one half of the anti-abortionists (68.8 per cent) agreed with this statement whereas 31.3 per cent disagreed with it. It would also appear, from replies to question 36, that an even larger percentage of anti-abortionists (78.1 per cent) considered there to be a moral crises in society which was largely responsible for the problems encountered in the social, political and economic spheres of activity. The responses to this question can be compared with those from the pro-abortionists in Table 18 below.

Table 18. Responses to the statement: 'The social, economic and political troubles currently facing this country are symptomatic of a moral crisis'.

<u>Response</u>	<u>Group</u>				
	<u>Anti-abortion</u>		<u>Pro-abortion</u>		
	number	per cent	number	per cent	
Agree	50	78.1	6	14.3	
Disagree	12	18.8	36	85.7	
No response	2	3.1	-	-	
	n	64	100	42	100

$$\chi^2 = 41.7360 \quad 1 \text{ df} \quad p = \leq 0.0001$$

(Corrected chi-square calculated excluding non-responses)

It can be concluded from the data obtained that there was a consensus among the anti-abortionists, similar to that observed in most moral reform movements, concerning the core

social values and a common conception that these values were in decline.

Evidence of a perception of a decline in moral standards appeared repeatedly in interviews with SPUC and 'Life' members. The secretary of the local SPUC group, a female college lecturer in her late thirties, married with two young children, felt that moral values in Britain were declining and this could be detected in many areas of life. In her opinion there was:

"A general decline in moral standards, a diminution in the importance of family life, a lack of integrity of politicians and increasing selfishness and materialism amongst the community in general". (SPUC respondent 6).

Another female member of SPUC, a nurse married with three children also expressed the view that moral values were in decline:

"As a practising Christian I applaud all that is done to make life better, both materially and in other ways, but I cannot help being uneasy about the general slide downwards, in many ways, in moral standards (a horrible phrase but I hope it covers what I mean). We are swamped with everything materially, emotionally (never have there been so many experts) and yet one can't help wondering if we are any happier ....." (SPUC respondent 3).

Many similar statements were made by other anti-abortion group members. For example, the treasurer of the local 'Life' group and elected regional delegate to the national association strongly condemned the "emphasis on purely material values" and suggested that more attention should be given to "Christian, humane principles" ('Life' respondent 34). A content analysis of the interview and questionnaire data pinpoints two major themes in the moral decline argument. Firstly, there is a

strong attack against materialism which is seen as being partly responsible for undermining basic moral values.

Secondly, and in some ways connected, the prevalence of a social philosophy based on individual self-interest is considered to be detrimental to the 'rights' of certain sections of society. An example of the former belief is contained in the following by a 'Life' member who considered that there was a:

" ... gross wastage of all types of resources in support of a life style which is too artificial to survive long and from which far too much is expected by way of living standards. Realities which are unpleasant are ignored even by those whose job it is to point them out". ('Life' respondent 43).

Criticism of the emphasis on wealth and the accumulation of possessions and material goods featured in many of the respondents replies. Concern was also expressed at the perceived growth in selfishness and self-interest at the expense of community values. The local treasurer of SPUC, a school teacher in his late thirties, stated that:

"The main problems of life in Britain today are concerned with self-interest which often conflicts with the rights, justifiable interests, health and safety and sanity of others". (SPUC respondent 7).

Another respondent and former secretary of the same group expressed a similar view:

"The main cause of our troubles today is selfishness in society. This causes human beings to suffer the worst 'disease', that of being unwanted and unloved. The symptoms are aborted babies, broken lives leading to alcoholism and drug addiction; people living alone with no one to call their own or talk to; vain battles of greed between employees and employers; inter-union rivalries; various forms of racial discrimination ... and legal robbery in financial transactions ..... to name but a few". (SPUC respondent 8).

This attack on self-interest can be seen to be invariably tied up with the question of individual rights, freedom and ultimate responsibility. This, along with a condemnation of the materialist approach to life, can be identified in the following comment made by an active member of 'Life':

"I dislike so much emphasis on 'rights' and often wonder where many of these rights come from. I think there is too much sloppy talk about freedom without sufficient thought being given to the responsibilities that inevitably go with freedom, or to the relationship between our own 'freedom' and that of other people. I heartily dislike the attitude of 'have now pay later' and think that this is possibly one of the biggest factors contributing to our social and economic difficulties". ('Life' respondent 31).

Gusfield in his analysis differentiated between defensive and aggressive approaches in the fundamentalist response (Gusfield, 1963, p.144). Examples of both these approaches were identifiable amongst the responses of SPUC and 'Life' members. The defensive reaction, incorporating a condemnation of the rising tide of permissiveness and maintaining that many contemporary problems could be alleviated, if not completely eradicated, by a re-affirmation of traditional values, was clearly evident in the replies of the anti-abortionists. Many examples can be drawn from the interview data to illustrate this stance, the statements following are a selection.

"I feel that there is a need for more moral and social education. People need to be made aware of the basic values. I should like to see a more caring society for the mentally ill, handicapped, elderly people and one parent families and the homeless. However, I think things are going in the right direction although things do take time and in this respect educating people to the needs of these people is extremely important". ('Life' respondent 61).

"Many of our major social and moral values are under attack ... I deplore the mass abortion on demand which seems to be more the rule now. To me it seems only the thin end of a terrifying wedge, when selected areas of humanity, with a soul accountable to God, can be disposed of because it is inconvenient to us". (SPUC respondent 3).

For some anti-abortion supporters a lack of moral education was seen to underlie the rise in permissiveness:

"As a nation we are moving away from traditional values .... Individual gratification has replaced responsibility to others. This is apparent in many aspects of life and is particularly relevant with regards to personal relationships". ('Life' respondent 27).

"A return to our basic values will be a return to stability and sanity". ('Life' respondent 58).

"I feel that abortion is being used as a means of contraception and this I find abominable. Abortion has given a greater freedom to some - a freedom to be sexually promiscuous". (SPUC respondent 8).

"Abortion is part and parcel of the Permissive Society". (SPUC respondent 46).

From the overall analysis it is evident that a defensive type of fundamentalism, similar to that observed in the survey of the national campaign literature, exists at grass-roots level. However, it will be remembered that the defensive and aggressive reactions are not mutually exclusive. The aggressive approach was also discovered to be equally prevalent in the responses of subjects.

In their attempts at locating the source of society's moral decline both 'Life' and SPUC members displayed hostile reactions towards particular institutions. Campaigners frequently cited the lack of firm leadership and the failure of respectable institutions to fulfil their positions of

responsibility, as causal factors in Britain's moral decline. The media and politicians came in for special criticism. The chairman of the local SPUC group, a fifty nine year old university lecturer, strongly criticised the 'lack of a trustworthy leadership, the cynicism of the leaders and the absurd trust placed in legislation as a solution to human and ethical problems' as integral factors in the so-called contemporary moral malaise (SPUC respondent 1).

Such a condemnation was by no means restricted to a minority of supporters but occurred in one form or another in the majority of interviews. One 'Life' member claimed to be: "Appalled at the corruption, dishonesty and power seeking ... that seems to be prevalent amongst people in authority nowadays" ('Life' respondent 22).

Similarly others expressed concern over the 'lack of integrity' shown by politicians and the failure of those in positions of legitimate power to exert their influence and ensure moral conformity. In the majority of cases the aggressive quality of the fundamentalist reaction was seen to be firmly embedded within the belief that central institutions and responsible bodies had failed to provide the necessary moral guidance. The media were singled out by many for special mention. They were seen as a disseminator and populariser of permissive attitudes as well as being a powerful force capable of moulding and influencing behaviour. This view is typically illustrated in the following:

"I feel that television has played a large part in the general lowering of moral standards in Britain today. The way that television companies go on one would think that they had just discovered sex ... I think that a great deal of crime (both violent and sexual) committed in Britain today is caused, directly and indirectly, by the effect of television on people, especially young people". (SPUC member 12).

"There are too many sex films on television which in my opinion is morally wrong. Children today are not allowed to use their own imagination or instinct, everything is suggested to them by television. It has a dangerous influence on them and their impulses are directed by what they see and hear, neglecting to see the possible consequences". ('Life' respondent 28).

### Orientation to reform

According to Gusfield moral reform movements may be characterised by an assimilative or coercive reform strategy. The former applies when efforts are made to convert the norm violator, while the latter refers to a more aggressive form of intervention in which the emphasis is upon constraint rather than conversion. An assimilative orientation is founded upon feelings of sympathy and pity towards the 'deviant' whereas anger and hostility are viewed as the emotional responses typical of a coercive reform strategy. The co-existence of these two approaches within one moral crusade has been documented by Wallis (1972). Similarly, in the present analysis of the anti-abortion movement's literature the simultaneous existence of these two modes of reform has been described. It has been shown that an assimilative approach is taken towards those women who are viewed as 'victims' in that they

have been pressurised into having abortions, whereas a coercive campaign is waged against those individuals who are seen as responsible for forcing and encouraging women to have abortions. Not only is indignation and anger directed at the corrupt few but also at those feckless and irresponsible women who are viewed as deliberately using abortion as if it were a means of contraception. In order to evaluate the relevance of this analysis at membership level interview data were studied and local radio programmes featuring pressure group representatives were monitored.

Anti-abortion campaign activists displayed aspects of an assimilative orientation to reform especially when portraying the woman seeking an abortion as an innocent victim of external circumstances, that is, more sinned against than sinning. Numerous members of 'Life' who were interviewed referred to cases they had dealt with in which the young pregnant women they were seeking to help, with practical advice and material support, were being encouraged by their boyfriends, husbands or mothers to have abortions. Comments like the following were frequently uttered:

"Believe you me, many of the young girls we give advice to come to us in a state of great anxiety. They just don't know what to do. The pressure they have been put under - by people who claim to love them - is remarkable. This pressure comes not only from their husbands or boyfriends but in some cases from profession counsellors, general practitioners and the like". ('Life' respondent 27).

In a radio programme in the "Talk-in" series on Radio Trent on 18 August 1975 the James White Abortion (Amendment) Bill was

discussed by representatives from both the Nottingham branch of SPUC and the local NAC group. One of the SPUC members claimed that a number of girls have abortions as a result of pressure from their parents, particularly the mother:

"... Some of the parents living in very nice houses in their very nice middle class areas want their (unmarried daughters) to have a nice easy abortion ... and not let the shame be brought in the family - the shame of an illegitimate child".

This image of an innocent victim is also recalled in the following transcript from an interview with a leading local 'Life' member which was broadcast on BBC Nottingham on 29 April 1975.

Interviewer: "Do you not feel that 'Life' when giving practical help tends to moralise?"

'Life' member: "No we don't moralise in any way at all we don't believe that girls who after all are just victims of society as it is now..."

Interviewer: "Why are they victims of society?"

'Life' member: "Well permissive society creates the need for abortion on demand .... We don't believe that abortion is the answer to the social problems and so we provide this service of help to the girls to show that we want to do something about the practical side of it.... We make sure she gets expert counselling about adoption and try above all to remove the awful shame that seems to have been attached to the unmarried mother ... we want to rid society of this angle completely (and) to make the mother feel there is something courageous in giving the baby to a childless couple ..."

The same 'Life' member was in another radio programme broadcast by the same station, on 7 October 1975, entitled "All Sides of the Question". In presenting the aims of the organisation she stated that:

"One of our main functions is to run an advisory service because we feel that girls who seek abortion really think that they don't have any other choice ... society offers them this answer to their particular problem and we think that there is a better answer, there must be a better answer and we must look for it and try to find it".

Later in the programme the discussion turned to the subject of guilt feelings experienced by women who had undergone an abortion. Commenting on this topic the 'Life' representative explained that:

"... often it is because abortion was forced on them when they didn't really want it, this is probably why they felt guilty, this does happen. Mothers pressurise their young daughters into having abortions to cover up the fact that they have become pregnant early on in their lives and when the girl realises in later life she does come to feel guilty. I would say to these girls: 'put your guilt aside, you are not the guilty one, society is guilty because this is the solution we have offered you'".

Thus it would appear that sympathy is directed towards the pregnant woman who is considered to be a 'victim of society'. An assimilative campaign strategy is strongly in evidence in this instance. There is no outright condemnation of the 'Permissive Society' with a recommended utilisation of the legislative process to reaffirm traditional values. Instead reference is made to the need to remove the stigma associated with unmarried motherhood. Young pregnant women are absolved of responsibility, they are not viewed as deliberately seeking abortions out of choice but society offers them abortion as a solution to their problems. In circumstances such as these anti-abortionists see themselves as being concerned with finding alternatives to abortion.

A coercive element is identifiable within the anti-abortion stance once the debate shifts its focus from that of the innocent woman pressurised into having an abortion to a consideration of the growth in attitudes favourable to abortion. It was the opinion of many campaign participants that some women who would never have contemplated having an abortion prior to 1967 were now doing so: its legality was an indication of its moral and social acceptability. In a 'phone-in' programme on Radio Trent in March 1976, a university lecturer in medicine and a representative of 'Life' spoke of the changes which had taken place in public attitudes towards abortion:

"I think that nowadays public opinion has shifted so much that whereas a few years ago if a girl was pregnant she would consider going ahead having the baby and consider adoption ... nowadays because of the way public opinion has altered people immediately consider abortion as the first choice".

The programme adopted the title of "Witness One Million", a slogan selected by the national anti-abortion movement to publicise the fact that there had been an estimated number of one million abortions in Britain since the passing of the 1967 Act. The slogan was used to launch a renewed attack on abortion and the proponents of abortion on demand. It was hoped that the resultant campaign would have some influence on public attitudes and opinion.

All the respondents were of the opinion that in one way or another the Abortion Act had resulted in a loss of respect for human life and if this once basic human value was to be reinstated then a repeal of the law was necessary. For them

abortion was the "thin end of the wedge" or the beginning of the "slippery slope into moral decline". Statements such as these occurred frequently in the replies of anti-abortionists.

A suitable example is provided by a 'Life' supporter:

"I am wholly opposed to abortion because it destroys life which is human and totally innocent. It is a form of apartheid which permits a stronger section of humanity to abuse and exploit a weaker section in the interests of the stronger. The most basic human right, the right to live, is arbitrarily denied to the unborn. There can be no justification for this. Abortion will weaken respect for all human life and could lead to 'mercy' killing, euthanasia and the killing of 'sub-standard' members of humanity - a Nazi philosophy". ('Life' supporter 27).

Another group member was of the opinion that:

"... once you erode the principle that life begins at the moment of conception you immediately open the flood gates for other abuses ... if you are going to destroy fetuses it is not a long shot from saying that ... once a child is born with a particular deformity or defect we'll also destroy that. Once you erode this principle of respect for life many other things will automatically follow". (quoted on Radio Trent March 1976).

The 'respect for life' arguments are based on a notion of the unborn child as the innocent victim in need of protection, whereas the claim that women are forced into having unwanted abortions suggests that they themselves are the victims. When respondents felt that the basic value of the right to life was threatened they tended to favour a coercive attitude toward reform. However, when they spoke of women being the 'victims of society' they adopted an assimilative approach. Thus both modes of reform could be seen to exist simultaneously, whichever predominated was primarily a function of the nature and form which the anti-abortion argument took.

Aspects of both orientations to reform were also identified when examining the accusation that abortion was being used by some as a means of contraception. Three forms of this argument could be identified. Firstly, it was suggested that in choosing to have abortions many women were unaware of the potential medical and psychological complications:

"I think that steps should be taken to avoid using abortion in place of contraception. Young girls contemplating abortion should be made aware of the dangers to their succeeding children and efforts should be made to persuade them to choose adoption". (SPUC respondent 10).

"I feel that abortion is being used as a means of contraception and this I find totally unacceptable. Women and young girls thinking about having an abortion need to be informed of the true facts". ('Life' respondent 18).

Secondly, it was believed that the prevalence of abortion had led many to assume that it was morally and socially acceptable and little different from contraception. Consequently an irresponsible approach to personal relationships was engendered. According to one 'Life' supporter:

"... to make abortion freely available tends to make people more irresponsible in their sexual relationships for they feel that if contraceptives don't work there's always the let out of an abortion..." (from an interview on BBC Radio Nottingham, 29 April 1975).

Another 'Life' member commented:

"I think that a lot of people don't really concern themselves about contraception until it is too late. They say to themselves: 'If the worst happens I can always get an abortion'". ('Life' respondent 26).

When the argument was presented in either of these two forms respondents advocated a programme of action which was largely assimilative in character. 'Life' members in particular

maintained that it was necessary to "educate people about the horrors of abortion" and inform them of the moral and social wrongs of abortion. A large proportion of women seeking abortion are not viewed as proponents of the 'permissive society' but as victims who choose abortion out of ignorance of the true facts and because they have no one to turn to for support. It is implied that once they are suitably informed and given assistance they will choose an alternative to abortion. As far as irresponsible attitudes toward sexual relationships are concerned it was suggested that more moral education was needed:

"I feel that if morals were taught within the home and schools people would not be so promiscuous, thus there would be less cause for abortion".  
(ibid).

A third form this argument took was that there existed a number of women who were neither the ignorant or innocent victims of society or unscrupulous profiteers but felt they had a right to free access to abortion facilities as a means to controlling their fertility. Unlike the irresponsible and feckless they were seen as a direct threat to the moral values espoused by the anti-abortionists. In the opinion of many respondents such individuals could not be persuaded to conform. Thus a more coercive approach was needed to modify their behaviour. This position is suitably summarised in the following:

"Life is primarily concerned with two things, care and education. I believe that the majority of women now contemplating abortion would actively seek an alternative if they were made aware of the serious and destructive nature of abortion and its ramifications both for the individual and society ... Unfortunately there will always be a minority of women who will

adamantly demand an abortion and indeed see it as a right. They are unlikely to respond favourably to any alternative we might suggest .... In order to ensure that abortions cease the law must be changed and the unborn child given greater legal protection. Only by making abortion illegal will we solve the problem". ('Life' respondent 63).

In conclusion it can be seen that both assimilative and coercive approaches to reform can be identified in the replies of respondents at grass-roots level. Overall the findings reflected the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the movement's campaign literature. The nature and form of the reaction against abortion was largely responsible for determining the appropriate mode of reform.

#### Expressive politics.

As mentioned in an earlier section theorists have postulated a distinction between social movements which aim to achieve specific changes in the distribution of material resources and power, and those in which the ends pursued are symbolic, in that the ultimate concern is with values. Gusfield (1963) adopted this distinction in his analysis. Parkin (1968) also utilised the symbolic crusade perspective in his study of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Both have claimed that it is a feature of movements of this type that their members or participants are engaged in expressive activity, that is, the protests are ends in themselves rather than incorporating an instrumental orientation.

In order to explore this issue Parkin asked his respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement:

'Protests and demonstrations which fail to achieve their aims are a waste of effort' (Parkin, 1968, p.36). He discovered that 86 per cent of his sample disagreed with the statement and concluded from this that they had an expressive commitment to the campaign. It was decided to explore this issue within the context of the protest against abortion.

At the time of the survey pressure group activity was being increased in support of William Benyon's Abortion (Amendment) Bill which obtained its Second Reading on 25 February, 1977. Both the local 'Life' and SPUC groups responded enthusiastically to the national campaign in support of the Bill. Observation at local committee meetings revealed a regeneration of interest and involvement. The introduction of a Parliamentary Bill such as this always stimulates pressure group reaction. Campaign coordinators were elected and several open meetings and leaflet distribution sessions were organised. Circulars were also sent to members encouraging them to participate, particularly by writing to their Member of Parliament.

Benyon's Bill purported to implement the recommendations contained in the First Report of the Select Committee on Abortion (1975-1976). However, its critics claimed that while on the surface the Bill appeared less severe than the earlier White Bill (1975) it did in fact go beyond the recommendations of both the Select Committee and the Lane Report (1974). A Standing

Committee was appointed which met on ten occasions between 22 June and 12 July 1977. By the time they had finished their deliberations and reported their findings to the House there was no time remaining for the Bill to make any further progress as the Parliamentary session had come to an end. Supporters of the 1967 Act claimed this as an important victory.

During the period from when the Bill was first introduced and until its final demise the anti-abortionists could adopt an optimistic attitude. The majority of the field work for the present study was undertaken after Benyon had obtained a Second Reading for his Bill and while the Standing Committee was still in session. Thus in an effort to explore the expressive - instrumental thesis respondents were asked for their reactions to the following statement: 'Previous Abortion (Amendment) Bills have been unsuccessful, if Benyon's Bill also fails to bring about a change in the law, will you feel that your participation in the anti-abortion campaign will have been wasted'. It was assumed that if respondents answered 'yes' to this question then they could be considered to have an instrumental approach or attitude towards participation, that is, they view protests which do not achieve their intended aims as a waste of effort. Conversely, as in Parkin's work, a 'no' response was indicative of a purely expressive orientation. The replies to the question are presented in Table 19.

Only 10.9 per cent of respondents adopted a distinct instrumental approach and stated that they felt that their

participation in the campaign would have been wasted if Benyon's Bill proved to be unsuccessful in changing the law and thereby reducing the total number of abortions performed each year in this country. Excluding the one non-response the remaining 56 campaigners (87.5 per cent) could be judged to have presented the expressive view. For these it might be assumed that the successful attainment of some goal or objective was not a prime source of satisfaction but they obtained their rewards and benefits from expressing their values and beliefs in action. In order to ascertain the validity of this interpretation, respondents who indicated that their involvement in the campaign had NOT been wasted were asked to state what they felt had been gained from participation. The replies to this open-ended question were categorised into a number of major groups with the result that the notion that the majority of campaigners displayed an expressive commitment required serious re-evaluation. Table 20 illustrates the numbers and proportions indicating particular categories.

Table 19. 'Previous Abortion (Amendment) Bills have been unsuccessful, if Benyon's Bill also fails to bring about a change in the law, will you feel that your participation in the anti-abortion campaign will have been wasted'.

<u>Response</u>	<u>number</u>	<u>per cent</u>
No	56	87.5
Yes	7	10.9
No response	1	1.6
Total	64	100.0

Although the Abortion Law had not changed, participation in the campaign had not been wasted because:-

	Respondents mentioning	
	<u>number</u>	<u>per cent</u>
(i) The right to life had been asserted	40	71.4
(ii) Some women would consider alternatives to abortion	38	67.9
(iii) Public attitudes toward abortion would eventually change	35	62.5
(iv) Politicians and other influential members of society would be encouraged to give more thought to the abortion issue	22	39.3
(v) A stand had been made against the 'rising tide of permissiveness'	14	25.0
(vi) Christian values had been demonstrated	13	23.2
(vii) Encouragement had been obtained from involvement	12	21.4
(viii) Other	7	12.5

Table 20. Reasons mentioned by respondents as to why their participation in the anti-abortion campaign had not been a waste of time.

It can be seen that 40 of the 56 respondents felt that their involvement in the anti-abortion movement had been worthwhile because the right to life had been expressed. This is captured in the following selection of comments:

"Life wants to protect the unborn child's right to life. Although we've not yet succeeded in changing the law we have brought the importance of this basic principle to the forefront of the debate". (SPUC respondent 7).

"We have done a lot to influence the course of the abortion debate. I'm sure that we have convinced many ordinary people that the fetus has certain rights - the right to live. What remains now is to convince the politicians and law makers". (SPUC respondent 9).

"Successive campaigns have shown that the unborn child is a weak potential member of society who deserves protection. By emphasising this point I am sure that we have attracted a great deal of support from the middle ground. This is only the start of the battle". (SPUC respondent 10).

"Once the right to life of the unborn child is fully appreciated, which I'm sure it must be, the campaign will be nearly won". ('Life' respondent 17).

Although responses such as these refer to the upholding of a basic principle or value they can hardly be interpreted as examples of a purely expressive orientation. Many respondents took the view that once the 'right to life' argument was accepted and given legal status the foetus would receive the protection it needed. Thus, in other words, satisfaction did not accrue from expressing this value in action as for many members it was seen as a means to an end - this end being the outlawing of abortion. An instrumental orientation was in evidence.

A substantial proportion of pressure group activists considered their involvement in the campaign as useful even though the law remained unchanged. Just over two thirds of respondents pointed out that a positive effect of their efforts was that some women would be likely to consider alternatives to abortion and therefore some lives would be saved. This view was particularly noticeable among 'Life' members, which is not surprising as one of the aims of this organisation is to provide a counselling service and offer practical help to deter women from having abortions. A total of 27 of the 38 subjects presenting this view were members of 'Life'. Some examples of the comments made are stated below:

"To my mind it is worthwhile if only one innocent unborn child is saved". ('Life' respondent 24).

"Even if only a handful of women a year are convinced of the wrongs of abortion we will have succeeded in saving lives". ('Life' respondent 55).

"Only the other day I was speaking to a woman who came to us ('Life') a while ago in need of help. We gave her the support she needed and she went through with her pregnancy and gave birth to a baby boy. She told me that she has never regretted having her baby. Indeed she seemed very well and happy. That for me is an achievement". ('Life' respondent 57).

The third largest category of responses, under the heading of 'public attitudes toward abortion', was equally instrumental in its orientation. A large proportion of campaigners did express the view that even though one attempt at legal reform might fail their continued efforts would eventually have some impact on public opinion.

"Things take time. We might have lost the battle (Beynon Bill) but we will win the war. Our campaign will continue to change public opinion, even if only slowly". (SPUC respondent 16).

"You must realise that changes come about as a result of many events. We failed this time because the opposition, if misguided, was very well organised. We have a large percentage of public support. Our recent campaign, and the one in support of White's Bill some two years ago, have had some effect on public attitudes". (SPUC respondent 41).

"The failure of White's Bill to change things was not so much a failure as a temporary set back. We kept up the pressure and now we must support Benyon's Bill. This might be successful and lead to some reduction in the number of abortions. If this is the case it will not be the end of the matter for further pressure must be exerted in order to ensure that all abortions are illegal. If the Bill fails then we must mount more demonstrations, hold more rallies and work even harder to get our point home". (SPUC respondent 32).

"If we can convert one person to our way of thinking they in their turn will convince others - it will be a kind of chain reaction". ('Life' respondent 17).

An instrumentalist attitude can also be identified in the fourth response category mentioned in Table 20. Over a third of the respondents believed that the campaign had not been worthless for it had ensured that others, such as politicians and the like, had been encouraged to give some thought to the issue. A fairly widely expressed belief was that certain responsible bodies and members of respectable institutions had been encouraged to take a stand and speak out against abortion.

"Although the (Benyon) Bill was unsuccessful we have shown our case to be a strong one. I'm sure that as a result of our efforts, and those of groups like us,

many individuals have been forced to seriously reconsider their views on abortion". (SPUC respondent 2).

"Just look at the number of M.P.s who having supported the 1967 Act have since expressed their doubts and reservations". (SPUC respondent 13).

"I feel that a large number of politicians have no fixed views on abortion as such, they form part of a floating middle ground. They can be influenced". (SPUC respondent 39).

Some 25 per cent of replies indicated that respondents felt that by their involvement in the campaign they had taken a necessary stand against the 'rising tide of permissiveness'. In spite of the fact that no concrete changes had been won it was intimated that if they had not made the stance in the first place the proponents of abortion on demand would have had greater influence.

"At least the leaders of our country now realise that there is a strong and determined body of people who are opposed to abortion and are concerned about the implications that 'abortion on demand' has, not only for the future of our society but for the future of humanity". ('Life' respondent 22).

"We have shown that abortion had led to a moral decline. The supporters of abortion must not be allowed to go unchallenged". (SPUC respondent 52).

"If we had not presented our case against abortion over the past few years we would now be witnessing the terrifying prospect of abortion on demand ... and who knows what else". ('Life' respondent 23).

Thus while respondents had been expressing moral and social values the ultimate aim behind the protest had been instrumental, for they desired to stem the trend towards 'permissiveness' and also prevent the supporters of abortion consolidating their position and campaigning for greater reforms. The pro-abortionists

should not be seen to go unchallenged, for in the opinion of some members they would thereby obtain even greater concessions.

The two categories mentioned least dealt exclusively with an expressive commitment or orientation. In thirteen cases reference was made to the personal encouragement received in the course of group participation. For example, one SPUC member stated: "Attending meetings and other group sessions makes you realise that you are not alone in your views but there are others who feel just as strongly as you do about abortion" (SPUC respondent 9). Similarly, another member commented on his recent presence at a national anti-abortion rally in London: "To see other groups present from all over the country gave one a sense of hope for the future. I thought how can such support fail" (SPUC respondent 11).

In distinguishing between these two types of commitment it should be noted that in some cases the responses of pressure group members contained both expressive and instrumental elements. The latter, however, predominated and only in a very small minority of individual cases were only expressive type responses obtained. The majority of campaign participants held the view that it was possible to effect some kind of social change. For example, when asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement: 'It is only wishful thinking to believe that one can really influence what happens in society at large', 68.8 per cent of respondents firmly disagreed.

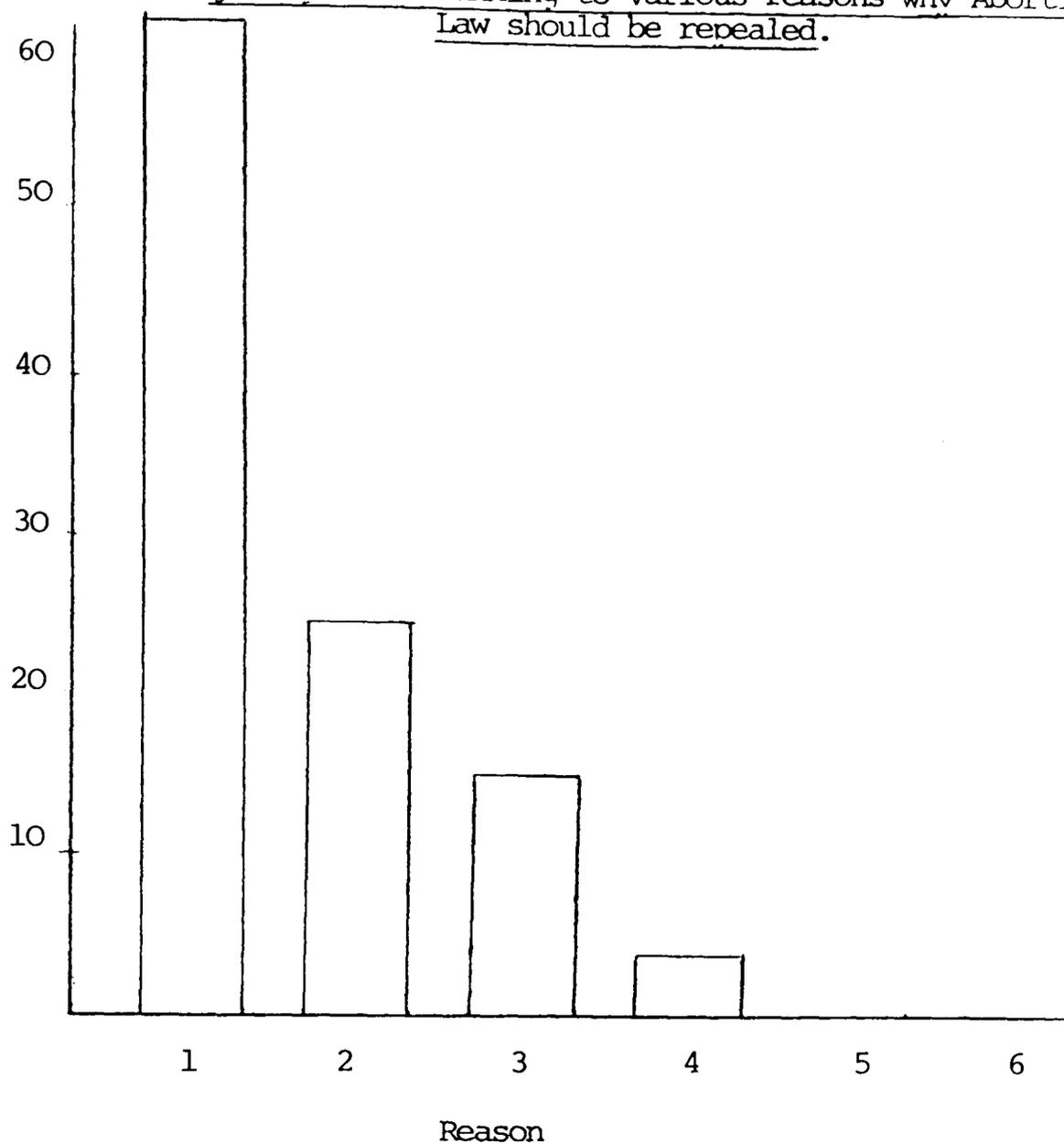
Further evidence of an instrumentalist orientation was obtained when an investigation was conducted into the reasons why respondents would like the Abortion Law repealed. From a survey of the campaign literature six main reasons for reform were elicited. Subjects were asked to rank these reasons in order of importance to themselves. The findings are presented in Table 21. What is particularly noticeable is that the majority of respondents (62.5 per cent) claimed that they would like to see the law changed in order that 'many innocent lives would be saved'. The belief that a repeal of the law would encourage a search for a 'more humane solution to contemporary social problems was given first ranking by 14 supporters, representing 21.9 per cent of the anti-abortion sample. Both these findings suggest the prevalence of an instrumental, as opposed to an expressive, commitment to the campaign.

The data for first ranking is produced in the form of a histogram in Figure 13. Attention can be drawn to the fact that not one single campaigner gave first place to the 'moral lead' argument. The idea that by changing the law a moral example would be provided for others was considered relatively insignificant in the light of other reasons and was given a low ranking. Interestingly, the notion that legislation was required to end profiteering was not ranked in first, or even second place by any of the respondents. This is in spite of the fact that it was an important theme in the national campaign literature and in the pronouncements made by spokesmen for the various anti-abortion groups.

Reason	Rank											
	1		2		3		4		5		6	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. Innocent lives saved	40	62.5	10	15.6	4	6.3	10	15.6	-	-	-	-
2. Encourage search for humane solutions to social problems	14	21.9	20	31.2	16	25.0	6	9.4	2	3.1	6	9.4
3. Doctors would be able to fulfil their 'proper' role	8	12.5	22	34.4	16	25.0	6	9.4	8	12.5	4	6.3
4. Medical and economic resources within the NHS could be re-directed	2	3.1	4	6.3	10	15.6	24	37.5	18	28.1	6	9.4
5. To provide a moral lead to others	-	-	8	12.5	4	6.3	12	18.7	16	25.0	24	37.5
6. End profiteering	-	-	-	-	14	21.8	6	9.4	20	31.3	24	37.5
Total	64	100.0	64	100.0	64	100.0	64	100.0	64	100.0	64	100.0

Table 21. Respondents' personal ranking of reasons why the Abortion Law needs repealing.

Figure 13: Histogram to illustrate the proportion of respondents giving first ranking to various reasons why Abortion Law should be repealed.



Key

1. Innocent lives would be saved
2. Encourage a search for humane solutions to contemporary social problems.
3. Doctors would be able to fulfil their 'proper' role, that of saving lives.
4. Medical and economic resources within the National Health Service could be redirected.
5. A moral lead would be provided for others.
6. Profiteering would be stopped.

In conclusion it can be stated that, the suggestion that moral reform crusades are mainly expressive as opposed to instrumental in their orientation is not supported by the data. What could initially be interpreted as expressive type responses have, on closer examination, been seen to be largely instrumental. A similar conclusion was arrived at by Wallis and Bland (1979) in their study of the NFOL. They commented that the expressive thesis:

"... receives little support from our data on the NFOL rally. While participants may have been aware that little of an immediate, concrete kind would change as a result of their activity, they often also believed that instrumental gains of a broader and longer term kind might be achieved. (Wallis and Bland, 1979, p.195).

Care must be taken when comparing the present findings with those obtained from the survey of participants in the NFOL's crusade. Differences in the form and nature of the protest and its organisation are such that an instrumental approach to reform could be considered more likely to be encountered among anti-abortion reformers. For example, the primary target for the NFOL was the 'Permissive Society' per se. The anti-abortion movement while expressing concern over moral decline and degeneration do have a highly specified and identifiable target, namely abortion. The prime purpose of the movement is to ensure that legislative changes take place. In contrast the NFOL's crusade was not as 'cause specific', being more broad ranging and concerned with the general question of permissiveness and moral laxity. Also the anti-abortionists studied here were members of well

planned pressure groups which were part of an efficiently organised national network. At local branch level there was frequent contact with similar groups within the region on a semi-formal basis. Each group also sent representatives to both regional committee meetings and to annual general meetings of the national committee. The same cohesive and coordinated framework was not typical of the NFOL crusade which by contrast was somewhat ad hoc, drawing its support from established pressure groups like the NVALA and a myriad of evangelical groups.

## CHAPTER IX

Status Politics, Status Defence and the Anti-abortion Movement.

In this review of theoretical thinking on moral crusades it can be seen how the concept of status is held to play a central and indispensable analytical role. As indicated in Chapter Four, individual mobilisation is viewed as beginning with perceived relative deprivation which gives rise to status frustration and discontent. This eventually engenders feelings of moral indignation which in turn motivates individuals to action. It would appear that the cornerstone of this explanation of collective action is the notion of status defence. While the terminology adopted by the various theorists differs, the underlying principles remain the same; individuals are seen to be defending their social position and that of the groups to which they belong. Thus Gusfield saw amongst the main supporters of Prohibition certain identifiable groups forming a status movement. He described a status movement as consisting of '... collective actions which attempt to raise or maintain the prestige of a group' (Gusfield, 1963, p.20). Similarly, Zurcher and Kirkpatrick considered anti-pornography crusaders to be engaged in a form of status politics by the fact that: 'They were fighting to defend their life style - that system of values, customs and habits with which they had been accustomed and to which they had been committed' (Zurcher and Kirkpatrick, 1973, p.70). While not exactly viewed as status discontents those engaged in the anti-pornography crusade were seen to be experiencing some form of status threat. Wallis, in his analysis of the NVALA, also found status loss to be a suitable motivating

force behind moral protest. He has suggested that the BBC became a target for such protest when it was viewed by campaigners as endorsing, without reservation, the norms and values of contemporary society. The BBC was 'seen to have deserted its traditional constituency, thereby dramatically displaying the loss of status of respectable morality and its bearers' (Wallis, 1976a, p.293, my emphasis). Clearly the aim here appears to be to develop a causal theory with status factors and variables providing the key to the understanding of motivation.

As some notion of status loss, threat, frustration, defence or discontent has at one time or another occupied a prominent place in sociological analyses of social movements, particularly in order to account for individual mobilisation, status variables were investigated in the present study. Attention was focused on their explanatory value with regards to individual participation in and commitment to, the anti-abortion campaign. Initially it was decided to examine the status attributes of the anti-abortion group members for evidence of status inconsistency or rank incongruity. For this purpose three separate indices of status consistency were constructed, based upon the major objective dimensions of stratification, namely, income, occupation and education. Educational achievement categories were given a numerical score and the various occupational groups were formed into socio-economic status hierarchy based on the Registrar General's classification of occupations and also given a score. Income data were already available in numerical form. This manipulation of the data was necessary in order to compute the

correlation coefficients.

Measures of status inconsistency may be interpreted as one indication of the degree of tightness or looseness among the various dimensions of stratification. If a particular group is characterised by high status consistency then the co-variation of the relative rankings of individuals on the different status dimensions will also be high. In other words, if status consistency is prevalent, individuals with high educational attainment will have occupations with high prestige and benefit from high income status.

When consistency is being assessed with regards to only two status attributes simultaneously then the square of the correlation coefficient between the status indicators provides a reliable measure of association. This is due to the fact that the higher the squared correlation, the greater the shared variance and hence the greater the degree of consistency between the two variables. The three possible bivariate relationships, that is, education - occupation; education - income and occupation - income were determined. Data appertaining to both anti and pro-abortion groups were subjected to this analysis and the results appear in Table 22.

As Table 22 shows there is no firm evidence of status consistency between the three components, in actual fact the low modest correlations indicate high levels of status inconsistency.

It would therefore appear that the relative standing of respondents on one dimension of stratification is matched by their standing on another. This applies to both groups.

Table 22. Squared correlation coefficients ( $r^2$ ) for three standard socio-economic indicators.

<u>Group</u>		<u>Variable Pairs</u>		
		Education Occupation	Education Income	Occupation Income
Anti-abortion	$r^2$	0.330	0.013	0.039
	n*	55	52	51
Pro-abortion	$r^2$	0.104	0.051	0.365
	n*	36	36	33

\* numbers lower than total sample size due to missing data and the fact that some respondents could not be assigned a place on one or more of the status dimensions.

Taking the ordinary Spearman rank correlation coefficients of the three variable pairs for the two groups only two significant correlations emerged. For the anti-abortionists there was a positive correlation between education and occupational status; high educational status was associated with high socio-economic class ( $r=0.57$   $p < 0.001$ ). This figure is based upon data from 55 of the 64 group members. The second significant correlation was between occupational status and income for the pro-abortion group members. Using data from 33 of the 42 respondents a negative correlation was obtained ( $r=0.06$   $p < 0.001$ ). The apparent incongruity between individual ranking on these two status

dimensions, that is high on social class but low on income, can be explained in two ways. Firstly, while all the respondents held occupations in the non-manual sector (i.e. in the first three categories of the Registrar General's classification) nearly one third of the group were in relatively low paid skilled white collar occupations such as clerical workers, library assistants and research officers. Secondly, some members held part-time posts as college lecturers and school teachers thus again giving them a relatively high social class rating but a low ranking on the income dimension.

Although, as reported earlier, Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (1976) found little evidence of status inconsistency and thus resorted to the notion of status threat as an explanatory factor, the actual presence of status inconsistency in the present context should not be automatically interpreted as providing support for, or confirmation of, the status consistency model. The findings need to be approached with caution. The existence of status inconsistency or rank incongruity among the anti-abortion activists does not necessarily imply support for, or even partial acceptance of, Gusfield's status defence thesis. Before any inferences can be drawn from the findings presented here three fundamental issues within the status consistency model require exploration.

Firstly, consideration needs to be given to subjective factors. Status inconsistency may be evident from an evaluation and assessment of the objective indicators available but its

impact and motivational potential can only be satisfactorily determined if information is obtained concerning the individual's subjective interpretation or understanding of his status profile or social position. In an early and short critique of the theory of status inconsistency, Box and Ford (1969) have identified five implicit and groundless assumptions, one of which is that there exists a close fit between the so called objective status rankings and the subject's own perceptions of reality. They claim that '.... investigators have been content to classify their samples on "objective" status dimensions as though these represent discrete realities' (Box and Ford, 1969, p.196). Similarly, in discussing the nature of status crystallisation Lauman and Segal (1971) have stressed the importance of individual perceptions and evaluations. They claim that the individuals' 'degree of awareness of or concern for status' is a significant intervening variable linking 'a man's objective condition of status discrepancy to his subjective view of the world and social behaviour' (Lauman and Segal, 1971, p.52).

Secondly, the fact that status incongruents can be found among the supporters of moral reform movements does not necessarily prove that inconsistency on the different dimensions of status produces moral indignation and thereby functions as a major determinant of active participation in moral crusades. Research purporting to have discovered a connection between status discrepancies and the production of psychosomatic symptoms of stress (Jackson, 1962) social isolation (Lenski, 1954) and the

like has been vigorously opposed by Meyer and Hammond (1971).

They claim that:

... stresses which appear in individuals who are inconsistently evaluated on several dimensions may have nothing to do with their stratificational disequilibrium, but may instead arise from conflicts in (non-evaluated) aspects of their social positions. (Meyer and Hammond, 1971, p.92).

Likewise the desire to engage in and support campaigns over moral issues by status inconsistent may have little to do with the lack of congruence in their status profiles. It might be the case that an explanation of their involvement could be found in other aspects of their social position or life experiences. The source of anti-abortion attitudes and the overall belief that moral decay is imminent may possibly be grounded in factors pertaining to the life events and socialisation experiences of the individual which are unrelated to status configurations. This is not to deny that an awareness of status differentials between groups or feelings of status threat may not be important motivating factors at the level of individual experience. However, certain theorists may have over emphasised the concept of status inconsistency as a predictor of individual mobilisation.

Thirdly, it could be claimed that proponents of the consistency approach to status systems and profiles have seriously over estimated the amount and degree of status consistency within the general population. In a comparative study of status configurations Covello and Bollen (1979) discovered

only a modest degree of consistency between the three standard status indicators thus suggesting that many individuals hold inconsistent values on these dimensions. If therefore, it is to be assumed that consistency among status attributes is not the norm then the fact that those participating in moral reform movements are status inconsistent is of limited use in the formulation of explanatory theories. Perhaps accounts of individual mobilisation and theories of motivation need to examine factors unrelated to stratificational variables.

These three qualifications concerning the utilisation of the notion of status inconsistency do not entirely preclude further consideration of status related concepts. Bearing in mind the importance of subjective responses attention may be focused on the actual level of concern expressed by respondents over social status. Inconsistency may be evident within status profiles but this may be of little analytical value if pressure group activists are unaware of its existence, or indeed, if aware fail to interpret its significance. The phenomenon of differential status awareness can be seen as an integral element in status oriented approaches to the study of social behaviour. According to Lauman, differential status awareness is an '... important attribute of stratification systems in its own right that may have significant consequences for processes occurring within the status system and its relation with other institutional sub-systems, such as the political or economic system' (Lauman, 1966).

An element of inconsistency has been observed in the status configurations of participants in both the pro and anti-abortion campaigns. This would appear contrary to Gusfield's original thesis in which status discontent or frustration is considered a primary force in the rise of moral reform movements which attempt to re-affirm or re-establish traditional values. Moral protest as a mode of status politics is reserved for groups with a conservative outlook. For Gusfield and supporters of his thesis the desire for status enhancement or improvement is responsible for motivating not any kind of crusading activity but crusading activity which involves the reiteration and defence of formerly dominant social and moral values. In the present analysis rank incongruity is evident amongst both pro and anti-abortionists alike, thus posing a problem for Gusfield's motivational or causal theory. Why should one group experiencing status inconsistency choose to express their discontent by way of defending traditional values and norms in an attempt to restore public deference which was formally their due, while another group experiencing similar discrepancies choose to engage in a campaign whose issue questions traditional values and beliefs?

Gusfield's thesis is not immediately rendered redundant if it is remembered that it is not only the existence of status discrepancies which is important but the interpretation given to the situation by individuals and groups. Thus while both groups experience inconsistency with regards to their ranking according to objective status indicators they might not display similar

levels of awareness or indeed concern. This was taken into account in the evaluation of Gusfield's model and in interviews, and through the use of self-administered questionnaires the possibility of the existence of differential status awareness was explored.

A shortened version of Kaufman's 'status concern scale' was employed with a Likert-type response set. The scale scores of group members were calculated and in order to discover whether there was a significant difference between the two groups a Mann-Whitney test was performed. As shown in Table 17 (see p.165) the mean ranks for the anti-abortion and pro-abortion groups were 65.27 and 35.56 respectively. A tentative conclusion might be that while according to objective indicators an element of status incongruity can be found within the status profiles of individual campaigners (irrespective of their stance on abortion) the anti-abortionists appear more sensitive with regards to status and attach more importance to it as a valued attribute of persons. Consequently it could be postulated that those individuals expressing high status concern and also experiencing status loss or dissatisfaction are more likely than those with low status concern to seek ways of voicing their discontent.

The four items forming the 'status concern scale' were subjected to individual analysis and the six response categories reduced to two, that is, agree and disagree. The responses to the individual attitude statements are presented in Table 23.

Table 23. Anti-abortion and pro-abortion group members' responses to four items from Kaufman's status concern scale.

'The raising of one's social position is one of the most important goals in life' (Question 5).

<u>Group</u>	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	n	%	n	%
Anti-abortion	14	21.9	50	78.1
Pro-abortion	2	4.8	40	95.2

$$\chi^2 = 4.5363 \quad 1 \text{ df} \quad p < 0.05$$

'It is worth considerable effort to assure oneself of a good name with the right kind of people' (Question 9).

<u>Group</u>	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	n	%	n	%
Anti-abortion	26	40.6	38	59.4
Pro-abortion	1	2.3	41	97.7

$$\chi^2 = 17.5750 \quad 1 \text{ df} \quad p < 0.0001$$

'The extent of a man's ambition to better himself is a pretty good indication of his character' (Question 17).

<u>Group</u>	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	n	%	n	%
Anti-abortion	36	56.3	28	43.7
Pro-abortion	8	19.0	34	81.0

$$\chi^2 = 12.9638 \quad 1 \text{ df} \quad p < 0.0004$$

'In order to merit the respect of others a person should show the desire to better himself' (Question 30).

<u>Group</u>	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Disagree</u>	
	n	%	n	%
Anti-abortion	22	34.4	42	65.6
Pro-abortion	3	7.1	39	92.9

$$\chi^2 = 8.9782 \quad 1 \text{ df} \quad p < 0.0029$$

What is immediately apparent from the cross tabulations is that there is a significant difference between the two groups in their response to the statements. Very few pro-abortionists agreed with the statements. It could be concluded that status concern is a feature of the anti-abortion group. However, in focusing on these significant findings care should be taken not to overlook the fact that a sizeable proportion of anti-abortion group members disagreed with the statements. In questions 9 and 30 for example over 50 per cent of anti-abortionists disagreed with the statements.

There is evidence of status inconsistency in the anti-abortion sample and, relative to the pro-abortionists, an element of status concern. However, when considering the responses to these questions in detail there appears to be little support for Gusfield's original thesis. Take for example question 5. This suggests that the raising of one's social position is one of the most important goals in life. Only 4 out of the 64 anti-abortionists (21.9 per cent) agreed with this statement. If status discontent is assumed to exist, along with a desire for status enhancement, then a higher level of agreement would be expected here. Few respondents appear to place a high value on the attainment of higher status. If as Gusfield claims, moral crusaders are determined to re-establish their social position and influence by ensuring that their once dominant social values are reaffirmed then they would be expected to display not only feelings of status loss, but a belief in the importance

of social standing and status. Such a belief is not evident from the replies to Kaufman's status concern questions as used in this survey.

The responses to the attitudinal statements can only be understood fully and placed in perspective when considered in conjunction with the replies to the open ended questionnaire items and the material obtained from personal interviews with campaign participants. The strong condemnation of modern life styles and abhorrence at the apparent pre-occupation with materialistic values has already been referred to in the section on cultural fundamentalism which appeared at the beginning of Chapter Eight. Far from expressing a desire to enhance their own socio-economic status positions the anti-abortion respondents vigorously attacked what they considered to be artificial living standards and the emergence and promulgation of an individualistic social philosophy based on self interest. A picture is presented of modern society living beyond its means as individuals are primarily concerned with personal gain and immediate gratification. People are seen as lacking a sense of social responsibility and motivated by materialistic values alone they will never achieve self fulfilment. Intertwined within this view of modern society is a belief in the need for consideration to be given to the development of values and a life style which would be capable of promoting human happiness. The following quotations from respondents illustrate this particular standpoint:

"I deplore the gross wastage of all types of resources in support of a life style which is too artificial to survive long and from which far too much is expected by way of living standards". ('Life' respondent 32).

"I think life in Britain would be happier if people cared more about each other. Education, medicine and politics should be aimed at increasing human happiness by positive caring not short cut policies of expediency. This would be more likely to happen if the media and advertising adopted a view of life they are unlikely even to aspire to. Human relationships lead to more happiness than money or status". ('Life' respondent 24).

"In general terms I would like to see less emphasis on purely material values and more on Christian and humane principles". ('Life' respondent 27).

"All around us old values are dying. I feel that many people today don't know the meaning of respect. Where is the respect for family life, the elderly and those in authority? I don't think that we should continually blame the young, the older generation are responsible for not giving sufficient guidance". (SPUC respondent 4).

When asked what they thought about life in Britain respondents readily expressed concern as to the decline in moral standards and the lack of respect for traditional values. From the replies obtained it may be asserted that the anti-abortionists are not so much concerned with their status position vis à vis others but with the position or status accorded to their values and beliefs. This focus on values rather than personal status or prestige first became apparent while conducting exploratory fieldwork during the early stages of the study. Respondents displayed few signs of status anxiety or discontent with regards to their occupational standing or overall social

position. Subsequent material obtained from the self-administered questionnaire and in-depth interviews with local campaign activists served to cast further doubt on the notion that status discontent could be the primary motive force behind the anti-abortion movement.

The anti-abortion crusaders held firm views and opinions as to what constituted a respectable way of life. They presented arguments against moral decline and the erosion of respectability. In a sense they could be seen as fighting to preserve a particular style of life against attack from what they considered to be modern values and beliefs. In short their campaign could be viewed as being a defence of social values and traditional beliefs as opposed to a defence of status. Rather than appearing to be concerned or pre-occupied with their social position per se they were sensitive to the prestige and status conferred upon their cherished values. According to one respondent: "We live in a society which is coming more and more to attach little value to family life. Community values have been eroded and selfishness prevails" (SPUC respondent 8).

A common argument advanced by the anti-abortionists interviewed was that the situation would only improve once the decline in moral values and standards had been halted and traditional values restored to their rightful place. The chairman of the local SPUC group, a 55 year old male university lecturer, was an exponent of this viewpoint:

"We (referring to British society) are in a mess, you must admit, both morally and spiritually. Our leaders seem to have an absurd and implicit faith in legislation as a solution to many of our moral and ethical problems. They have ignored and continue to ignore the root cause of many of the problems we face today. The solutions they offer, for example, easier abortion and easier divorce are short term solutions which in the long run will have a lasting and damaging effect on our culture and way of life.

For me abortion is at the centre of our current moral crisis and I don't think that crisis is too strong a work to use here. We must repeal this law. This is a major step in bringing about stability and introducing a sense of sanity into our value structure. I believe that we need a firm moral and spiritual base on which to build a humane and caring society. We will not get such a society by killing innocent babies. We must get our values and priorities right and the right to life is perhaps the most basic of these rights". (SPUC respondent 1).

This response was not untypical and has been reproduced in length for it provides a suitable illustration of how the abortion issue forms part of a wider issue involving rights and values. This assumption might at first appear to be inconsistent with the replies to the question on why group members thought the law should be repealed. As shown in Table 21 and Figure 13 in the previous chapter (see pages 199 and 200 respectively) the majority of respondents felt that the primary reason for repeal of the 1967 Act was the saving of innocent lives. Some 40 of the 64 anti-abortionists ranked this reason in first place. This represented 62.5 per cent of the sample. However, the importance attached to values is evident in the responses received to the question asking why participation in the campaign

would not be wasted in the event of failure of the Beynon Bill. As illustrated in Table 20 (page 192) 40 of the 56 members (71.4 per cent) felt that their involvement in the campaign would nevertheless have been worthwhile for the "right to life would have been asserted". Thus it can be concluded that the anti-abortionists wished to see a repeal of the 1967 Act not only because this would save lives but also because it would establish the right to life as a dominant social value.

There was little evidence uncovered to indicate that members saw their fight to re-establish once socially dominant values as a means of enhancing their own status. Nor can it be assumed that an unconscious desire for status advancement was an underlying motivating force. Primary concern appeared to be over the status of the values themselves.

So far Gusfield's analytical model has provided a suitable and rewarding framework for the study of the anti-abortion movement. In previous sections appropriate use has been made of both the notion of cultural fundamentalism and the distinction between coercive and assimilative reform. However, the concept of status politics, which is an integral part of Gusfield's thesis, has proved to be of limited analytical significance. As observed from the data collected, anti-abortion activists appear to be predominantly concerned with the prestige accorded to the values and beliefs they espouse rather than their own status position vis à vis other groups and individuals.

There are three possible explanations as to why there is only partial support for Gusfield's thesis in the present study:

1. While the notion of moral reform as a mode of status politics may be applicable to many moral crusades or social reform movements with a middle class membership it is decidedly inapplicable within the context of the abortion issue. There may be something about the nature and content of the anti-abortion crusade which sets it apart from other conservative pressure groups campaigning in the sphere of moral issues.

2. While the abortion issue may be considered comparable to other moral issues and a potential generator of moral indignation the anti-abortion pressure groups may not constitute status groups and therefore invalidate any real test of Gusfield's thesis.

3. A more serious and fundamental point is that there may be internal flaws and inconsistencies within Gusfield's original theoretical formulation.

With regards to the first explanation this may be discounted purely on the weight of evidence provided in previous sections. It has been shown that the pressure group literature and the statements made by campaigning activists contain elements similar to those found in other moral crusades. In Chapter 3 it has

been observed how participants view abortion as a threat to basic social values. A certain cultural fundamentalism appears to be readily identifiable within the anti-abortion stance. Concern is readily expressed over increasing permissiveness, with regular attacks being made on the responsible bodies for not taking suitable action. It has been shown earlier how, as in the case with such groups as the NVALA, institutions such as the Church and established bodies like the BBC are repudiated for neglecting their duties as guardians of the nation's morals. Thus the similarities between the anti-abortion movement and other moral crusading groups, particularly in relation to cultural fundamentalism and orientation to reform, are such that an examination of Gusfield's thesis in this context is justifiable.

The second and third explanations suggested above are in many ways related and will be discussed by way of providing a critique of Gusfield's theory of status defence.

#### Gusfield's theory of status defence: An appraisal

As argued in previous sections Gusfield presents what may be considered a causal theory of pressure group mobilisation. In brief, status discontent or dissatisfaction is experienced by individuals and groups. This engenders feelings of moral indignation which eventually leads to some form of collective action. Status politics is viewed as the central theme in this

theoretical construction and provides a useful starting point for a closer examination of his work.

To begin with, Gusfield conceives of status politics as '... an effort to control the status of a group by acts which function to raise, lower or maintain the social status of the acting group vis à vis others in the society' (Gusfield, 1963, p.19). The American Temperance movement is envisaged as a group involved in such status politics when Gusfield claims that it has 'functioned to preserve, maintain, or defend the social status of its adherents' (ibid. p.35). In these two extracts the use of the term function is of particular significance. There is no suggestion that individuals are motivated by feelings of status discontent to indulge in moral reform campaigns. This is typical of many of the statements in the early part of his study. By adopting the term 'function' the implication is that one of the possible outcomes of such pressure group activity is that it might result in a change in an individual's or group's social position. As stated by Gusfield: 'Every effort to enforce or promote a set of values has consequences for the status of its promoters' (Gusfield, 1963, p.85). Status enhancement is seen as a function but not necessarily the only function or outcome of participation in the Temperance campaign. In this way Gusfield maintains that he is not attributing motives to the behaviour of campaign activists but merely objectively observing possible consequences of their actions. Undoubtedly this is a solid stance reflecting a sound

methodology but it is a long way from explaining or accounting for individual mobilisation. To maintain that pressure group involvement may possibly bring some status reward is not to suggest that the desire for such status enhancement motivated the behaviour in the first place. It is this latter view which is the very pivot of Gusfield's theory. In the present study the anti-abortion activists are not status discontents nor is there any evidence to suggest that status threat is a primary motivating factor. The group members are seen as being concerned over the status attributed to their values and beliefs. It is therefore possible that if they became successful in their campaign and their cherished values were publicly endorsed then they may experience some form of status enhancement. However, what is important is that they do not appear to have become involved in the campaign purely in order to improve their status position. Increased status may be a consequence of their actions but a desire for the same can hardly be interpreted as a motivator. This conclusion is based on the accounts provided by anti-abortion movement members; Gusfield provides no such information in support of his argument, his conclusion is based purely on data drawn from secondary sources. This is totally inadequate at the level of causal analysis. Having commented on the functions or consequences of movement participation Gusfield embarks upon a study of motivations to support his status discontent thesis but offers no examples from the accounts of campaign members by way of substantiation. It could thus be claimed that he falsely attributes motives to participants.

For example, in discussing the Temperance movement's aim to secure the passing and subsequent enforcement of Prohibition legislation Gusfield sees the movement as being involved in '... an attempt to defend a position of social superiority' (ibid. p.88). Likewise, the statement is made that 'Temperance has been both a protest against a changing status system and a mechanism for influencing the distribution of prestige' (ibid. p.12) and 'again 'armed with the response of indignation at their declining social position, the adherents of Temperance sought a symbolic victory' (ibid. p.111). Comments such as these illustrate how Gusfield aims to present a causal theory of moral crusades. Participants are viewed as being motivated by a desire to improve their status position. This attributing of motives has been criticised by Wallis (1977). Originally, in his study of the NVALA, Wallis (1976a) drew heavily upon the work of Gusfield and Zurcher and Kirkpatrick in order to provide a conceptual and theoretical framework for the understanding of this moral pressure group founded and organised by Mrs. Mary Whitehouse. However, shortly afterwards he published a critique of the theory of moral crusades as status defence, in which, among other things, he illustrated how Gusfield is 'committed to a causal thesis concerning the origins and meaning of the (Prohibition) crusade' (Wallis, 1977, p.197) and thereby erroneously searches for causes in the resentment at lost status or the indignation generated by declining social position. According to Wallis the origin of moral indignation may be far simpler:

Moral indignation is a normal response to the violation of any deeply cherished norm or value. There is no reason to believe that an increasing disparity between the standards of morality and behaviour which one has grown up to believe were true and right and those displayed and legitimised in the surround society cannot of itself provide the ground for commitment to a movement of moral reform. (Wallis, 1977, p.179, original emphasis).

Similarly, in the case of the abortion debate, moral indignation among the anti-abortionists may not be in any way related to status loss or status disenchantment but may be a reaction to practices which are felt to undermine basic social values and are contrary to the belief in the sanctity of life. Comments made by group members and statements contained in the campaign literature support the notion that moral indignation can have sources other than the anger and frustration experienced as a result of status anomalies. The sanctity of life is a clear and dominant theme in the anti-abortionists' armoury. In their attack on the pro-abortion lobby they attempt to illustrate how the so called quality of life argument, favoured by the supporters of abortion, ignores the more fundamental issues of moral worth and value. In their opinion, to give the woman the right to decide the fate of the foetus is to suggest that the life of the fetus cannot be rated anywhere near as highly as that of the adult. The unborn child is without rights and fetal life is not viable life. The foetus is seen as only having the potential to develop into a human being and until it reaches viability it is disposable. It is the claim made by those

supporting 'a woman's right to choose' that a woman should have an absolute right over her body, which gives rise to indignation among the anti-abortionists. The anti-abortionists see such a right as ignoring the moral value of life and making the unborn child vulnerable and defenceless. According to an official 'Life' publication:

This kind of thinking is clearly incompatible with Christianity, which puts a premium on cherishing precisely those whom it would spurn. It defies a basic principle of English Law, which (like every civilised law) takes pains to protect the vulnerable .... It has little to do with civilisation. Indeed, it is anathema to much that our society, painfully and with many set backs, has gradually established as the foundation principles of its organisation. (Scarisbrick, 1976, pp. 11-12).

The very importance and central significance of the right to life argument in the anti-abortion stance is brought out in the following passage from the same source.

A right to life must be a moral right. It must be quite different from, say, the right to appeal within twenty eight days against an income tax assessment, which is a privilege conferred by law and can be extended, reduced or even removed if the appropriate authority so decides. No outside body gave me my right to life. The state ought to acknowledge it and protect it; but it is not its author. The state may violate it, but cannot take it away. Like the right to truth or the right to justice, it is part of the human state, a mark of human dignity. If it is "found" in me when I am grown it must have been "in" me from the beginning, because it cannot come "from" anywhere but me. (ibid. p.13).

The point being stressed is that the right to life applies right from the very moment life begins and life begins at conception. As 'life is a spontaneous and continuous "becoming"' (ibid. p.14) the unborn child has the same rights as the infant or the adult.

Accordingly, 'whatever moral right life has at any moment it has throughout that continuous ongoing which is inaugurated by fertilisation and concluded only at death' (ibid. p.14). To intervene at any stage in the development of the foetus is to deny this basic right to life. The anti-abortionists staunchly defend this right and the underlying moral values. Although the focus of the abortion debate has changed over the past few years the sanctity of life argument has remained one of the dominant issues for the anti-abortionists. It is not the loss of life per se which gives rise to indignation but the wider implications of having a system of social and moral values which fails to acknowledge that there is something sacred about life.

Thus abortion is considered within the wider context of the right to life. This was also evident in the responses of many SPUC and 'Life' supporters. One member of SPUC, a male school teacher in his thirties stated:

"I feel that most of the thinking on this issue has got entangled with other emotional stuff - women's rights, male domination, our heartfelt sorrow for the abnormal in birth - when all it simply boils down to is a matter of life and death of the child. We cannot weigh a doubt against a certainty. A child may or may not grow up in a poor environment, he may or may not be wanted by his natural parents, he may be abnormal but we cannot judge the happiness of others, we have not the right to choose. Every individual has, in my opinion, the right to life from the moment of conception. It is the blatant disregard for this right which we must speak out against". (SPUC respondent 7).

Similarly, a male university lecturer and member of 'Life' stated:

"I can see no distinction logically between the human embryo immediately after conception and the human person at any given age. Therefore, any argument for abortion is equally an argument for killing any other inconvenient person ... No one (and I have read the bulk of the published literature on the subject) has produced an argument to counter this position". ('Life' respondent 25).

Many anti-abortionists believe that those who participate in abortions 'dehumanise society by diminishing the value of life' (SPUC pamphlet, no date). Such a view was expressed by a 'Life' respondent:

"I am wholly opposed to abortion because it destroys life which is human and totally innocent. It is a form of apartheid which permits a stronger section of humanity to abuse and exploit a weaker section in the interests of the stronger. The most basic human right, the right to live, is arbitrarily denied to the unborn. There can be no justification for this. Abortion will weaken the respect for all human life and could lead to 'mercy' killing, euthanasia and the killing of 'sub-standard' members of humanity - a Nazi philosophy!" ('Life' respondent 27).

The core of the argument is that the right to life is a fundamental human right which should apply from the time of conception and not the time of birth. It is essential, in the interests of social well-being and the future of mankind, that such rights are protected and defended where necessary. It would appear that indignation arises when these rights are overlooked or violated by individuals and groups in society. Thus in the light of the available evidence it would be inaccurate to assume that moral indignation is the result of

dissatisfaction over status evaluation. The present analysis supports Wallis' contention that indignation can be seen as a normal response or reaction to any deviation from cherished norms or values.

Wallis has claimed that the work of Gusfield (1963) and Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (1976) displays a 'debunking drift' (Wallis, 1977, p.201). He believes that these theorists have chosen the view that 'things are not always what they seem' by ignoring the rationalisations of group members. Participants in moral reform campaigns may claim that values and norms once widely accepted as dominant are no longer shown the respect they deserve. Campaigners may express a desire to see such values regain their rightful place within the social and moral order and thereby endeavour to defend and promote these very values. The 'debunking drift' refers to the fact that some observers and social theorists have questioned the validity and significance of the motivational statements offered by moral crusaders in favour of their own status oriented explanations of individual mobilisation. According to Wallis these theorists conclude that 'the real reason (moral crusaders) choose to defend these values and norms is a sense of lost status and a desire to restore the public deference formerly their due' (Wallis, 1977, p.201). Such an explanation is not supported by the survey findings presented here. Defending the status of one's values is not tantamount to defending one's status or social standing. As clearly stated by Wallis: 'What we have in Gusfield's account

is not the politics of status defence, but the politics of cultural defence, and the two are not the same' (ibid. p.199).<sup>\*</sup> Similarly, in reference to Zurcher and Kirkpatrick's study of two anti-pornography crusades he states that: 'Pornography crusades are a matter of cultural defence not status defence' (ibid. p.200).

In accepting Wallis' critique care should be taken not to underestimate the relevance and worth of Gusfield's approach and his overall contribution to the study of moral protest groups. For example, his distinction between two major orientations to reform have proved valuable in the present analysis. However, his status defence thesis has not received any empirical support either from Wallis' examination of the NFOL or the present analysis of the two main anti-abortion pressure groups. On closer examination of Gusfield's work it becomes evident that he sometimes uses the language of status defence when what he is referring to could be more accurately termed cultural defence. While Wallis is correct to draw attention to the notion of cultural defence it should not be assumed that this concept is entirely neglected by Gusfield. In fact, it does play an important part in his thesis and this must be understood and appreciated if his work is to be evaluated.

The notion of cultural conflict is an integral part of Gusfield's analysis of the Temperance movement. In focusing

<sup>\*</sup> Wallis attributes the notion of cultural defence to Professor David Martin

on Prohibition during the First World War and recalling the accusations made by Temperance supporters that the controllers of the brewing industry were pro-German sympathisers he claims that this was more than effective propoganda but was 'one aspect of a conflict of cultures which was rooted in divergent values' (Gusfield, 1963, p.123), my emphasis). Similarly, elsewhere he claims, 'we are dealing with a cultural group, united by their common commitment to a set of values and norms' (ibid. p.114, my emphasis). It is when discussing reactions to the norm violator, in particular, that Gusfield appears to favour the cultural defence approach. Thus in his work cultural conflict becomes inextricably linked with the coercive mode of reform. The norm violator is seen as more than just a deviant, he is viewed as an enemy and thus seen as posing a threat to the reformer. According to Gusfield the reformer sees 'the dominant position of his culture ... under attack' (ibid. p.68). In this sense the coercive side of Temperance can be seen as having developed in a context in which the holder of Temperance culture and values felt that he was threatened (or more accurately his culture was threatened) by the increasing dominance of those groups and individuals espousing ideals and beliefs different from his own.

For Gusfield then, coercive reform is viewed within the context of cultural conflict. 'It is in this characteristic of cultural conflict that the disinterested nature of coercive Temperance reform is manifest' (ibid. p.110). Feeling that his

social values are no longer as culturally prestigious or socially dominant the Temperance campaigner seeks to coerce others into accepting a cultural perspective in which drinking is not socially acceptable. In this way Gusfield claims to have shown how: 'Prohibition had become a symbol of cultural domination or loss' (op.cit.).

From the foregoing it can be seen that the notion of cultural defence, particularly in connection with the orientation to reform, features prominently in Gusfield's analysis. When covering the reactions of Temperance followers to drinkers and those advocating the consumption of alcohol Gusfield concentrates on the importance of cultural values and the existence of divergent cultures in society providing the potential for some type of cultural conflict. The use of the concept of status in this part of his analysis clearly refers to the status of the individual's cultural values. It would thus be incorrect to assume that he does not recognise the fact that campaign participants are defending cultural values which at some earlier period were considered socially dominant. Consequently he cannot be criticised for overlooking entirely the notion of cultural defence. The weakness in his stance stems from the way in which he moves from an explanation based on cultural defence to one based on status defence. While Wallis has drawn attention to some of the inherent flaws and inadequacies in Gusfield's status defence thesis he has not explored the route by which Gusfield arrived at a status oriented account while

incorporating a notion of cultural defence.

Gusfield moves from a position of cultural defence to one of status defence by first establishing the fact that there is cultural diversity in society and that different cultural systems can be associated with varying degrees of prestige. In this way a group may acquire an elevated position within the social order by virtue of the fact that they adhere to and endorse what are considered to be the dominant cultural values. These are usually those values which emanate from established institutions and responsible bodies. If the values held by a particular social group mirror those proclaimed by the major cultural institutions of a society then the group and its members can be expected to be regarded with approval and respect. Conflict may arise when a group comes to see its position of cultural dominance under threat and is in danger of being eroded. The argument is presented by Gusfield in the following extract:

In a society of diverse cultures and of rapid change, it is quite clear that systems of culture are as open to downward and upward mobility as are occupations and persons ... As the cultural fortunes of one group go up and those of another group go down, expectations of prestige are repulsed and the ingredients of social conflict are produced. (Gusfield, 1963, p.180).

This idea of cultural diversity is perfectly acceptable and the argument concerning fluctuations in 'cultural fortunes' is also quite plausible. Gusfield is simply maintaining that group cultures or life styles may be differentially evaluated and subjected to some kind of comparative assessment. In short,

status may be attributed to systems of culture so that one cultural pattern may be rated more highly than another and credited with more prestige. Given that such assessments may take place it is not unreasonable to assume that individuals who adhere to a particular cultural group may expect to benefit from the status attributed to the group. In other words, their self image will reflect the status and prestige accorded to those groups of which they are members. However, to say that group membership might lead to status enhancement is not the same as saying that individuals seek status enhancement by identifying with particular groups which are attempting to protect certain cultural values.

Gusfield links cultural values with status politics by discussing the status implications of certain central public issues. He states that: 'A public issue has status implications insofar as its public outcome is interpretable as conferring prestige upon or withdrawing it from a status group' (Gusfield, 1963, p.173). He views many public issues as 'confrontations between opposed systems of moralities, cultures and styles of life' (ibid). Thus for Gusfield moral issues, such as the consumption of alcohol, become status issues which, 'indicate, by their resolution, the group, culture or style of life to which government and society are publically committed' (ibid). In this part of Gusfield's analysis there is no suggestion that status discontent is a factor motivating the individual to engage in moral or social protest. What is being asserted is

that the outcome of any protest which may occur may produce changes in the status evaluation of certain individuals or groups. In campaigns over moral issues it is acceptable to view the opposing sides as being locked in a kind of cultural or social conflict. The group which is successful and has its stance supported and endorsed by the legislature will undoubtedly have the satisfaction of seeing the status of its values promoted or upheld. All issues over which there are easily identifiable opponents engaged in cultural conflict have status implications. In every such battle there must be a winner and a loser. The former will have the pleasure of seeing his or her culture or way of life receive public praise and official approval. This conferring of prestige by dominant institutions or legislative bodies is, however, indirect. They do not personally confer prestige on the pressure group activists and campaign participants but by publicly endorsing the position taken by such campaigners, they acknowledge and reinforce the central and dominant position of the values and beliefs held by these individuals and groups. Moral issues may therefore have status implications but this does not imply that those individuals engaging in moral protest are motivated by a desire to enhance their own social status.

In order to present a causal theory of pressure group or social movement mobilisation Gusfield extends the concept of status beyond both the group level of analysis and concern over cultural values. He implies that it is concern or conflict

over status in the widest sense of the term which provides the necessary impetus for moral protest. However, while he quite successfully demonstrates the existence of cultural conflict as an integral element in the Prohibition controversy he is unable to produce any convincing evidence in support of his status defence hypothesis. To provide a motivational theory of social movement participation requires a consideration of the personal accounts of group members. This is not to suggest that the personal accounts of participants alone provide a sufficient basis on which to construct an explanation of individual mobilisation. The aim of the social scientist is to construct views of the motives of campaigners using evidence from a variety of sources. The essential task is not to attribute motives to individuals or simply accept without reservation the members' accounts, but 'to accept the persons' own version of his motivation as a partial statement which we can complete on his behalf' (Toch, 1965, p.189). Gusfield's account, by its very nature, is devoid of any such accounts from rank and file members. If he had been able to collect first-hand accounts from Temperance movement supporters, rather than having to rely on secondary sources for data, and also been in a position to obtain full and accurate information regarding the socio-economic background of movement members he may not have favoured so strongly a status defence thesis. Such data was obtained in the study of anti-abortionists and as indicated above there was no support for the status defence approach.

Wallis, in his critique of Gusfield's work, suggests that it is doubtful whether a status group has been identified within the Prohibition campaign. He maintains that any collection of individuals sharing some component of their life style cannot be considered to constitute a status group. Status refers to the social determination of life chances. Thus in order for a group to be considered a status group it must not only share similar status attributes and life style characteristics but these features must also act as important and recognisable determinants of life chances. Wallis claims that in his analysis Gusfield provides no evidence to suggest that Temperance crusaders formed a status group in this sense of the term. In his critique Wallis emphasises how support for Temperance was drawn from various social levels and yet while individual participants in the campaign shared the same style of life:

This style of life was no longer uniquely associated with some set of structural characteristics determinative of life chances. (Wallis, 1977, p.199).

He continues by stating that there 'is no evidence in Gusfield's account that that style of life carried with it any differential rights and privileges by the turn of the century' (ibid.). On the basis of this he concludes that the members of the Temperance movement represented a cultural group engaged in the politics of cultural defence as opposed to a status group engaged in the politics of status defence.

This raises the question as to whether or not a status

group can be identified within the anti-abortion movement. Before this question can be answered satisfactorily it is necessary to have a clear understanding as to the determining characteristics of a status group. This requires recourse to Weber's writings on fundamental concepts in sociology.

Defining a status group is no easy task. As Talcott Parsons has claimed, 'the term stand with its derivatives is perhaps the most troublesome single term in Weber's text' (Weber, 1964, note 27, p.347).

Weber describes a status group as 'a plurality of individuals who, within a large group, enjoy a particular kind and level of prestige by virtue of their position and possibly also claim certain special monopolies' (ibid. pp.428-429). The development of a peculiar style of life is viewed as a significant source of prestige or social esteem. For Weber, 'status honour is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific style of life can be expected from all those who wish to join the circle' (Weber, 1970, p.187). The reference to a style of life or way of living is of paramount importance for it is not simply the possession of certain well-defined qualities or characteristics which is significant but the actual symbols of their possession. This point has been elaborated upon by Rex (1970, p.145).

So gradually a picture emerges of a social group the members of which have a relatively well-defined status position, a common

mode of life and adhere to a specific moral and social code of behaviour. On the basis of this definition certain status groups could be identified among the anti-abortion movement. The evidence presented here has shown that in the local SPUC group all the 32 active members held occupations which fell in the first three categories of the Registrar-General's classification of occupations. As for the 'Life' group, 18 members came from non-manual occupations and 12 from manual backgrounds. The majority of the latter consisted of the wives of manual workers. A common life style and firm adherence to a moral code of conduct is clearly evident in that all members were Christians and regular church attenders; the majority being Catholics. A breakdown of the denominational attachments of the anti-abortionists can be found in Table 5 on page 140.

However, if the notion of life chances is drawn into the definition of a status group it becomes more difficult, if not impossible, to identify specific status groups in the anti-abortion movement. While Weber is particularly clear concerning the definition of class his concept of status is surrounded in some terminological confusion. Weber states that: 'We may speak of a "class" when ... a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances ...' (Weber, 1970, p.181). The connection between life chances and status is not made so explicit. Reference is made to a 'status situation', which as opposed to a 'class situation' involves 'every component of the life fate of men that is determined

by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honour' (ibid. p.187). In Weber's writings status can be interpreted as referring to the social determination of life chances but this is not always stated clearly and categorically. It is the life style characteristics themselves which may be important determinants of life chances or alternatively the characteristics may derive from some other feature, such as race or source of power, which the members of a group have in common. It has been seen that the anti-abortion supporters have a common life style and value system but the extent to which these features are determinants of life chances is negligible. By its very definition a status group possesses certain life style characteristics which must entail the exercise of specific rights. In other words they have privileges not shared by individuals and groups not following their mode of life. Also status group members may be seen as possessors of particular status attributes which gives them the opportunity to gain access to unequally distributed rewards and benefits. While there is evidence that the anti-abortion activists studied here shared a distinct and common life style there is no evidence to suggest that this life style incorporated differential rights and privileges. However, it must be remembered that the present analysis is based upon two relatively small local branches of two major national anti-abortion pressure groups. Data from a survey of the national membership are required before any definitive statements can be made as to whether or not the anti-abortion supporters

constitute a status group. Nevertheless, there is nothing to suggest that the research sample chosen here is not characteristic of the national membership.

It would appear that Gusfield has underestimated the complexity of Weber's notion of a status group. Communal groupings, each with their own distinctive way of life, are a characteristic of most societies. They are usually considered by members of a society to be hierarchically arranged according to social esteem or status. Therefore, one can expect individuals to have some notion of their standing or social position in relation to others. It is possible that some pressure group participants may have feelings of frustration or discontent with regards to their status position, but if this is to provide the motivation or impetus for a social movement then such features would be common to the group and not merely occur in a number of isolated individual cases. The general conclusion favoured here is that the anti-abortion groups do not have the characteristics or attributes of status groups and, as confirmed by the questionnaire data presented earlier, status concern or discontent does not appear to be evident among the individual members. In short not only has a status group not been identified but there were very few examples of individual campaigners among those interviewed, expressing feelings of status discontent. The language of cultural defence as opposed to that of status defence would appear to be more appropriate in describing the anti-abortion movement.

## CHAPTER X

Feminist Politics, Status Protest and the Pro-abortion Campaign

Pressure group campaigns, moral crusades and the like, have their own distinct modus operandi, in which groups aim to denigrate the opposition while presenting their own case in the most favourable and attractive terms possible. The language adopted is designed primarily to change laws, and to this end the campaign rhetoric is carefully controlled so as to create vivid and lasting emotional images rather than to induce or foster any systematic probing of the deep seated moral issues involved. Under such circumstances the activities of interest groups ensure that any discussion of the crucial issues is reduced to a level of crude polemics, with the result that certain fundamental values which are at stake are often ignored. This is not to deny that such major values do not feature in public debates, on the contrary they often do. Unfortunately such a multiplicity of views are usually advanced by both sides that the issue in question remains relatively unclarified. Such is the nature of pressure group campaigning that each group continually reiterates to itself the correctness of its own particular position and perpetually defends itself against the opposition. In the course of this kind of activity many suggestions are made as to the fundamental issues at stake. So while pressure group campaigns can be relied upon to produce a variety of viewpoints and perspectives on a specific issue or problem they cannot always be relied upon to ensure that such issues are perceived with greater clarity and vision.

The abortion debate is no exception. As pointed out by Callahan (1970) the task of the analyst of the abortion controversy is to attempt to discern below the level of common discourse the different value systems which characterise the various groups engaged in the abortion debate. What is immediately apparent is that the issue is not understood simply as being one in which two diametrically opposed pressure groups or social movements are engaged in a battle to influence the direction of abortion legislation. The abortion issue is far more complex than that. On both sides one can see that numerous disparate social groups have been brought together under some kind of 'umbrella' organisation. While there are groups and individuals representing the extreme positions of free abortion on demand, and no abortion under any circumstances, there are others who occupy positions between the two extremes. Individual differences can exist in formal pressure groups. As noted in the study of anti-abortion respondents, while one or two took an extreme view and condemned abortion totally some of those questioned accepted the need for abortion under special circumstances. One female member of SPUC stated:

"As a Christian, although I'm not against abortion in needy cases, when it is a kindness to the mother and family, I deplore the mass abortion on demand which seems to be more the rule now." (SPUC respondent 3).

One member of 'Life' expressed a more extreme position stating that: "I am completely and wholly opposed to abortion under any circumstances because it destroys life which is human and absolutely innocent" ('Life' respondent 27). This echoed the official line taken by the 'Life' organisation. 'Life' 'is opposed to all abortion, regardless of when it is done, how and by whom' (Scarbrick, 1971, p.34).

It is an organisation working for the repeal of the 1967 Act and 'is not content with amendment or "tidying up" of that Act' but wants to see abortion 'repudiated as uncompromisingly as are ..... racialism and robbery with violence' (ibid). Thus it is possible to identify two broad types of anti-abortion supporter. Firstly, there are those who wish to see some legislative reform so as to eradicate the abuses under the present system, but at the same time recognise the need for abortion as a last resort if the mother's life is in danger. Secondly, there are the so called hardliners who would wish to see abortion abolished completely. However, the latter group are aware of the lack of public appeal inherent in such a stance and therefore publicly reiterate the arguments for restriction rather than total abolition. This is a strategic move on their part. Once the numbers of abortions have been reduced they see their campaign involving the manipulation of public opinion against abortion, thus paving the way for its total eradication.

In studies of organised forms of social protest involving the co-ordination of the efforts and energies of numerous disparate groups it is imperative that consideration is given to any differences which may be evident in the aims and objectives of particular participating groups. It would be erroneous to assume that all the groups involved in the campaign to defend the abortion law in the second half of the 1970's shared a common ideological and political background. In 1979 the Co-ordinating Committee in Defence of the 1967 Abortion Act could claim the following groups among its membership: British Humanist Association, Child Poverty Action Group, Christians for a Free Choice, Doctors for a Woman's Choice on Abortion, Labour Abortion Rights Campaign, Socialist

Medical Association, Tories for a Free Choice and the Young Communist League. (A fuller list of organisations lending support to the Co-ordinating Committee can be found in Appendix 7.) Thus support for abortion came from a wide spectrum. However, what must be borne in mind is that these individual groups can be seen to represent a variety of perspectives on abortion. While some would wish only to defend the 1967 Act others see this only as a short term aim and would ultimately like to see abortion on demand introduced.

The feminist movement aside, Greenwood and Young (1976) have distinguished two broad categories of reformers among those who are in general agreement with the 1967 Act. The 'progressives' are those who feel that the Act has been successful in achieving its purpose, and all that remains is to tighten up some of the administrative procedures. The so called 'conservatives' are of the opinion that the spirit of the Act has been seriously violated; the law has opened the flood gates, and a situation of abortion on demand has been created. Consequently they believe that measures need to be introduced in order to reduce the number of abortions performed. Greenwood and Young maintain that both these types of reformer share the same political philosophy. Neither group is against abortion, they support the original Act in principle, but they strenuously oppose any notion of abortion on demand. For these reformers abortion is viewed as a therapeutic measure, a solution to a myriad of social problems. Support is given to abortion on purely practical grounds, as a means of controlling and containing adverse social and economic conditions, which under other circumstances would escalate.

Thus they do not view abortion within the wider context of the emancipation of women. As stated by Greenwood and Young:

Our political and medical rulers bestow the possibility of an abortion on those they have elected to have problems. They do not respond to women's demands, or join in discussion about their rights. (Greenwood and Young, 1976, p.78).

In the present analysis of the pro-abortion movement attention is focused not upon the so called 'progressive' and 'conservative' reformers but upon those individuals and groups fighting for free abortion on demand in order that women may gain control over their own fertility. Thus the views and opinions to be discussed are not representative of all those groups and individuals who support current abortion legislation, or would like to see abortion more freely available. The data collected relates to a highly specific and voluble section of the abortion campaign, that is, supporters of 'A Woman's Right to Choose', and members of the National Abortion Campaign (NAC).

At the time this research study began the abortion issue had come to attract the interest and support of a number of groups involved in the promotion of women's rights. With the formation of a mass movement, with its structural and organisational roots in the women's movement, there were signs that the abortion campaign was moving way from traditional pressure group politics. Although abortion has always been a major topic in feminist politics, by the middle years of the 1970's it had become a central and fundamental issue in modern feminism. Thus an understanding of the roots and development of modern feminism must be an integral feature in any analysis of the pro-abortion movement in Britain.

However, as Marsh and Chambers (1981) have pointed out, abortion is not an exclusively feminist issue, but is a subject which raises many fundamental moral and ethical questions, and women can be found to take up positions on either side of the campaign. Nevertheless, they claim that there are three reasons which ultimately justify focusing on abortion as a feminist issue.

Firstly, by drawing upon the evidence of Vallance (1979), Marsh and Chambers illustrate how abortion was the first single issue on which female Labour MPs became united as a group. In a study of women in Parliament during the period 1974 to 1979 Vallance has described how, 'Abortion focused attention on a particular issue and .....concentrated women's aspirations and self awareness' thus giving women, both inside and outside Parliament, 'something precise and specifiable and central to their developing self-consciousness' (Vallance, 1979, p.92). As shown in previous sections the attempts by James White, William Benyon and John Corrie to amend the 1967 Abortion Act resulted in the mobilisation of many women's groups and feminist organisations throughout the country, many of them operating under the banner of the National Abortion Campaign. Inside Parliament several female politicians were largely responsible for mounting and sustaining a counter attack to defeat the potentially restrictive bills and protect the rights of women with regard to abortion. Vallance claims that these female activists experienced a growing awareness of their common womanhood and for once women MPs could be seen to be fighting an issue for and on behalf of women. It is Vallance's contention that the debate on abortion which took place in the House of Commons during the period 1974 to 1979 'symbolized the wider demand by women that their ideas and priorities should be taken as they were presented and neither defined by men, nor distorted by being

presented as seen through the lenses of male opinion' (Vallance, 1979, p.93).

From an examination of the voting figures on the various abortion amendment bills presented before Parliament between 1974 and 1980 it can be seen how it was the female Labour MPs who played an important and influential part in the defence of the 1967 Act. Abortion is not an issue which has united all female Members of Parliament. Jill Knight, Conservative MP for Edgbaston, Birmingham and a supporter of SPUC, was one of the original sponsors of James White's Bill and served on the Standing Committee on the Corrie Bill. Of the eleven sponsors of William Benyon's Bill, introduced in December 1976, two were women, Mrs Elaine Kellet-Bowman, Conservative MP for Lancaster and Margaret Bain of the Scottish National Party representing East Dumbartonshire. The former, along with Janet Fookes, Conservative MP for Plymouth Drake, also backed the Corrie Bill.

According to the voting records abortion has never been debated before a full House. On no occasion have all the female members been present for a vote on any of the amendment bills. When the White Bill had its Second Reading on 7 February 1975, and was passed by 203 votes to 88, five female MPs voted for the Bill and the same number voted against. Some two years later when the Benyon Bill passed its Second Reading by 172 votes to 132, seven women MPs voted in favour of the Bill and thirteen against. Twenty of the twenty-seven women MPs voted on the issue. When the Second Reading of the Corrie Bill took place on 13 July 1979 the vote was 242 for and 98 against. The women members voted seven for and six against.

Throughout the 1970's it was largely the female Labour MPs who co-ordinated the parliamentary defence of the Abortion Act. Of the seven Labour women in 1975 nine supported the aims and objectives of 'A Woman's Right to Choose'; four were actively involved in campaigning against the White Bill; three supported the 1967 Act in principle but expressed concern over claims of abuse of the law and favoured minor amendments in order to "tighten up" the legislation, and one member was against abortion on religious grounds.

Secondly, Marsh and Chambers believe the feminist movement to have been important particularly in relation to the handling of the abortion issue by the media. From the mid 1970's onwards, the majority of national newspapers opposed any amendment of the 1967 Act. This was especially noticeable in the case of the Corrie Bill which met strong resistance from the national and provincial press and received a hostile reception from a number of popular women's magazines. Two factors have been advanced to account for this reaction by the media. Marsh and Chambers have suggested that not only was there a growth in the number of female journalists, who consequently influenced editorial policy, but also that during this period feminist views had acquired a certain respectability and were finding expression in the popular and hitherto conservative magazines for women.

Finally, it has been suggested that it is appropriate to consider abortion in terms of feminism in that the increasing acceptability of the feminist viewpoint is thought to have had a significant effect on thinking within the Labour Party and among the more liberally minded MPs.

Marsh and Chambers conclude their short discussion of the influence of the feminist movement in the abortion debate by stating that:

It is clear then that feminism has had a significant effect on the abortion issue. This does not mean that feminism is an important political force generally. There are so few women in Parliament that even if they were united across parties, which they are not even on abortion, they could have little effect. However, what the abortion issue does suggest is that the feminist viewpoint has been incorporated, at least in some form, into the liberal ideological perspective. (Marsh and Chambers, 1981, p.194).

The fact that Labour women within Parliament united as a group to defend the 1967 Abortion Act and actively opposed attempts to introduce restrictive abortion legislation is easily verifiable from a study of the official records of parliamentary debates, a perusal of parliamentary voting figures, and knowledge of politicians' membership of, and involvement in, pro-abortion campaigning groups and feminist organisations. What is less easy to substantiate is the assertion that as far as the abortion question is concerned the feminist stance has increasingly become embodied within the so called 'liberal ideological perspective'. It is suggested that feminist ideas have acquired a reputable and socially acceptable image to the extent that they have come to find an outlet in popular newspapers and magazines, as well as among liberal thinking parliamentarians.

Empirical confirmation of this belief is somewhat problematical, especially as Marsh and Chambers do not specify exactly what they mean by 'the feminist viewpoint'. Speculation as to what is encompassed by the phrase is therefore called for.

As Marsh and Chambers themselves refer to NAC, the major pro-abortion pressure group, as being 'overtly feminist' it would seem logical to take the official stance on abortion, as propounded by this organisation, as typifying the 'feminist viewpoint'. However, if the aims and objectives of NAC are considered to be representative of the feminist position then Marsh and Chambers' claim that feminist views have been incorporated into the 'liberal ideological position' is highly questionable. At their national conference in October 1975 NAC adopted the campaign slogan of 'free abortion on demand - a woman's right to choose'. It was agreed at the conference that a national movement should be organised with the ultimate aim of establishing 'in law a woman's right to make the decision to have an abortion without any medical or legal restrictions'. Is this the 'feminist viewpoint' Marsh and Chambers see as having had 'a considerable effect on thinking in the Labour Party and among liberal MPs'? (ibid., p.193).

The answer would appear to be no. In the last three major parliamentary debates on abortion legislation no politician has formally taken the extreme line favoured by NAC and proposed that abortion should be freely available to all women without any restrictions. Admittedly the debates have centred around proposed measures to restrict present legislation, and therefore tactical decisions have had to be made by supporters of abortion. Little would have been gained by presenting a case for the removal of restrictions and further liberalisation of the law when serious consideration was being given to a Private Members' Bill designed to achieve the opposite.

Nevertheless, if these bills had not been introduced it is extremely unlikely that a call for abortion on demand, and the subsequent removal of all legal and medical restrictions, would have received a sympathetic hearing from MPs. Those MPs in favour of legal abortion were very much on the defensive and forced into mounting a campaign designed to counter the arguments advanced in favour of amending the 1967 Act. As subsequent analysis will show they were not so much advancing the feminist position, as protecting those rights which had already been won. The strategy

proved to be successful, for it attracted the support of those politicians uncommitted on the abortion question; a point highlighted by Marsh and Chambers: 'Liberal abortion law is associated with women's rights and so some liberal MPs voted to defend the 1967 Abortion Act even if they had little interest in, or knowledge of, the issue' (ibid., p.194).

However, to say that support for abortion was based primarily on a desire to protect women's rights is not the same as suggesting that the feminist viewpoint became in some way integrated within the liberal ideological perspective. A much more accurate definition and clear description of the social and ideological roots of feminism is required. Marsh and Chambers have drawn attention to the possibility of considering abortion as a feminist issue; it is the aim of the present study to illustrate how free legal abortion gradually came to be accepted as a legitimate cause within the women's movement in Britain, and to investigate the significance of the emergence of abortion as a feature of contemporary feminist politics.

Early twentieth century feminism and the abortion issue.

Abortion did not become a clearly articulated demand of the feminist movement in Britain until the seventh decade of the twentieth century. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries birth control could be identified as the major campaigning issue. The idea of family limitation was positively welcomed by many feminists, although not all welcomed the introduction and proliferation of artificial family planning aids. However, throughout the 1920's and 1930's attitudes changed and the development and use of contraceptives gained the support and approval of many feminists. Although reproduction and birth control featured in many feminist debates of this period little attention was given to the subject of abortion. In a recent study of feminism as a social movement Banks (1981) has confirmed that:

The open advocacy of abortion was pioneered... not by the birth control movement as such, but by a few of the sexual radicals. (Banks, 1981, p.191).

This is a direct reference to such writers as Havelock Ellis and Stella Browne, who emphasised the need for women to gain control over their bodies and saw readily available contraception as a necessity. Stella Browne was a particularly vociferous exponent of radical views on female sexuality and an ardent campaigner for women's rights. Not only did she promote birth control but also advocated that abortion should be made available to all women irrespective of marital status or financial circumstances. In her opinion women should have the right to decide on abortion.

Writing in 1935 she stated:

Abortion must be the key to a new world for women, not a bulwark for things as they are, economically nor biologically. Abortion should not be either a prerequisite of the legal wife only, nor merely a last remedy against illegitimacy. It should be available for any woman, without insolent inquisitions, nor ruinous financial charges, nor tangles of red tape. For our bodies are our own. (Browne, 1935).

At this time this was an extreme position to adopt and it met with firm opposition from many members of the birth control movement. Supporters of the movement feared that to introduce abortion into the debate would serve to alienate many existing and potential campaigners. Thus her views on abortion were not adopted or publicly endorsed by any social movement or pressure group at the time. Abortion did enter the debate in 1936 when the Abortion Law Reform Association was formed, of which Stella Browne was a founder member.

During the middle to late 1930's abortion came to be discussed more and its importance as an issue for women came to be acknowledged. Two years prior to the setting up of the ALRA the Women's Co-operative Guild had passed a resolution in favour of the legalisation of abortion. Although there appeared to be a change in the general climate of opinion towards abortion the arguments advanced in favour of legislation were not in any way based upon any notion of female liberation or the furtherance of rights of women. Individual feminist activists such as Stella Browne, Alice Jenkins and Janet Chance did hold and express firm and radical views on the issue but the debate during this period centred around the medical issues involved and not the rights of women over their own bodies.

The campaign mounted by the various interested parties was conducted in the language of women's welfare. Concern was expressed at the high maternal death rate and the horrific experiences some women suffered when forced to have recourse to the services provided by backstreet abortionists. In spite of the influence of a handful of feminists who were active in radical politics this period has come to be referred to as one of 'welfare feminism' (Banks, 1981). The dominant issues, and the way in which they were presented and discussed, did more to bolster and reinforce the traditional role of women, rather than question and challenge the validity of such a typification.

This orientation to a welfare approach persisted for many years. Indeed, when the ALRA underwent re-organisation in 1963 and emerged to play a vital role in abortion law reform as a parliamentary pressure group the case for abortion was based primarily on health and welfare issues. Although after its temporary post war decline, the ALRA did, in the early 1960's, attract a number of younger more radical members it rejected the slogan 'A Woman's Right to Choose' (Potts, 1977). This demand which had been important to such founder members as Stella Browne, was not adopted as part of the Association's official campaign strategy until January 1975 when the Abortion Act was under strong attack from the anti-abortion lobby. The fact that the ALRA did not pursue a policy of abortion on demand when Stella Browne was an executive member is not necessarily a reflection of the latter's impact on the feminist movement of the thirties. Although she was an important campaigner for women's rights many of her views on sexuality, abortion and related issues were considered too radical by some.

Commenting on her writing Banks has proclaimed that: 'Her views are astonishingly modern and anticipate the modern feminist movement to an extraordinary degree' (Banks, 1981, p.191).

The Women's Liberation Movement and the abortion issue.

During the time in which welfare feminism dominated political thinking in the women's movement abortion was considered to be a subsidiary issue. It was not until the emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement, in the latter part of the 1960's, and the subsequent appearance of a more radical feminist perspective, that abortion came to the forefront of the campaign for women's rights. The extent of the impact of this development on the nature and tone of the abortion debate is captured in the following statement:

A turning point in the fight for the right to abortion came with the rise of women's liberation consciousness. Before the emergence of the new wave of feminism, supporters of legal abortion tended to present their arguments in a half apologetic or wrong fashion - justifying it in terms of population control or demanding legal abortion only in the case of birth defects, danger to the mother's life, rape or incest. The women's liberation forces helped to pose the issue in a new way by stating categorically that abortion is a woman's right. The feminists took the issue off the axis of population control and placed it where it belonged - on the woman's right to control her own body and her own life. (Jenness, Lund and Jaquith, 1971, p.13).

Undoubtedly the rise of the women's movement was a significant factor in the changing nature of the abortion debate. However, it is perhaps an exaggeration to say that the movement was responsible for posing the issue in a new way. Some of the early pioneers of feminism, such as Stella Browne, did in fact campaign for free abortion on demand.

What was new in the late 1960's was that the source of the demand for free abortion was a social movement, and not a loosely organised collection of radical feminist intellectuals.

The origin of the movement for women's liberation in Britain has been well documented, see for example Mitchell (1971), Rowbotham (1972), Bouchier (1978) and Banks (1981). Initially highly localised groupings began to emerge in London and some provincial cities and large towns during 1969. As Mitchell (1971) recalls, a group of women historians met at Oxford in March 1970 and what was planned to be a study workshop escalated into a national conference with some six hundred participants. The resolutions passed at this conference laid the foundations of the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain. A National Co-ordinating Committee was established with limited powers and responsibilities.

From the point of view of social movement structure and organisation two aspects of the women's movement deserve special mention.

Firstly, although the movement had its origins in the new revolutionary left it attracted individuals with political sympathies and affiliations covering a wide spectrum. Although some form of national organisation was in evidence, the local groups were autonomous and did not form part of a coherent and strongly articulated network of homogeneous groups. In essence the movement was intended to be broad based, catering for the concerns and interests of all women irrespective of their political persuasion or ideological commitments. At the outset the movement was devoted to the fight against domination and subjugation.

Such was the commitment to collectivism, that local groups guarded against individuals obtaining positions of leadership and influence by having a flexible approach to management and organisation. Administrative duties and related activities were allocated to individuals on a rotational basis. As many regional NAC groups had their roots in the women's movement this organisational structure was copied. The absence of a conventional pressure group structure with individuals appointed to clearly defined positions made the negotiations with the local NAC group difficult in the present study.

A second organisational feature of the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain is that many of the grass roots groups were initially closed to men. The principle of male exclusion was rooted in the whole philosophy and ideology of the movement. Members felt that they were oppressed and that discrimination against women was rife. There was a need to mobilise in order to overcome this oppression. According to Mitchell: 'The separatist politics of Women's Liberation may have come out of one of the chief manifestations of women's oppression: their diffidence' (Mitchell, 1971, p.58). Thus male support was excluded from the various campaigns launched by the movement. Many of the NAC groups had their roots in these all women groups. However, NAC did not adopt a policy of male exclusion. As one local supporter of NAC commented:

"In actual fact we were originally a Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign group, this was very much a women only group. NAC developed out of this, largely in order to involve both men and women, and gain support from the Labour Movement". (NAC respondent 2).

On a national level the abortion rights already won were under attack from the anti-abortion lobby, and there was an urgent need to consolidate forces and launch a counter campaign. Under these circumstances many feminist groups recognised the strategic and tactical advantages to be gained from including men in the campaign and eliciting the support of the Labour Movement.

In the foregoing analysis of the anti-abortion campaign it has been shown how the concept of status defence is of little significance in the explanation of individual mobilisation. It has been concluded that pressure group participants can be considered to be engaged in a defence of their life style or culture rather than being motivated by a desire to protect or enhance their social status. In this sense Gusfield's notion of status discontent, as a motive force for collective action in the form of moral crusades, can be rejected. However, the possibility arises that some element of status politics may be identified in the activities of the pro-abortion movement. A review of pro-abortion pressure group literature and an examination of the campaign rhetoric indicates that the concern is not necessarily with socio-economic status as such, but with the status of women in society.

During this century abortion has gradually developed into a major issue within the women's movement. From being demanded as a fundamental right of all women by a small group of pioneering feminists it has become the focus of a mass movement. Abortion has come to be a dominant issue in the campaign for women's rights and has successfully brought together a number of women's groups with differing ideological and political backgrounds.

From the way in which the movement presents the case for abortion it would appear that the issue is considered within the wider context of the role and status of women in modern society.

According to Simms: 'Abortion has come to be seen not only as a crucial issue in preventive medicine, but also as a critical indicator of women's status in society' (Simms, 1981, p.183).

From a analysis of feminist publications, statements made by leading activists and the growth of pressure groups concerned with women's rights, it can be seen that abortion is viewed not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. The termination of a pregnancy is not seen as a solution to a social, emotional or medical problem but is viewed in a wider context. The easy availability of abortion is considered essential if emancipation is to be achieved. Only when women achieve control over their own fertility will they be able to overcome discrimination. Thus the ultimate aim is liberation, and abortion on demand is seen as part of this wider goal.

During the 1960's the campaigns on women's issues tended to be dominated by complaints of sex discrimination and unfair treatment at work. The activists were predominantly female trade unionists. Towards the end of the decade a group of women workers formed themselves into the National Joint Action Campaign for Women's Equal Rights and called on the TUC to take up the women's fight for equal pay and improved job opportunities. By the mid 1970's the campaign for women's rights had undergone a number of changes.

Women's liberation groups had emerged in the larger cities and the question of women's rights had been carried beyond the sphere of work. A manifesto produced at the first national conference of women's liberation groups, in March 1970, expressed a belief that:

Women in our society are oppressed. We are economically oppressed: in jobs we do full time work for half pay, in the home we do unpaid work full time. We are commercially exploited by advertisements, television and press, legally we often have only the status of children. We are brought up to feel inadequate, educated to narrower horizons than men. This is our specific oppression as women. (Shrew, Vol.3, no.6, July 1971)

The political and ideological changes which had taken place in feminist politics were reflected in alterations in movement organisation and mobilisation, as well as in campaign rhetoric. Talk of discrimination, and a demand for equal rights, gave way to claims of oppression and subjugation. Feminist activists wanted liberation and total freedom from male domination. They openly expressed their dissatisfaction with what they saw as an ineffectual and mediocre programme of equal rights. This change in campaign objectives, along with the modifications in group organisation and strategy, had implications for the way in which the abortion issue was debated.

#### Abortion: Discrimination and equality

The attack against discrimination and the demand for equality of treatment was reflected in the presentation of the case for free legal abortion in a number of ways. Those in favour of a liberal abortion law supported their case on three main grounds, namely, equality of opportunity, equality of access and equality in terms of provision.

As regards equality of opportunity, this was a major theme in the equal rights campaign. As previously illustrated the campaigners wanted the introduction of legislation to ensure equal pay for equal work and the eradication of sex discrimination, particularly in the field of employment. In their opinion equality of opportunity could only be realised if women had easy access to reliable methods of birth control. The pro-abortionists maintained that if women were to compete in society with men, on an equal basis, and benefit from such legislative measures as the 1970 Equal Pay Act and the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, they must have control over their own fertility. At the ALRA conference on Abortion Rights and Community Health Care, held on 17 January 1976, numerous speakers referred to the importance of abortion in the fight for equality. In the opening address Lady Gaitskell stated:

Let women have no illusions about their prospects of progress without birth control. Women may as well abandon their fight for women's rights - they have little chance unless they can limit the size of their families. (ALRA, 1976)

In a later address the gynaecologist Professor Peter Huntingford stated that abortion was necessary 'because to achieve equality of opportunity and contribution to society, women must be able to control their own fertility' (ibid.).

It was some time before the abortion issue was debated in the Labour Movement. The very first Trades Union Congress document on women at work was published in 1963 and reprinted five years later, but did not contain any reference to abortion rights. An updated version of the document appeared in March 1975, to mark International Women's Year, but this too omitted to mention abortion.

However, couched in terms of equality of opportunity and equal rights the abortion question was debated at the Trades Union Annual Congress in 1975. Congress opposed the Abortion (Amendment) Bill introduced by William Benyon and called upon the General Council, and all allied trade unions, to defeat the Bill and any other moves to introduce restrictive abortion legislation. They also urged members to fight any changes in the 1967 Act which would produce conditions detrimental to the health and welfare of women. Four years later the TUC organised a mass protest against the Corrie Bill. This was the first time that they had organised a demonstration on a so called women's issue. So the 1970's saw the Labour Movement giving increasing support to the campaign for abortion. The issue was debated by unions with a large percentage of female members. Generally the view adopted was that abortion was part of the fight for equal rights and social justice. Geoffrey Drain, General Secretary of the National and Local Government Officers' Association, summed up the thinking of one section of the Trades Union Movement when he stated that:

Abortion and contraception are trade union issues. NALGO is fighting to open up choices for women - for more job opportunities, better training, well paid part-time work and an end to discrimination against women. But to take advantage of these and other choices, women must both be able to control their fertility (to decide for themselves when and whether to have children) and also have access to nursery facilities and better maternity provision. It is part and parcel of the same thing. (Breaking Chains, ALRA Newsletter, Dec/Jan 1979/1980, p.2).

In the years before the passing of the 1967 Act many campaigners had argued for free abortion on demand on the grounds that there should be equality of treatment for women.

It was claimed that many wealthy women could obtain abortions in private clinics and were not put at risk like those women without the necessary financial resources who had to resort to the services of the cheap back street abortionist. They argued that the same opportunities should be available to all women. Women would always demand abortion in certain circumstances; abortion could never be eradicated by legislation. However, the legalisation of abortion would bring to many women the rights and privileges only available to a minority of wealthy women under restrictive legislation.

Even after the passing of the Act the pro-abortion supporters claimed that in spite of the legislation all women were not treated equally. It was claimed that regional variations existed regarding access to abortion facilities and that the National Health Service was failing to provide a sufficient and satisfactory service. The main aim of the pro-abortionists was to ensure that the right to abortion was extended to all women. They wanted abortion to be freely available on request in the NHS, and all women in all areas of the United Kingdom to be treated equally. The ALRA argued that if a health region had a record of extremely restrictive attitudes towards abortion then measures should be taken to ensure that abortion units were manned by sympathetic staff, drawn from nearby hospital regions if necessary.

Thus the notion of equality entered into the abortion debate in three main ways:

i Equality of opportunity

Abortion was considered necessary if women were to gain full control over their fertility and be in a position to take

advantage of the opportunities made available to them under the equal rights legislation.

ii Equality of access

All women, irrespective of income, wealth, nationality or status should have equality of access to abortion facilities.

iii Equality of provision

Abortion facilities should be provided by the NHS in all areas of the country according to demand.

Abortion: Oppression and liberation

In the mid 1970's a section of the pro-abortion movement expressed dissatisfaction at having to continually defend the 1967 Act against allegations of abuse. The activists who formed NAC and had their roots in the women's movement, did not mount a defensive campaign but put their case for free abortion on demand. For them, women and only women had the right to decide on abortion. Abortion was not seen as a precursor to the acquisition of equal rights, but as a fundamental goal of female liberation. In ideological terms women were seen as existing in a state of oppression in a male dominated society. Equal rights were not enough. These activists sought more fundamental socio-cultural and economic changes which in the long term would provide true emancipation. This view is clearly expressed in the following extract from an official NAC publication:

The contradiction between what is possible in terms of freeing women and what is actually being done is clearest around the issue of abortion. Nowhere are the efforts of women to fight their oppression more profound than around sexuality and reproduction. The complete ability to control and plan her reproductive life is vital to the liberation of women. (Knight and Gorton, 1976, p.15).

Within the Women's Liberation Movement at this time there were two clearly distinct groupings. Indeed since the beginning of the decade those within the movement had been aware of a split between the 'radical feminists' and the 'socialist feminists'. Although united in their understanding of the impact of female subordination these two schools of thought adopted markedly different analytical approaches towards the study of women in society, and had different political preoccupations. Radical feminists were primarily concerned with sexual rather than economic exploitation and as such favoured, what may be termed, a sex-class analysis. Conflict arising between men and women was seen as originating within the relations of reproduction, in which women were viewed as constituting an oppressed class. Thus, radical feminists concentrated on the existence of biological and gender divisions in society and studied women's exploitation through an analysis of the traditional female concerns of love, marriage and children. Sex came to be seen as a form of oppression.

Out of this radical tradition a number of strategic ideas emerged. At one extreme some radicals launched an attack on the very biological base of male power, claiming that it was essential that the potential for male dominance be destroyed at its source if women were to be liberated.

Shulamith Firestone, a prominent American feminist, and founder of a major women's liberation group in New York, advocated that women should seize control of reproduction and work towards the ultimate elimination of the sex distinction itself; a process which entailed freeing women from the burden of child bearing

through the development of artificial means of reproduction (Firestone, 1971). These views were by no means representative of radical feminist thinking within the women's movement. Some supporters maintained that progress towards liberation could be achieved by challenging and overthrowing the social, cultural and economic structures which had arisen out of the basic biological differences between men and women. Such structures were seen to reflect masculine values and reinforce beliefs in male supremacy. It was, in their opinion, the patriarchal system that was responsible for keeping women in a subordinate position. This situation was to be altered without creating artificial means of reproduction. Women needed to be given greater choice and control especially with respect to fertility and child rearing, without giving up these responsibilities altogether.

It would appear then, that radical feminists do not form a single, cohesive and homogeneous faction within the Women's Liberation Movement. As observed by Banks, radical feminism does not constitute a movement in any concrete sense of the term, but represents 'a wide variety of positions' (Banks, 1981, p.233). Ideologically it has 'no single doctrine and no single set of goals or aims' but 'is united in its opposition to what it sees as patriarchy or women's oppression by men' (ibid., p.227). The fight for liberation is very much a fight against male domination. Radical feminists have developed a deep suspicion of wider political strategies, a fact which has brought them into conflict with socialist feminists.

The development of a radical component in feminist thinking brought a new dimension to the abortion debate. For them the anti-discrimination legislation favoured by the equal rights feminists of the 1960's merely granted women equal rights in a male defined way. This was considered to be most unsatisfactory. The 'new feminists' can best be described as 'pro-woman'. What they wanted was a more fundamental change in society. In their view women had been repeatedly conditioned to undervalue themselves and underestimate their capabilities. By expounding a pro-woman line feminists wanted to encourage women to pay attention to their own life experiences and social situation, and not passively accept the stereotyped roles of male superiority and female inferiority. Traditional sex roles assigned to women were strongly condemned, and the conventional view of the institution of the family soundly attacked, by radical feminists. As far as abortion is concerned the belief is that the 1967 Act granted certain concessions to women, largely as a result of the publicity given to the activities of back street abortionists. It is held that the MPs who voted for safe and legal abortion in the 1960's did so because of the concern expressed over the rising number of women being admitted to hospital because of septic wombs, resulting from illegal abortions. It was estimated at the time that the demand for abortion would be in the region of 10,000 per annum. This has since proved to be an underestimation. In the first full year of the Act the figure was 23,641, this rose to over 120,000 in 1971. The feminists believed that action needed to be taken not only to defend the limited right to abortion, but to ensure that the right was extended and abortion was not simply made available to those women who had been defined as 'deserving cases', but was available to all women.

Although some of the writers and activists who had an important influence on the development of feminism in this country had their political and ideological roots in socialism, the Women's Liberation Movement did not come under socialist-feminist influence to any great extent during its formative years (Coote and Campbell, 1982). It was the radical feminists who played a major part in radicalising feminism and the various reform movements concerned with women's issues; this is particularly noticeable in the case of abortion reform. The socialist feminists emerged as a significant force to meet the challenge of the radical feminists.

Socialist feminists differed from the radicals within the movement in a number of ways. They did not pursue a separatist strategy, but maintained their links with various left-wing political groups and thereby did not discard the notion of class conflict, which is a fundamental feature of socialist thought. While some extremist radical feminists claimed that men oppressed women by virtue of their 'biological maleness', socialist feminists sought an explanation of female subordination in the very social and economic relations that exist between men and women. These relations were perceived to be in need of transformation. According to this analysis women's liberation must depend upon the eventual eradication of class conflict and the end to the exploitation of one class by another. Supporters of this brand of feminism tended to be those women who had strong attachments to left-wing political groups. They entered the women's movement as committed socialists and consequently viewed the struggle against male dominance as part of a wider struggle against social and economic inequalities.

Unlike their radical counterparts they did not reject men nor did they suggest that women were engaged in a unique struggle which could only be fought by women. The feminists within the socialist movement expressed the belief that the feminist cause could only be advanced if women worked alongside male socialists and encouraged them to consider women's issues in their discourses. Their aim was to ensure that topics such as reproduction and the nature of family relations were incorporated into socialist social and economic theory and strategy.

The existence of the radical and socialist themes within the campaign for women's liberation has been commented upon by feminist writers and academic observers (Mitchell, 1971; Banks, 1981 and Coote and Campbell, 1982). However, care should be taken not to over-emphasise the consequences of such a division for movement solidarity and cohesion. The two perspectives are not irreconcilable, but as Banks has indicated: 'They are ideal types rather than clear cut divisions within feminism' (Banks, 1981, p.229). While neither of the groups have produced anything broadly resembling a manifesto, an insight into their respective philosophical and political stances can be obtained from studying the available feminist literature. It would appear that there are some radicals who still consider themselves socialist in some way and some socialists who have made conscious efforts to integrate aspects of the radical feminists' critique of sexism in society into their socialist approach to female subjugation.

In spite of their differences, radicals and socialists have fought together on a number of specific issues.

In the case of abortion they have presented a united front against the anti-abortion movement and campaigned under the slogan of 'A Woman's Right to Choose'. The need for women to exercise control over their own fertility has been recognised by all feminists as a major prerequisite of liberation.

Much of the NAC literature presents the demand for abortion as part of a wider campaign for female independence. A recurrent theme is that women will forever be restricted to low status social roles unless positive action is taken to establish their own identity. As one speaker at the 1976 ALRA annual conference stated: 'women must have a chance to say who they are and we must see abortion as a means to that end and not as an end in itself' (ALRA, 1976).

The concern over status can be seen to permeate the pro-abortion campaign rhetoric. It is evident in both the movement's attack on what are considered to be the inadequacies and shortcomings of the 1967 Act and in NAC's response to some of the arguments against abortion advanced by SPUC and 'Life'. The Abortion Act has been criticised for not going far enough and giving women the right to choose. Under the Act the decision as to whether or not a woman has a pregnancy terminated is made by two doctors. In the view of the pro-abortionists this reliance on medical discretion serves to deny women complete control over their own bodies. Consequently this is seen as having an impact on the life fate of women. According to Theresa Woodcraft, at one time a member of the executive committee of ALRA:

A human being is something that women are demanding the right to be; someone who has

hopes and dreams and fears and plans and wants to widen experience of life. A woman must have the choice to explore these things. ..It is, of course, clear that if all women are to have a chance to find out who they are and to explore all their hopes and dreams which we have been talking about, then it is clear that they can only achieve them if they have a maximum amount of choice. That must include control over their own bodies. (ALRA, 1976).

This passage suggests not only that women are subjugated but that their exploitation is such that they are not granted the basic rights and privileges attributed to human beings. Choice is equated with freedom. To refuse women the right to control their own fertility, and to give the power to choose over abortion to the medical profession, is ultimately to deny women freedom.

Concern over status is also reflected in the reaction of NAC to some of the arguments formulated by the anti-abortionists. The 'Life' organisation has expressed serious concern over the falling birth rate. In an article published in 1976 the national chairman of the group commented:

We are facing a national emergency - more severe and more fundamental than inflation or any other of our current economic problems. Our national birth rate has been collapsing dramatically during the last few years. In 1975, for example, there were only 602,000 live births in England and Wales, an all time low. Between 1964 and 1975, our birth rate has declined by 32%; between 1967 and 1975 by 28%. These are staggering figures. (Scarisbrick, The Universe, 12 March 1976).

This argument was also presented before the Select Committee on Abortion (1975/1976), when it was suggested that efforts should be made to reverse the trend in order that there would be sufficient numbers producing goods and services to provide for the demands created by an ageing population.

If abortion was not available many women who did not want their children could place them for adoption. This would solve the population problem and bring happiness to many couples who could not have children of their own. In a memorandum to the Select Committee, 'Life' stated:

An abortion may seem to 'solve' the problems of the natural parent but it condemns to lasting childlessness an infertile couple who could have adopted that child and would have been immeasurably happy to do so. (Select Committee, 1975, vol. II, 'Life' memorandum, p.11).

This view received strong condemnation from the pro-abortion movement. To hold such a view was thought to disregard women as individuals, and value them solely for their ability to produce and rear children. Many feminists believed that men had been able to gain ascendancy over women because the latter performed a clearly determined biological role. Attitudes and beliefs which serve to strengthen this stereotype have been strongly reacted to. The view prevalent within the movement is that to value women primarily as producers of the future generation is to see their role in purely biological terms and ignore their rights as individuals. Female oppression through biological determinism is a central theme in radical feminism, it can also be found in socialist feminism, and features in the campaign for 'A Woman's Right to Choose'. In the opinion of one ALRA campaign leader:

Because we believe that women must define who they are, we fervently believe that a woman in 1976 cannot, if she does not choose (whether or not to have an abortion) for herself, be seen as anything more than the bearer of children. She must not be ruled by her biology. We have been tyrannised by our biology for far too long. (ALRA, 1976).

In the 1980's the status issue, as outlined above, still occupies a prominent if not central place in feminist thought. As commented upon earlier, Simms (1981) has declared that abortion may be seen as a 'critical indicator of women's status in society'. This gives rise to the question as to whether or not campaign participants can be identified as constituting a status group in the Weberian sense of the term. As suggested when discussing the concept of status discontent as a motive force in anti-abortion activism, Weber's definition of a status group does not permit us to identify any group sharing a particular life style as forming a status group. Status refers to the social determination of life chances, and in order for a group to qualify as a status group there must not only be evidence of shared status attributes and shared life style characteristics among individuals, but these must be seen to function as important determinants of life chances. In other words, the status characteristics must be such that they provide access to certain rewards and privileges not shared by non-possessors of those status attributes. Sex is an example of an ascribed status attribute with, according to some observers, implications for life chances.

In general, feminists are critical of the overall status of women in society, and from the campaign literature reviewed so far it is evident that the fight for control over their fertility (in terms of free birth control services and easy access to abortion facilities) is considered as one way in which progress may be made towards establishing social equality for women and curtailing, if not abolishing, male oppression and dominance.

The idea of women as an oppressed group 'is an essential element in the fully fledged position of radical feminism' (Charvet, 1982, p.120). According to which the primary social distinctions are considered to be those based not on wealth but on sex. For instance, there has been a strong reaction towards the biologically determined reproductive role of women being used as a means of justifying sexual stratification in society. The argument advanced by most feminists is that activities such as child rearing are assumed to be the responsibility of females thus preventing their greater participation in the wider social, economic and political spheres of activity. They claim that many of the roles assigned to women are not the reflection of fundamental biological differences between the sexes but are the outcome of social stereotyping. Consequently they believe that by altering society's expectations of women more opportunities will be open to them. In a sense then, feminists are not engaged in any form of status defence; they are not protesting at the erosion of prestige, but are fighting to improve their status position as women. For them, gender (that is, the social definition and interpretation of sex roles) is a form of status exclusion.

#### Summary

A substantial body of theory to explain the reasons for, and persistence of, women's subordination has developed within the feminist movement in Britain over the past fourteen years. The primary purpose of the present chapter has not been to provide a critique of feminist theory, but to illustrate how one issue, namely abortion, came to occupy a place of central significance in feminist politics.

In order to achieve this aim some oversimplification of what may be termed the 'feminist perspective' has been necessary. Banks (1981), in a study of the rise of feminism as a social movement, identified six major varieties of feminism. While Oakley (1981), drawing on the work of Sebastyen (1979), outlined no less than ten tendencies in the Women's Liberation Movement and subsequently divided them into two major categories, socialist feminism and radical feminism. In the present study it is this dual dichotomy which has been adhered to, this is because it reflects the fundamental ideological and political differences existing between the various brands of feminism, while simultaneously appreciating the existing similarities. This division between radical and socialist feminists will be the subject of further comment in a later chapter.

In examining the feminist's presentation of the case for a liberal abortion law two central themes have been outlined; one being discrimination and the other oppression. In the early part of the 1960's liberal social reformers emphasized the desirability of allowing abortion in certain specific circumstances. The 1967 Abortion Act permitted the medical termination of pregnancy on a limited number of medical, social and psychological grounds. It did not grant the right of a legal abortion to all women, only to those considered to be deserving cases. During the mid to late 1960's and well into the 1970's there was a movement for equal rights and social equality for women. There was a demand for an end to discrimination against women; two of the four demands made by the Women's Liberation Movement in 1970 were for equal pay and equal opportunities for women. It has been shown above how it was argued that abortion had to be a choice available to all

women if they were to be able to take full advantage of sex equality legislation. Gradually the equal rights perspective gave way to a much more vigorous and vociferous campaign, in which participants were fighting against male dominance and the oppression of women. In battling against oppression they presented a vision of liberation which went beyond a preoccupation with questions of equal rights in the fields of work and education. The liberationists spoke not only of the necessity of freeing women from exploitation in the labour market, but of the need to liberate women from the psychological limitations imposed upon them by the restrictive nature of the institutions of marriage and the family.

By outlining the two themes of discrimination and oppression the intention has not been to suggest that the two are in some way mutually exclusive. The distinction has been drawn merely for the purpose of illustrating how the abortion issue has featured in the wider context of feminism.

## CHAPTER XI

Feminist Campaigns for 'Abortion on Demand'

In the previous chapter it has been shown how, in Britain, abortion became a feminist issue after the introduction of a liberal abortion law. Consequently, in order to evaluate the impact of feminism during the early stages of legislative change, when prohibitive legislation is first repeated or reformed, it is necessary to study cases where a feminist movement has preceded such change; Italy, France and the United States of America all provide such examples. In each of these countries modern feminist groups have played an important part in campaigns to introduce liberal abortion laws. In the following sections these campaigns will be briefly outlined; the emphasis will be on the role of feminist groups and women's organisations. In the closing discussion some general observations will be made concerning the nature and format of the various feminist pro-abortion campaigns.

Italy

The women's movement in Italy is a very complex phenomenon. The feminist movement started in the early 1970's and was particularly strong from 1974 to 1978, but this was not the first example of collective action by women. Italy is the only European country where a strong and politically active women's movement has existed since the end of the Second World War.

Two major associations have dominated this movement, the Centro Italiano Femminile (CIF) or the Italian Women's Centre and the Unione Donne Italiane (UDI) or Union of Italian Women. Since the late 1940's these groups have campaigned, both individually and together, for a variety of social and political reforms of particular interest to women. In 1946 they campaigned for the right to vote, 1957 saw the equal pay for equal work campaign, while in 1963 they demanded that women be allowed to enter public office at all levels. Despite the nature of these issues neither of the associations could be considered feminist. The CIF developed strong links with the Christian Democrats and held a very traditional view of the role of women in society. By comparison the UDI was originally formed as a non-partisan organisation concerned with women's problems, but it eventually came under the influence of the Communists as it appeared to attract its leadership from within the feminine commission of the Italian Communist Party.

The beginning of the 1970's saw the emergence of a new type of women's movement in Italy. This feminist movement wanted to alter some of the fundamental social values which they believed were obstacles in the way of female liberation. In February 1971, the Movimento di Liberazione della Donna (MLD) or Women's Liberation Movement, held its first national conference in Rome. The MLD, which had connections with the Radical Party, was primarily concerned, in its early stages, with fighting for women's rights in the areas of abortion and divorce. Other feminist groups developed around the same time, such as the

Movimento Femminista Romano (Roman Feminist Movement) and Lotta Femminista (Feminist Struggle). On the whole, the feminist movement consisted of a loosely organised collection of diverse and disparate groups. Women in the revolutionary groups of the political left developed their own feminist organisations in which they tried to reconcile the feminist struggle against male domination with revolutionary politics and the fight against capitalism. Groups such as Lotta Continua (Continuous Struggle), Avanguardia Operaia (Worker's Advanceguard) and il Manifesto (The Manifesto) emerged. Thus, it can be seen that the feminist movement had no centralised structure; many feminists participated in small informal groups operating at a local level, but this did not prevent them from mounting national campaigns and demonstrations. When a campaign for a referendum to abolish divorce was started in March 1974 the feminist movement made a public stand in favour of divorce, and in 1980 some 30,000 women from all over Italy took part in a march through the streets of Rome to announce their support for a Parliamentary Bill on violence against women. The Women's Liberation Movement was also responsible for leading the attack on the restrictive abortion law and played an influential part in abortion law reform in Italy.

Under legislation inspired by the overtly racist policies of a former fascist regime, abortion carried severe penalties, both for the person performing the operation and the women seeking to have a pregnancy terminated.

Abortion appeared under a section of the penal code dealing with 'crimes against the integrity and health of the race'. In spite of the threat of harsh punishment illegal abortions did take place; these were estimated to be anywhere between one million to three million each year (The Times, 19 June 1971, p.4). Approximately six months after the Italian Parliament had approved of divorce, following a long and acrimonious debate, three Socialist senators tabled a Bill to legalise abortion. It was intended that abortion would be allowed if the mental or physical health of the mother was in danger; the child was likely to be mentally or physically abnormal; the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest, or that the mother already had five or more children or was over forty-five years of age. Any termination of a pregnancy would have to be undertaken before the one hundredth day of the pregnancy, and carried out in an approved hospital or clinic.

The introduction of this Bill marked the start of a heated debate involving politicians from all the major political parties, representatives of the Church and members of the Vatican, as well as feminist activists and trade unionists. The Vatican was particularly quick to register its disapproval and declare its intention to fight the Bill. The legalisation of abortion was condemned as part of a 'monstrous moral decline (that) would inevitably lead to the killing of the incurable, defective or socially useless (Osservatore Romano, 9 August 1971, editorial). On 17 January 1972 the Italian Bishops issued a pastoral document firmly opposing any attempts to introduce abortion.

They rejected the view, expressed by many liberals and supporters of the Bill, that legal abortion was a lesser evil than illegal abortion. In their opinion, to relax legislation on abortion would have serious repercussions on moral standards which were already too weak. It was the view of the bishops that:

Rape, extreme youth, fear of dishonour, serious danger to the mother, diagnoses of malformation in the foetus are without doubt very grievous situations. However, such cases do not justify an act which by its nature is contrary to moral order. (The Times, 18 January, 1972, p.4.).

When Signor Louis Fortuna, the Socialist deputy deposited the Abortion Bill with the President of the Chamber of Deputies on 11 February 1973 the Italian bishops renewed their attack on the Bill by claiming that abortion was a 'crime against life'.

Support for liberalisation of abortion was readily forthcoming from the Socialists, the Radical Party and the emerging feminist groups. In contrast there was virtually no support for the feminist struggle for abortion from either of the two established women's organisations, the Centro Italiano Femminile (CIF) and the Unione Donne Italiane (UDI). The CIF clearly rejected most feminist ideas, it did not support a change in the abortion law and was in favour of holding a referendum on the abrogation of divorce. In a sense it reflected the ideals and beliefs espoused by the Christian Democratic Party. The UDI was under the influence of the Communists, who for reasons of political expediency were reluctant to support feminist causes. The Communist Party was conspiring to form an alliance of the left which had to include the Catholic as well as Marxist left.

Consequently they were anxious not to offend the Church, thereby alienating left wing Catholic support. As a result of their political ambitions they were forced to take a non-controversial stance on potentially divisive issues of a sensitive nature, like divorce and abortion. As commented by one observer:

The (Communist) Party has too cautious an eye on the sources of real power and is aware that no political group hoping for a future dare challenge the Roman Catholic Church on its home ground which, as much as anything else, in the world of women. (The Times, 8 November, 1973, p.8).

This conciliatory approach was clearly evident in a speech given by Signora Nilde Iotti, deputy presiding officer of the Chamber of Deputies, to members of the UDI at their annual conference in 1973. Signora Iotti spoke out against abortion declaring that 'the fruit of a relationship of love' could not be discarded so easily and a solution to the abortion question did not rest with the women of the left. All sections of women's opinions needed to be taken into account, and particular attention needed to be given to the views of Catholic women.

In presenting their case the pro-abortionists emphasised two points. Firstly, that the demand for abortion would not diminish and illegal abortionists would continue to flourish. The women's movement estimated that nearly three million abortions took place in Italy every year (The Economist, 25 January 1975). Many doctors were seen to be making large profits. The only way the state could exert some control over what was happening was to bring abortion out into the open; then it would be possible to regulate fees and impose restrictions on clinics to ensure that women were not exposed to the risks encountered when resorting to back street abortionists.

The women's liberation movement made an appeal for nationwide protests 'by the thousands of women who in the space of a day have abortions in Italy and suffer personally the violence of the regime which forces them to abort secretly and in terror' (The Times, 13 January 1975, p.4).

A second point stressed by the supporters of abortion when presenting their case was that in spite of the statements made by prominent religious leaders and some leading politicians, public opinion was in favour of a law permitting abortion under certain circumstances. In 1974 a leading weekly magazine in Milan published the results of an opinion poll in which, out of a sample of 900, 86 per cent were in favour of abortion if the pregnancy would damage the physical or mental health of the mother. Also 85 per cent stated that they thought abortion permissible when there was a danger that the child was likely to be severely deformed (Panorama, 27 July 1974). A second poll conducted in January 1975 produced similar results, with three quarters of women interviewed expressing a wish to see abortion legalised. (Panorama, 23 January 1975). A further poll in 1978 showed just over 80 per cent of respondents approving of abortion which prompted pro-abortionists to claim that there was overwhelming support for a change in the abortion law (The Times, 23 February 1978, p.7).

Opposition from the Church increased as the abortion debate continued. The Vatican issued a strongly worded statement in November 1974 reiterating its total objection to abortion.

Under no circumstances was it considered acceptable for a family or political body to use abortion as a means of regulating births. Roman Catholics were forbidden to support any law favouring abortion. The Declaration on Procured Abortion was signed by Cardinal Seper, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and ratified by the Pope. In reply to the pro-abortion argument that abortion could not be viewed as killing because the foetus was not a living human being, but had the potential for human life, the document asserted that:

In reality respect for human life is called for from the time that the process of generation begins. From the time that the ovum is fertilised, a life is begun which is neither that of the father nor of the mother: it is rather the life of a new human being with its own growth. It would never be made human if it were not human already. (The Times, 26 November 1974, p.8).

It was on this issue that the state came into open conflict with the Church. On 18 February 1975 the Italian Constitutional Court entered the abortion controversy by declaring that abortion was legal when performed in cases where the mother's physical and mental health were in serious danger and this danger could not be avoided except by terminating the pregnancy. The Court instructed Parliament to take steps in order to ensure that abortions were not performed without sufficient medical evidence and were undertaken in such a way as to enable the life of the foetus to be saved wherever possible. According to the Court there was no comparison 'between the right not only to life but also to health of someone who is already a person, like the mother, and the safety of the embryo, who has yet to become a person' (The Times, 19 February 1975, p.1).

The Vatican was swift in responding to this ruling. Concern was expressed over the implication that there was a substantial difference between the value of the life of the mother and that of the unborn child. The Church held the view that abortion was a crime because it involved the killing of the innocent. The foetus was regarded as having an undeniable right to life. Speaking out against the practice of abortion the Pope called upon parents to protect their children 'from the very moment' they 'rest' in the maternal womb' (The Times, 5 January 1976, p.5). The Church also attacked the feminist notion that abortion was a precursor of liberation. According to the Church, any law giving women the right to choose whether or not they continued with a pregnancy would not lead to their automatic liberation. In the words of Professor Federico Alessandrini, an official spokesman for the Vatican, 'women "liberated" by divorce, by contraception and by abortion are being brought back rapidly to the passive and humiliating servitude of pagan times' (The Times, 24 January 1975, p.5).

The women's liberation movement attempted to distance itself from the theological issues surrounding abortion and avoided becoming involved in any protracted debate with the religious authorities. The feminists fought an aggressive campaign which guaranteed that abortion remained a topical social issue. They also played an important part in organising support for those people arrested following the closure of a private abortion clinic in Florence on 10 January 1975.

The clinic was run by the Centro Informazione Sterilizzazione e Aborto (CISA) and supported by the Radical Party. The latter had no representation in Parliament but had been influential in the campaign for divorce law reform and wanted liberalisation of the abortion law. Three days after the clinic was closed, Signor Gianfranco Spadaccia, secretary of the Radical Party, was arrested on charges of being an accessory to acts of procured abortion. Certain sections of the Italian news media accused the Party of obtaining a regular income from the clinic (The Times, 14 January 1975, p.5). On 26 January at a conference organised by the Radical Party in conjunction with the women's liberation movement, Adele Faccio, a prominent campaigner for abortion and a leading figure in CISA, was arrested in connection with the activities of the Florence clinic. In order to show that the arrest of a feminist leader, plus a raid on an abortion clinic had not affected the campaign for free abortion on demand the women's liberation movement held a press conference on 12 February at which they showed a film of an abortion which had taken place one hour earlier (The Times, 13 February 1975, p.5).

By the mid 1970's the pro-abortionists were expressing dissatisfaction at the lengthy political deliberations and manoeuvrings which they saw as hindering the progress of the Bill to amend the abortion law. The Communists were negotiating with the ruling Christian Democratic Party in a move to reduce the scope of the original Bill. Signor Fortuna, the Bill's sponsor, and leader of the campaign in Parliament, accused some political parties of conspiring out of overtly selfish political motives to prevent women from obtaining their rights.

In a display of the strength of his feelings Fortuna offered to resign his seat in the Chamber of Deputies. On 27 November 1975 the Chamber voted unanimously to turn down his resignation.

The passage of the Abortion Bill was continually marred by the delicate balance of power within Parliament. Moro's Christian Democratic Party formed a minority government and towards the end of February 1976 was compelled to seek a vote of confidence before the Senate. No sooner had the Senate given its support than the abortion issue was raised once again in the Chamber. The left wing parties along with many lay members were in direct opposition to the Christian Democrats on this issue. In addition to this the Catholic Christian Democratic Party's opposition to abortion had hardened in response to Vatican pronouncements. They claimed that abortion should continue to be classified as a crime for 'educative' reasons, but that in exceptional circumstances it should not be punishable. The situation was a dilemma for the Christian Democrats. The Bill had been before Parliament since 1973, and if a decision was not reached soon then it was highly likely that a national referendum would be called for. Having already suffered a major defeat two years previously in the referendum on divorce the Party wished to avoid a similar embarrassment on the abortion issue. However, if the Bill was to be debated in Parliament there was a chance that the opposition would see the Bill through. Technically a defeat could not bring the minority Government down because the Bill to legalise abortion was not a Government sponsored measure.

Nevertheless, the fragile coalition depended on the goodwill and support of the Socialists for its survival and the Socialists could retaliate by withdrawing support when a Government backed issue was next debated. A solution to the dilemma favoured by a large number of Christian Democrats was to absent themselves from the Chamber during the committee stage of the Bill, thus allowing the Bill to go forward unimpeded. This brought a warning from the Government chief whip that such behaviour would not be tolerated and Party members were instructed not to be so negligent in future.

On 1 April 1976 the Lower House passed a Christian Democratic amendment limiting abortion to victims of rape or cases where the pregnant woman's life was in danger. This was the minimum change necessary to comply with the ruling of the Constitutional Court issued some twelve months previously. The amendment was passed with the support of the right wing Italian Social Movement. Disorder broke out, with the Socialists demanding a referendum to abrogate the present law which declared abortion to be a crime. Such was the uproar that the sitting had to be suspended. Meanwhile on Sunday 4 April the feminist movement organised a mass demonstration. An estimated group of 30,000 women marched through Rome calling for an end to all restrictions on abortion (The Times, 5 April 1976, p.1). The abortion debate was due to be resumed in the Chamber of Deputies on 6 April, but was postponed to give the political parties time to come to some sort of an agreement.

The feminist struggle for abortion law reform was helped by two events in 1976. Firstly, women and women's issues featured more than ever before in a General Election campaign. Although women comprised over 52 per cent of the electorate they had been generally overlooked in the past and not seen as constituting a political mass. Admittedly the feminists only constituted a small minority but there is ample evidence that their ideas and beliefs had permeated Italian society (Colombo, 1981). Even the Christian Democratic Party revised its traditional view of women stating that changes were needed in order to enable women to combine their family responsibilities with increased involvement in the social and economic life of the community. Although they viewed women as primarily mothers they did acknowledge the importance of wider social participation for women.

Of the 945 seats in Parliament 61 went to women; 50 were elected to the Chamber of Deputies and 11 to the Senate. This was double the number in the previous administration. The majority of female members were Communists, 11 were members of the Christian Democratic Party, one was a Socialist and two represented the Radical Party. The women's liberation movement scored a success in the elections by having three members elected. One was from the Proletarian Democracy Party and the other two from the Radical Party. This was the first time the latter had fought an election. One of its successful candidates was the leading feminist Adele Faccio who had been arrested in 1975 for her involvement in the organisation and running of CISA.

Secondly, an accident at a chemical factory in the Seveso-Meda district of north Milan on 10 July 1976 indirectly led to a re-examination of the moral and social issues surrounding abortion. The factory, owned by the Icmesa Company, a subsidiary of Roche, was the scene of an explosion resulting in the release of trichlorophenol, a poisonous compound. The accident caused the death of animals and plants over a radius of twelve miles. The area was closed off and 210 inhabitants were evacuated. Initial tests by the local health council underestimated the seriousness of the problem. Representatives from Roche visited the site and declared that contamination was far more widespread than at first anticipated. They stated that liver and kidney damage could occur and that there was a possibility of genetic alterations. The northern border of a town with a population of over 30,000 was found to be affected and over 1,000 people had to be evacuated. On 2 August a test centre for pregnant women was set up in Seveso and expectant mothers in the area were asked to report for medical examinations. On hearing of the possible danger to the health of the foetus Emma Bonino, a feminist and Radical Member of Parliament declared her intention to introduce a special Abortion Bill to allow abortion in cases where it could be shown that a pregnant woman had been affected by the chemical trichlorophenol. Meanwhile her Party sponsored a medical centre to give help to those women from the Seveso area who did not want to continue with their pregnancies.

It was not necessary for Emma Bonino to introduce a Bill, for on 3 August the Christian Democratic Government agreed to change the abortion law in order to allow women affected by the poisonous vapour to have abortions (The Times, 3 August 1976, p.1). The abortions were performed on 13 August. Out of an estimated number of 250 pregnant women living in or near the contaminated area 38 had their pregnancies terminated. The Church was not in favour of any relaxation of the law. Before the first Seveso women underwent their abortions Cardinal Colombo, the Archbishop of Milan, claimed that many Catholic couples had come forward who were prepared to adopt any malformed children (The Times, 9 August 1976, p.4). The decision by the Christian Democrats to permit abortions to take place was strongly condemned by the Vatican (Catholic Herald, 20 August 1976).

The new Parliament was very finely balanced, with the ruling Christian Democrats relying on support from the other parties. Changes in the composition of the new Parliament prevented the Christian Democrats from falling back on the old anti-abortion stance it had developed with the old alliance in the previous administration. There was no longer an arrangement with the Communists. The Communist Party had been criticised for its accommodating attitude towards the Government on the abortion issue in the last Parliament. The Union of Italian Women, which had for many years firmly backed the Communist Party, decided in 1975 to support the feminist struggle for abortion. This was in open opposition to the Party's official policy of compromise (Colombo, 1981).

As a result of the June General Election the number of female Communist MPs had risen from 21 to 47. Many of these had a deep concern for women's issues. The Communists withdrew from their alliance with the Christian Democrats and accepted the feminist principle that the woman should be allowed to decide for herself. However they did not give official backing to the pro-abortion movement. They tended to support amendments which would satisfy as many shades of opinion as possible.

On 18 January 1977 the Chamber of Deputies began to debate a new Abortion Amendment Bill. The Bill's main feature was to allow abortion within the first three months of pregnancy in order to preserve the physical and mental health of the mother. Despite strong criticism from Church leaders, and attempts by Christian Democrats to introduce additional amendments with the aim of nullifying the Bill's original proposals, the Bill succeeded by 310 votes to 296.

The approved Bill was considered to be liberal. It permitted abortion in cases of rape or incest, and allowed a woman to decide to terminate her pregnancy within the first ninety days, if there was a risk to her physical and mental well being. Social and economic circumstances were also taken into account.

The Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano strongly condemned the proposals as 'practically adopting the slogan...of free abortion at the expense of the state' (The Times, 22 January 1977, p.3).

The Bill failed to gain approval in the Senate. A final vote was expected on Thursday 9 June but the Bill failed on a procedural motion on the previous Tuesday. It was defeated by a narrow margin of two votes; 156 votes to 154 votes.

The abortion issue was brought before the Lower House, for the third time since 1975, on 6 April 1978. The Bill stood a good chance of succeeding for a number of reasons. First, a number of public opinion polls which had been recently published indicated a high proportion of Italians in favour of abortions in certain cases. Over 80 per cent were reported to approve of abortion if the mother's life was in danger, or if the foetus was malformed. Around three quarters of those interviewed were in favour of abortion when the pregnancy was the result of rape. These poll findings were reported to represent a significant change in public attitudes. Second, the Government was a delicate coalition and it was feared that failure to reach an agreement on abortion would mean another divisive national referendum. Third, Aldo Moro, president of the Christian Democrats, had devised a pact involving the leading parties (particularly the Communists), and Members of the House were only too well aware of the impact a serious division on the abortion issue could have on the new alliance. Finally, Signor Moro had been kidnapped on 16 March, and the shock of his abduction had reinforced the alliance. Under the circumstances the Christian Democrats did not propose to employ delaying tactics in an attempt to prevent the Bill succeeding, but they were determined to vote against the Bill.

After a continuous thirty-three hour debate the Chamber voted on the Bill on 14 April 1978. The vote was eventually forced by the filibustering tactics of the four Radical Party members. They supported the feminist stance of free abortion on demand. In fact, as illustrated above, two of them were leading activists in the feminist movement. Their aim was to prevent a decision being reached on the Bill thereby forcing a national referendum. A vote was duly taken and the Abortion Bill was passed by 308 votes to 275 (The Times, 15 April 1978, p.4). On 18 May Senate approved of the Bill by 160 to 148 votes (The Times, 19 May 1978, p.6). The new law permitted abortion in the first ninety days, if there was serious danger for the physical or mental health of the mother, or for reasons connected with her social, economic or family background. After ninety days abortion was still legal if it could be shown that there was grave danger to the mother's life. The law came into force during the first week of June 1978.

The Church quickly attacked the new law and reiterated that in its view abortion law was a crime. According to the Archbishop of Ravenna, Monsignor Ersilio Tonini 'no vote can transform homicide into a right' (L'Observatore Romano, 19 May 1978). On the day the Act came into force Cardinal Ugo Poletti, the Pope's Vicar of Rome, stated that a human law could not cancel the natural and divine law according to which abortion was always a crime, no matter what the circumstances (L'Observatore Romano, 6 June 1978). At the Italian Episcopal Conference in December of the same year the bishops remarked that abortion was 'a grave moral danger and that: 'The moral judgement in the civil law

authorising abortion is clear: it is an intrinsically and gravely immoral law' (The Daily Telegraph, 18 December 1978, p.4). Also it was announced that women undergoing an abortion would face automatic excommunication (The Universe, 22 December 1978). In addition to these attacks religious leaders called upon doctors to profess their Christianity and refuse to carry out abortion operations. There was a conscience clause in the new legislation, and doctors had been given until 4 July 1978 to register as conscientious objectors. Bishop Fiorenzo Angelini, the papal delegate to the Catholic doctors association, while encouraging doctors to sign the conscience clause, said that nuns nursing in private clinics where abortions were allowed would be withdrawn (The Sunday Times, 11 June 1978, p.9).

Throughout 1979 and into the 1980's the Church continued in its public condemnation of legal abortion. At an open air mass in Siena in September 1980 the Pope spoke of the right to life as existing from the very moment of conception. This was the basic and fundamental right of all human beings and it was not a right that the state could remove by means of legislation. This brought strong protests from a number of politicians. Signor Fortuna, the deputy presiding officer of the Chamber of Deputies criticised the Pope's speech for constituting 'an attack on the autonomy and the sovereignty of the state and of Parliament' (The Times, 16 September 1980, p.4). Other Socialist MPs accused the Pope of unwarranted interference in the abortion debate.

Meanwhile the anti-abortion movement was campaigning for a repeal of the law. A Catholic organisation, the Movement for Life, was collecting signatures in support of a national referendum on abortion. An attempt was made to obtain a ruling that the abortion law was unconstitutional. This failed, for in January 1981 Italy's highest court declared that the 1978 law on abortion was constitutional.

The controversy was renewed when it was declared that a referendum would be held on the issue on 17 and 18 May 1981. Voters were faced with three choices, they could choose to vote for a restrictive law as suggested by the pro-life movement; they could vote in favour of no change, or support proposals to relax the abortion regulations even further and remove all time limits. The Pope and other prominent figures in the Church urged all Catholics to vote in favour of the first of these options. Such was the involvement of the Church in the campaign that all the leaders of the lay parties expressed concern. Signor Enrico Berlinguer, leader of the Communist Party, criticised the Pope for his involvement, stating that it was: 'excessive and inopportune for the Pope to put himself at the head, with almost daily appeals and mass meetings, of a movement conducting a campaign to modify the legislation of our republic, and that the Church should be employed in a massive and detailed action for this purpose' (L'Unita, 1 May 1981). In any event the anti-abortion amendment was opposed by over two thirds of the voters. An even larger number, around 88 per cent, registered their opposition to the proposal that the abortion law be liberalised even further. Thus the 1978 law remained unchanged.

In the period from the introduction of the new legislation to the referendum in 1981 the feminists continued their pro-abortion campaign, but this time the primary objective was to ensure that the law was properly enforced and women could obtain what were now their legal rights. The law allowed women to obtain abortions during the first three months of pregnancy at the expense of the national health service. However hospitals were critically over-crowded and poorly organised and therefore unable to meet the demands for abortion; even by the most conservative estimates, around one million women a year had abortions prior to the new law. The feminist movement claimed that the real figure was somewhere in the region of three million. Thus they claimed that the state health service was in no position to cope with the legitimate demand, and now that Parliament had given women the right to abortion (under certain circumstances) it should now provide them with the means of exercising that right. The women's movement criticised the legislation for not providing sufficient facilities to meet the demand for abortion. There was no provision for the setting up of private clinics specialising in abortions and restrictions were imposed upon private surgical clinics to control the number of abortions they performed.

Feminists complained that not only were abortion facilities scarce, but lengthy bureaucratic procedures were causing unnecessary delays and many women were still being forced to seek illegal abortions. In some cases it was claimed that women had to make appointments up to two months in advance and queues would form outside of some hospitals in the early hours of the morning (The Daily Telegraph, 6 April 1979, p.6).

A major reason for the difficulties encountered by women seeking legal abortions in state hospitals was that one month after the Abortion Act was passed nearly 90 per cent of Italy's doctors had signed the conscience clause. Consequently illegal abortions continued to flourish. While some doctors had registered their objection on legitimate grounds it was suggested in some quarters that a considerable proportion of medical practitioners were motivated by a desire to protect their lucrative side line in illegal abortions; a view frequently expressed by the feminists, who reacted to the doctors' action by opening their own clinic in Rome. In addition the women's movement organised a campaign in which they obtained sworn statements, from women who had had private abortions, naming the doctor who performed the operation and declared that they intended to compare the names with a list of doctors signing the conscience clause. By this action they intended to put pressure on those doctors who declared themselves to be conscientious objectors and did not perform abortions in state hospitals, but ran a profitable private practice. Local feminist groups organised protests against the failure to implement the law. In one incident feminists occupied a hospital in Turin as part of their campaign.

In summary, the feminist movement in Italy had no centralised structure and there was a division, on both ideological and political grounds, between radical feminists and socialist feminists.

However, the issue of abortion was responsible for uniting the many factions within the women's liberation movement in a mass campaign. The success of the pro-abortion campaign, with women being given the right to choose during the early months of pregnancy, was due primarily to the activities of the feminist movement. The new law introduced in 1978 did not mark the end of the campaign. The failure of a large proportion of medical practitioners to implement the new regulations meant that pro-abortion supporters, having succeeded in their fight for legal abortion, had to turn their attention to campaigning for the enforcement of the new legislation.

### France

The radical feminist movement emerged in France in the late 1960's and was labelled the Mouvement pour la Libération des Femmes (MLF). Like the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain, the MLF was a loose amalgam of autonomous women's groups with no real centralised organisational structure. In the words of Gisèle Halimi, a lawyer and leading French feminist, the MLF was 'neither a union, nor an homogenous movement' but 'an open house for all' (Halimi, 1973, p.70). This 'open house' contained four broad tendencies or divisions representing diverse political and ideological positions (Sauter-Bailliet, 1981). Firstly, the Féministes-Révolutionnaires (revolutionary feminists) focused on sex, and not class, as the determining factor in female oppression. In their opinion women could be united across all classes against the social system of patriarchy, which was seen as responsible for the subjugation of women. A second grouping was called the Politique et Psychanalyse

Unlike the revolutionary feminists they did not see the male sex as the enemy, but attacked the idea of masculinity from a Freudian standpoint. A third faction within the MLF was the Cercle Dimitriev which maintained strong links with left wing political groups. Finally, Les Pétroleuses was actively engaged in the class struggle in the name of revolutionary communism. Despite their ideological and political differences these groups were part of the MLF and were united in the struggle for women's liberation, and fought together to obtain abortion rights for women.

Prior to the legislative reforms introduced in 1975 abortion was illegal and any infringement of the law carried the possibility of severe penalties. Any woman found guilty of attempting to procure an abortion was liable to a period of imprisonment of between one and two years and a fine of around 7,500 francs. A person convicted of performing an abortion could be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of between one to five years (ten years if found to be a regular practitioner) and fined up to 40,000 francs. However, the law was not always strictly enforced. The number of prosecutions, and severity of the sentences imposed, diminished over the years, suggesting a more liberal attitude towards abortion. The last execution of a woman for performing an abortion which resulted in the death of the mother occurred in 1941. In 1950 there were 2,885 people sentenced for offences relating to abortion, by 1969 the annual figure was 471 (The Times, 15 November 1974, p.20).

Public prosecutors were instructed to try to avoid prosecuting the women themselves. The cases finding their way to court tended to be in some way special, that is, they involved minors or instances in which the woman had died or suffered serious physical injury.

Although there is evidence of a general liberalisation of attitudes towards abortion this was not sufficient, in itself, to encourage the introduction of changes through the legislative process. It was the women's movement which was responsible for taking the initiative of placing the issue before public opinion. At a time when releasing propaganda in favour of abortion was a punishable offence a number of feminists, and women who were in favour of the introduction of free legal abortion, signed a manifesto which was published in a left-wing weekly magazine claiming that one million women in France had recourse to abortion each year and:

They do it under dangerous conditions, owing to the secretiveness to which they are condemned. The case of these million women is kept quiet. I declare that I am one of them. I declare that I have had an abortion. In the same way as we claim free access to contraceptives so we claim free abortion. (Le Nouvel Observateur, 6 April 1971).

This became known as the 'Manifest of the 343' as it was signed by 343 women, many of whom were well known public figures. The writers, Simone de Beauvoir, Marguerite Duras and Françoise Sagan, and the actresses, Catherine Deneuve and Jeanne Moreau were among the signatories. They could not be prosecuted because the offence to which they admitted had taken place over three years previously.

At the time the manifesto was published an amendment to the abortion law was being proposed in the National Assembly by Dr. Peyret, chairman of the Gaullist social and health study group. The amendment recommended the authorisation of abortion in cases where the mother's life was in danger. This was strongly attacked by the pro-abortionists who criticised the amendment for not taking into account the question of the health of the mother. They sought to publicise the fact that abortion did take place, and that many women each year were making a voluntary and rational decision to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. In their opinion the conspiracy of silence surrounding the issue needed to be broken. People needed to be made aware of the fact that women were being forced to seek abortions under appalling conditions. The criminalisation of abortion did not just mean that women underwent great risks when having to resort to back street abortionists, but that those women who had the resources to seek safe legal abortions abroad (for example, in Britain) did so, thus they claimed the legislation was unfairly discriminatory.

Throughout the early years of the 1970's the women's campaign began to gain momentum; the feminists became increasingly aggressive in their demands for abortion law reform and an end to female subjugation. The MLF began to organise protest marches. One such march took place in Paris on 6 June 1971. Some 250 women took part. They condemned the celebration of Mother's Day because it concealed 'the exploitation of women in the family' and they chanted slogans for free contraception and abortion (The Times, 7 June 1971, p.4).

The next major demonstration organised by the MLF occurred fifteen months later and centred around an abortion trial held in Bobigny, north Paris. A seventeen year old girl was accused of procuring an abortion after being raped; her mother was charged with complicity. The MLF demonstration began outside the court on the eve of the trial and continued throughout the whole of the next day. The girl was defended by Gisèle Halimi, a feminist lawyer and one of the signatories of the 'Manifest of 343'. In the course of the case the counsel for the defence claimed that the abortion law of 1920 was hypocritical because the defendant had been unable to afford to travel abroad for a private abortion as many French women did. The girl was acquitted and her mother received a suspended fine of 500 francs. The case against the two women who performed the operation was adjourned until November, when they received a suspended prison sentence of one year. Both the media coverage and the public activities of the MLF did much to ensure that the abortion issue received maximum exposure.

Undoubtedly the abortion issue was at the centre of the campaign for women's liberation. Consequently it gave rise to the emergence of two separate pressure groups whose main objective was to see the legislation of the 1920's repealed, and abortion made accessible to all women. The first of these groups was named 'Choisir', which means 'to choose'. Originally founded by Gisèle Halimi to defend the 343 women who signed the manifesto, Choisir broke away from the MLF and developed a highly structured and hierarchical organisational framework.

Having been established on the basis of a single issue, namely to ensure that the woman has the right to choose freely if and when to have a child, Choisir entered the political arena by fielding candidates in the legislative elections in 1978. The second of the two groups to originate within the MLF, and this time remain within it, was the Mouvement pour la Liberté de l'Avortement et pour la Contraception (MLAC) in 1973. MLAC was dedicated to fighting for free birth control and free abortions on demand. Both organisations favoured direct and aggressive campaign tactics. In May 1973 Choisir planned to stage a public abortion in the local offices of the family planning association in Grenoble in an effort to draw attention to their demands. The police closed the offices and prevented the operation taking place (The Times, 12 May 1973, p.1). The MLAC published lists of clinics and surgeries where women could obtain abortions and also ran its own service providing illegal abortions

Changing public opinion, pressure from the feminist movement and the views of some politicians were such that the Government could not ignore the abortion issue. On Wednesday 13 November 1974 the Cabinet adopted the text of a Bill to amend the abortion law. Although the Government intended to defend the Bill, such was the contentious nature of the topic that each member of the Government majority was given the freedom to vote according to his or her own conscience. The measures proposed in the Bill were by no means radical and seemed to confirm the Government's attitude, which was to view abortion as a necessary evil.

Abortion was to be made available in the first ten weeks of pregnancy after consultation with two doctors. After the first ten weeks only therapeutic abortions would be permitted in cases where the mother's life was in danger, or there was a risk that the child was likely to be severely deformed.

Although the Bill was approved by the Council of Ministers there was considerable conflict between the political left and right. The opposition were in favour of free abortion on demand; the Government were suggesting abortion on request during the first ten weeks of pregnancy, and did not envisage financing the operations through the national health scheme. On 26 November 1974 Simone Veil, the Minister of Health, introduced the Bill into the National Assembly. With some seventy amendments tabled and forty deputies down to speak the debate lasted for three days. In arguing the case for a relaxation of the anti-abortion law Veil drew attention to the estimated rise in illegal abortions and the methods and practices of back street abortionists. Eventually the Bill was passed by 284 votes to 189, with 6 abstentions and 5 deputies excused. The success of the Bill was due directly to the support it received from the Socialist and Communist opposition members. The Independent Republican Party displayed the greatest resistance, only just over twenty-five per cent of their members voted for the Bill. Of the 174 Gaullist deputies 106 disapproved of the proposed measures (The Times, 30 November 1974, p.4).

The following month the Abortion Bill went before the Senate. In the early hours of Sunday 15 December it was approved of by 181 votes to 91. A number of amendments were made at this stage, some of which were intended to prevent a sharp rise in the number of abortions performed. For example, it was decreed that in no hospital, clinic or similar institution should abortions exceed other surgical operations. Immediately after the new law was approved, Jean Foyer, a Gaullist and chairman of the legal committee of the National Assembly, summoned the support of 81 deputies and petitioned the Constitutional Council, claiming that the new law was contrary to the rights of man as enshrined in the constitution. It was also claimed that the proposed law was contrary to article 2 of the European Human Rights Convention which stipulated the right to life of every human being. The Constitutional Council ruled that the text of the abortion law did not permit: 'any breach of the principle of the respect for all human beings from the beginning of his existence, save in case of necessity' (The Times, 17 January 1975, p.6). Thus on 17 January 1975 France became the first predominantly Roman Catholic country to legalise abortion.

The new legislation was intended to operate for a trial period of five years, after which time it was to be reviewed by the National Assembly. During this period the MLF continued their campaign. The general feeling was that the changes had not gone far enough, women had not been granted free abortion on demand. Feminists worked to show how the legislation was failing to meet the demand for abortion.

Sometimes their protests took the form of direct action. On 7 March 1975 the MLAC staged one such demonstration at the Cochin Hospital in Paris. Thirty women wishing to have their pregnancies terminated approached Professor Lucien Leger, the Head of the Surgical Department at the hospital requesting that he perform the abortions. When he refused a number of MLAC members, along with two pro-abortion doctors, commandeered two rooms in the hospital and carried out seven abortions (The Times, 8 March 1975, p.1).

In November 1979 the abortion legislation was approaching the end of its five year trial period and the National Assembly were debating whether or not the law should become a permanent feature. On 24 November a march in support of abortion was organised and attracted 50,000 people. For the first time men took part in a demonstration in favour of abortion. Many trade unions, left wing groups and other political organisations took part in the march. Although there was some opposition to the law the National Assembly, after a three day debate, passed the abortion law by 70 votes. The voting figures were 271 for and 201 against. An amendment to have abortions paid for through the social security system was not accepted by the Assembly. Abortion was only to be funded by the State in cases of extreme low income and where a termination was performed for therapeutic reasons.

From 1979 onwards a campaign for free abortions and increased state provision was mounted by the women's movement. The Socialist Party manifesto promised to make abortion available on the national health service by September 1982.

However, the Government had to postpone this measure in August of that year in order to meet a planned savings target in the social services budget. It was estimated that a postponement would save 200 million francs in one year (The Times, 4 August 1983, p.5). Some opposition was raised to this move and eventually a Bill to approve state aid for abortion for all women was granted Cabinet approval in December 1982.

Throughout the 1970's there had been strong opposition to any liberalisation of the abortion law from the Roman Catholic Church. The Church referred to abortion as 'institutionalised murder'. Shortly after Michel Poniowski, the Minister of Health, declared that a Bill to reform the law was to be introduced into the National Assembly, Cardinal Francois Marty, the Archbishop of Paris made a public statement condemning abortion. He stated...respect for life is a fundamental moral value which involves the very meaning of man... This principle assumes special gravity in respect to the child whose life is to be defended both before and after birth (The Times, 30 May 1973, p.6). In an attempt to influence the debate the Church released a papal statement on the day before the National Assembly met to discuss the abortion issue. This had little influence on the debate, and as previously stated the Bill received the approval of the National Assembly (New Humanist, February 1975).

The MLF criticised the French Medical Council for its conservation approach to the abortion issue. They accused the Council of adopting a restrictive attitude.

However, not all sections of the medical profession were seen as being against any kind of reform. On 4 February 1973 330 doctors in Paris issued a statement claiming that they had performed, or facilitated, abortions. They called for legal reforms to make both abortion and family planning freely available. Six of the doctors appeared on television to present their case. The following day a further 200 doctors added their names to the petition; this led to the President of the Medical Council, Professor Lortat Jacob, describing the original signatories as a 'band of criminals' (The Times, 15 November 1974, p.20). Thus a split could be discerned within the medical profession. In 1973 a body known as the Association of Doctors Representing Human Life was formed. This group continued to campaign after the law was reformed. The Armistice Day Mass in 1977 was disturbed by five young demonstrators claiming to be members of the Association. They threw leaflets at the Government ministers present in protest at a law which they claimed had accounted for 1.5 million lives (The Times, 12 November 1977, p.4).

While the MLF welcomed the reforms of 1975, which introduced abortion on request in the first ten weeks of pregnancy, they interpreted this as only a partial victory for women's liberation. They continued to fight against what they saw as major weaknesses in the new legislation. In their opinion the 1975 Act was incapable of altering the fact that many women still had to resort to illegal abortionists. This was seen to be due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the supply of legal abortions did not meet the demand.

In an effort to prevent the introduction of specialist abortion clinics the legislation had been drafted so that no clinic was permitted to devote more than 25 per cent of its work to the termination of pregnancies. Secondly, the bureaucratic procedures accompanying a request for a legal abortion in the public sector, and the attitudes of some doctors, were such that many women were unable to obtain an abortion within the ten week time limit. According to one critic:

Not only do half of the doctors, refuse their services, they fail to refer the women to a willing doctor or keep them waiting till the tenth week is passed. Head physicians impose their own conscience on the whole hospital and forbid their personnel to offer help to these women in distress. (Sauter-Bailliet 1981, p.416).

The Minister for Women's Rights recommended that the time limit be increased to sixteen weeks because many women who were prevented from obtaining an abortion within the ten week period were forced to seek help from illegal abortionists (The Times, 4 August 1982). Thirdly, the cost of a legal abortion could be anything from 1,000 to 2,500 francs and this was prohibitive. Although the French Department of Health stated that health insurance would cover abortion in cases of extreme financial hardship, or when abortion was necessary to protect the health of the mother, abortion was not free for all women.

Thus according to the MLF, while the law did represent a step forward in so much as it acknowledged a woman's right to abortion on request (albeit for a limited time during the pregnancy), women were not provided with the means to exercise their new rights.

Abortion facilities were limited, the cost of an abortion was beyond the reach of many women, the procedures involved in applying for an abortion were unnecessarily cumbersome and some medical practitioners were accused of engaging in deliberate delaying tactics in order to prevent women making use of their right to choose. In a case brought against eight doctors, accused of contravening the abortion law in their Paris clinic by performing abortions on request after the ten week limit, and exceeding the legally permitted number of abortions in their clinic, the defence counsel for the doctors stated that the abortion law had given women the legitimate right to decide their own fate while in possession of the facts. However, in reality they claimed that the situation was such that:

But from religious conviction or an attitude of corporate defence part of the medical profession refuses to accept the idea of the freedom of women, and has done its best to put brakes on the application of the law. (The Times, 5 March 1981, p.6).

In summary, the pro-abortion campaign in France was organised and directed by the feminist movement. Abortion was seen as a specific issue in a much wider campaign for women's liberation. According to Danièle Léger (1979): 'Abortion cannot be isolated from the whole context of women's subjugation. The fight for liberalised abortion is an integral part of the fight for women's liberation'. When the 1975 legislation came up for review in 1979 many feminists wanted further liberalisation of the law, as outlined above. On the whole the abortion issue brought together many disparate women's groups and feminists in left wing organisations, under a mass campaign, and a number of large scale public demonstrations were held.

On 6 October 1979 50,000 people marched through the streets of Paris demanding definitive legislation on abortion (Le Monde, 9 October 1979).

#### United States of America

The circumstances surrounding the introduction of legal abortion in both Italy and France have been outlined in some detail; the primary aim being to illustrate the extent to which various feminist groups have been involved in campaigning for abortion law reform. In both cases it has been suggested that the women's movement played a prominent part in the securing of abortion rights. A similar situation would appear to apply in the case of the United States of America. The events leading up to the liberalisation of abortion legislation in the United States have been well documented by Lader (1966, 1973). More recently Francome (1984) has summarised the American experience and provided a brief and factual account of the growth of opposition to abortion since the Supreme Court decision of 1973 which interpreted the Constitution in such a way as to revoke the laws of individual states which outlawed abortion. Thus as a suitably detailed description of the legislative changes has been provided elsewhere the task here is to merely provide a few general comments on the nature and extent of feminist involvement in the abortion campaign.

In 1966 the National Organisation of Women (NOW) was formed and at its annual conference the following year it declared that legal abortion was to be one of its major aims.

The right to abortion was seen as a fundamental right essential to women's liberation. The view was held that if women were to obtain equality and overcome their oppression then it was essential that they acquired complete control over their fertility. Abortion was a means to an end. NOW was concerned with equal rights and in the 1970's emerged as the largest and best financed organisation fighting for the Equal Rights Amendment. Its ten year struggle came to an end in July 1982 when it failed, by three states, to obtain the thirty-eight state total required for national ratification (The Times, 1 July 1982, p.5).

Betty Friedan, a leading American feminist and founder member of NOW considered the Supreme Court ruling of 1973 to be a major victory in the first stage of the women's movement for sex equality (The Times, 21 February 1973, p.6). Although the organisation concentrated its efforts on the equal rights campaign throughout the 1970's, it continued to maintain an interest in the abortion issue, and supported the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL). The NARAL led the abortion campaign by developing contacts in the different states and co-ordinating and directing the activities of numerous groups and associations. A survey of NARAL has shown its members to be predominantly female (approximately three quarters of its members are women) with a deep concern for women's issues and strongly in favour of the Equal Rights Amendment (Granberg, 1981).

In the early years of the campaign some abortion activists became impatient with the lack of progress resulting from the adoption of conventional pressure group tactics and elected to

pursue a more direct approach in which they openly challenged the law. Confrontation was the principal feature of their campaign strategy. Some groups ran counselling services for pregnant women seeking abortions. Women wishing to have a pregnancy terminated were referred to sympathetic doctors. Other groups established ad hoc abortion clinics and disseminated information on abortion techniques. Francome (1984) reports the activities of the Society for Humane Abortion which was founded in the mid 1960's. Pat Maginnis, a prominent member of the organisation, gave lectures on abortion techniques, which regularly attracted between thirty to sixty people. Activities such as these served to convey the impression that anti-abortion legislation was unenforceable.

As might be expected once abortion was legalised many campaigners devoted their time and energy to other women's rights issues. Those maintaining an interest in abortion legislation concentrated on the implementation of the new law, drawing attention to the availability of abortion, and what they considered to be the unnecessary cumbersome administrative procedures. Many feminists were drawn back into the campaign with the rise of the anti-abortion movement. This movement first emerged in the late 1960's and gradually gained momentum throughout the following decade. Shortly after the Supreme Court ruled in favour of abortion in 1973, the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), which had previously functioned as an 'umbrella organisation' co-ordinating the activities of a myriad of anti-abortion groups and associations, became an independently organised and democratically structured organisation.

The growing influence of the anti-abortion movement, and the attempts by some senators to introduce prohibitive legislation, forced the pro-abortionists onto the defensive. They could no longer concentrate on attempting to extend abortion rights, but had to consolidate their forces in an effort to protect their recently won rights.

By the early 1980's the anti-abortion backlash had attracted considerable support. Restrictive amendments to the abortion law were being discussed and measures were being introduced to reduce the amount of state funding for abortion. On 22 May 1981 Congress decided that the state would no longer provide financial support for abortions in cases of rape or incest. Medical aid would only pay for abortions when the mother's life was in danger (The Times, 23 May 1981, p.7). However, the most serious threat to abortion rights came in 1982 when Senator Hatch introduced a Bill designed to give Congress and the individual states the right to restrict or prohibit abortion by ensuring that no right to abortion was secured by the Constitution (The Times, 9 February 1982, p.6). This proposal did not attract the immediate unqualified support of the anti-abortion movement. The United States Catholic Conference generally approved of the measure, the NRLC narrowly supported the proposal and the March for Life organisation attacked the Bill for failing to go far enough and outlaw abortion altogether. In March 1982 the Bill came before a Senate judiciary committee and was approved by 10 votes to 7. This was the first time that a full congressional committee had supported an anti-abortion amendment (The Times, 12 March 1982, p.6).

The 'right to life' lobby was given a further boost when President Reagan gave his support to the anti-abortion amendment. Nevertheless the amendment was rejected by Senate in June 1983 by 50 votes to 49; in the same month the Supreme Court ruled that the states could not place restrictions on a woman's right to have an abortion.

### Discussion

Although Italy, France and the United States have all passed liberal abortion laws the nature and extent of the legislative changes have been far from identical, a fact due mainly to the widely differing socio-political backgrounds in which the laws originated. To give one example, as shown earlier the pro-abortion movement in France eventually received the support of the majority of left wing political groups, whereas in Italy, the left was split over the issue. The Communist Party had its sights set on future political control and was therefore reluctant to alienate potential Catholic voters by publicly backing the feminist demand for abortion on request. In contrast the Italian Socialist Party readily gave its support to the feminist cause and advocated the removal of all sanctions during the first three months of pregnancy.

In all three countries the success of the pro-abortion lobby owed a great deal to the campaign activists within the feminist movement. This was in spite of the fact that there were fundamental differences with regards to the social and political roots of feminism in the three countries.

For example, many founding members of the modern women's movement in France had connections with Socialist and Marxist political groups, likewise the women's liberation movement in Italy drew many of its early members from revolutionary groups on the political left; whereas the women's movement in the United States in the 1960's embraced a radical style of politics as favoured by the early Civil Rights movement.

These social, political and cultural differences notwithstanding it is possible to make a number of general observations concerning the feminist stance on abortion and the nature of the involvement of the women's movement in the pro-abortion campaigns conducted in Italy, France, the United States of America and Britain. Such a comparative approach is an integral element in any assessment of the impact feminism has had on the abortion debate.

The first of these observations concerns the symbolic nature of abortion. In the feminist perspective abortion was represented as a symbolic, as well as practical, issue. Not only was it claimed that abortion was a practical measure with therapeutic properties, particularly in cases where the pregnancy had resulted from incest or rape, but was also viewed as important in terms of women's quest for freedom. By achieving full control over their fertility women could free themselves from male oppression. Free legal abortion on request was considered to be an essential requirement for any revolutionary change in sex roles.

The central significance given to abortion by feminists ensured that the issue remained at the forefront of the political arena.

Secondly, with the exception of the British case, a certain similarity in campaign tactics can be observed. In France the MLAC published lists of (illegal) abortion clinics, in Italy some feminist groups organised their own abortion clinics and in the United States some campaign activists gave lectures on how to induce an abortion. All these activities were against the law. Feminists in these countries adopted campaign strategies which openly challenged the authorities by illustrating their inability to enforce or implement anti-abortion legislation. A possible explanation as to why such aggressive campaigning tactics were not used by the women's movement in Britain can be found in the fact that the British campaign was at a different stage of development.. While other feminists were fighting for the repeal or reform of anti-abortion statutes, British feminists were engaged in a struggle for the retention of pro-abortion legislation. When the women's movement emerged in this country a liberal abortion law had already been in operation for several years. Although many feminists would like to have seen abortion regulations relaxed even further, and women given the right to choose, circumstances were such that a defensive campaign had to be mounted to protect abortion rights as granted in the 1967 Act. Confrontation tactics would have been strategically inappropriate given the conditions of the abortion controversy during this period.

Finally, it can be seen that although the feminists played an important part in the introduction of liberal abortion laws in Italy, France and the United States of America, the subsequent legislative reforms were not due entirely to feminist intervention. In order to reach a realistic appraisal of the impact of feminist influence consideration has to be given to the general climate of public opinion and the actions of legislative bodies. In all the countries mentioned there is evidence to suggest that a liberalisation of sexual attitudes was taking place prior to abortion law reform, and that in general, public opinion was in favour of legal reforms in areas such as divorce and abortion. Public opinion polls in France during the first half of the 1970's showed a majority in favour of allowing abortions under certain conditions, but very little support for abortion on demand. (The Times, 15 November 1974, p.20). Similarly, a poll conducted in Italy in 1978, revealed 72 per cent of respondents approving of abortion in cases of rape, but 61 per cent against abortion to meet the wishes of the mother (The Times, 23 February 1978, p.7). Polls undertaken in the United States prior to liberalisation of the law also reported a majority in favour of abortion (Francome, 1984). National opinion polls carried out in Britain during the early part of the 1960's showed nearly three quarters of respondents to be in agreement with abortion when there was evidence of foetal abnormality or where a continued pregnancy would cause risk to the life of the mother.

An interesting finding from these surveys is that while large percentages of respondents claim to be in favour of abortion when the mother's life is in danger, the foetus is malformed, or the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest, there is much less support for abortion when the woman simply wishes to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. Unfortunately meaningful comparisons cannot be made between the various polls (either within or between countries) because of differences in sampling frames and questionnaire design. As Francome (1980) has pointed out care needs to be exercised when interpreting the findings as much depends on the wording of the questions and the number of response categories provided. However, what can be concluded from the polls carried out in the various countries is that the feminist demand for abortion on request has never attracted much public support. In Britain, after thirteen years of liberal abortion legislation, the results of three major polls indicated that the majority of the population wanted the abortion law left largely as it was; there was some evidence of support for a reduction in the time limit for abortions from twenty-eight weeks to twenty weeks, but no general backing for the feminist position of 'abortion on demand'. In commenting on the findings of opinion polls undertaken at the time of the Corrie Bill Francome has stated that: 'the percentage of those agreeing with "abortion on demand" has increased five per cent since 1975 but that it is still below a quarter of all respondents. The views of women on this are quite clear. Four out of five believe the decision as to whether or not to continue the pregnancy should be left to the woman in consultation with her doctor yet only one in five agree with "abortion on demand" (Francome, 1980).

While feminist groups have campaigned for 'abortion on demand' the debates which have taken place within the various legislative assemblies have not centred around feminist issues but have reflected a liberal social reforming ideology. The arguments propounded by those legislators in favour of legal abortion have contained two main themes. Firstly, that anti-abortion legislation was unenforceable. Speaking in the French Parliament in the marathon abortion debate in December 1973 Michel Poniowski claimed that the law was unenforceable, and if it were not flouted everyday then over fifteen million Frenchwomen would have been convicted over the last fifty years. In a similar attack on restrictive legislation Jean Taittinger called the law both archaic and ineffective claiming that on the occasions it was enforced it penalised the underprivileged (The Times, 15 November 1974, p.20). Secondly, many legislators have made reference to the dangers encountered by women undergoing illegal abortions. Signor Louis Fortuna, when presenting a Private Member's Bill before the Italian Chamber of Deputies, argued that the only way to eradicate the horrors of back street abortions was to legalise the operation and thereby exercise some control over the practice. Legislation was viewed as a means of bringing abortion out into the open where the state had a better chance of controlling what was going on. In arguing the case for legal abortion in France Simone Veil, the Minister of Health, emphasised the need to curb the activities of back street abortionists and prevent women having to risk serious injury, and in some instances death, in order to have a pregnancy terminated. Arguments of a similar nature were used in the abortion debate in Britain in the mid 1960's.

In fighting campaigns, whatever the issue, pressure groups sometimes find themselves benefitting from external events. Usually these events are incidents over which the groups have no control, and in some instances they are not directly relevant to the campaign issue, but can be seen to have repercussions which serve to influence public, professional and political opinion on the issue in question. (The thalidomide scandal provides an example.) As documented in an earlier chapter analysts of the abortion debate in Britain see this as an important incident which added impetus to the pro-abortion lobby. Likewise, the accident at the chemical plant in the Seveso Meda district of north Milan made an impact on the abortion controversy in Italy. The Christian Democratic Government was forced to concede that pregnant women from the area affected by the leakage of poisonous vapour could request abortions without running the risk of violating current legislation. Thus abortion rights were extended, albeit temporarily, to a specific group of women and the abortion issue was again given wide publicity. When evaluating the effectiveness of the Italian feminist movement in bringing about legal abortion this and other circumstances need to be borne in mind. The need for successive minority administrations to establish a viable working relationship with the opposition parties has influenced legislative reforms in a number of fields. The abortion issue recurred at regular intervals throughout the 1970's and on each occasion caused a rift between the major parties. On 6 March 1970 the Communist leader Enrico Berlinguer called for an all party agreement on the legalising of abortion. He maintained that if such an agreement could not be reached then there would be a great strain on any future understanding between the

Christian Democrats and the lay parties (The Times, 7 March 1978, p.8). The ruling Christian Democrats were fully aware of the position and, as outlined earlier in the chapter, although they did not support the Bill to introduce legal abortions they agreed to withdraw from delaying tactics designed to impede the progress of the Bill.

In summary it may be said that the various feminist movements were not solely responsible for the passing of pro-abortion legislation in Italy, France and the United States of America, and the successful defence of the 1967 Act in Britain during the latter part of the 1970's. If there had not been a liberalisation of attitudes, favourable public opinion and legislators both willing and able to present a forceful argument for reform, then it is doubtful whether feminist pressure alone could have won, or safeguarded abortion rights. Very few feminists held positions in elected legislative assemblies and changes in the abortion law came about as a result of the proliferation and acceptance of arguments based on principles of liberal social reform. However, this is not to deny that the feminist movement played a part in the acquisition of abortion rights. Differences are discernable between countries, but in general the feminist movement presented a strongly articulated case for 'abortion on demand'; although they failed to achieve all their objectives they did ensure that abortion remained a topical issue, and they provided a firm base on which formidable opposition to the anti-abortion movement could develop.

## CHAPTER XII

### A Study of Active Participants in the Pro-abortion Campaign

The rise of the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain was not a carefully arranged event. During the latter part of the 1960's a number of relatively small women's groups began to emerge throughout the country. These were largely informal groups in which women met to discuss general aspects of their lives. According to Coote and Campbell this was not unusual 'but what was new was that they (women) were now drawing political conclusions from their personal experiences' (Coote and Campbell, 1982, p.14). Women were beginning to develop a collective consciousness; there was a growing recognition of a shared female condition that constrained women regardless of individual differences of race, class or social background (Mitchell, 1971; Oakley, 1981). Such were the ideological roots of this new feminism that the emerging movement was loosely co-ordinated and purposely avoided developing conventional administrative structures. Individual groups tended to denounce the hierarchical structures favoured by those political groups which had a clearly defined leadership in which individuals had specific duties and responsibilities. Nevertheless, at the national level there was a need for some form of co-ordination. At the first National Women's Liberation Conference in February 1970 a National Co-ordinating Committee was formed and the movement opted for 'a structure of small autonomous groups based on localities or special interests, each with equal status, loosely co-ordinated through national meetings' (Coote and Campbell, 1982, p.23).

The Nottingham women's group was formed in 1969 and many of the regular supporters were teachers and college lecturers (Nottingham Evening Post, 11 January 1973). As well as running 'consciousness raising' groups, holding open meetings and organising small discussion groups, members provided information and advice on women's issues and conducted public campaigns. In November 1971 they held a public demonstration on abortion and in a march through the streets of Nottingham they carried banners proclaiming 'Every Child a Wanted Child' and 'Every Mother a willing Mother' (Nottingham Evening Post, 16 November 1971). They also campaigned for better child allowances, improvements in local social service provision, and criticised the local Housing Committee for failing to provide a refuge for battered women. During the early years of the group's formation local lectures were held to outline the fundamental aims and objectives of the movement and in the process dispel many of the misconceptions of women's liberation promulgated by the media. At one such meeting a speaker referred to the composition of the local membership when she stated that: 'we are not just students and ardent left wingers - many of our members are just ordinary mums and housewives' (Nottingham Evening Post, 24 March 1975). Members regularly expressed genuine concern over the general image people had of the Women's Liberation Movement; it was felt that the movement needed to be taken seriously before any progress could be made. When questioned by a local newspaper reporter, on the public image of liberationists, as propounded by the popular press, one member admitted that: 'The image we

have is a poor one but as this is gradually changing we are becoming a much more effective force' (Nottingham Evening Post, 19 March 1974).

Abortion was a major campaign issue for the Nottingham group. A Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign was established and one member of the women's group was given the task of mobilising local support and organising campaign activities. In April 1975 a local branch of NAC was formed by members of the women's centre in Nottingham. Pro-abortion respondents were selected from within this group.

In Chapter Ten, it has been shown how abortion emerged as an important issue in feminist politics and how, in the 1970's, the women's movement took up the issue not only because it was seen as a practical one, but because it was also viewed as a highly significant symbolic issue. As seen from the study of pressure group literature and campaign rhetoric the question of individual choice with regard to abortion was a critical area of political struggle; from the outset NAC were committed to the goal of 'a woman's right to choose'. For many feminists complete fertility control included free and easy access to abortion facilities; to deny women abortion rights was tantamount to denying them control over their own bodies. In their view such control was essential if women were to overcome male oppression and unfair discrimination. For as long as the power to decide rested with external authorities, be they doctors or governments, the position of women in society would be that much weaker.

Thus abortion came to be seen as a symbol of female freedom.

In Chapters Six and Seven the sociographic and attitudinal data collected from the questionnaire survey were used to construct a general profile of the Nottingham NAC group.

Meanwhile, the primary aim of this section will be to examine the accounts of individual group members in order to determine the extent to which the above analysis applies at grassroots level. Using material obtained from both the self administered questionnaire and informal semi-structured interviews the following areas will be investigated:

1. Individual mobilisation

The pattern of individual recruitment to NAC will be outlined.

2. The case for 'abortion on demand'

By examining the nature and extent of the support for 'abortion on demand' an attempt will be made to identify individual motives for participating in the campaign. Consideration will be given to the notion that abortion has a symbolic relevance for feminists in so far as it has become associated with women's status.

3. Response to anti-abortionists

The anti-abortion movement have accused NAC of being both 'anti-life' and 'anti-family'. Reactions to these charges will be examined and the response of NAC members to the main anti-abortion arguments will be commented upon.

Individual mobilisation

Of the forty-two NAC respondents sixteen were members of the Women's Liberation Movement and had previously been involved in the Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign; twelve were introduced to the group by friends who were already members; ten supporters had first heard of NAC through reading the

organisation's publicity material, and four members had joined after attending a public meeting arranged by the Nottingham group. Ten of the forty-two respondents were male, six of these had been recruited to NAC by female friends and four had joined after reading campaign literature.

In looking at the pattern of recruitment two points deserve special mention. Firstly, though NAC had its roots in the Nottingham women's group it did not receive the full support of all members of that group. Both groups wanted to see abortion freely available on request but they differed on a number of tactical and political points. The split between the two groups was confirmed when they set up separate information stalls at a city fair in 1976 (Nottingham Evening Post, 19 February 1976).

Secondly, while a large number of respondents were already active participants in the feminist movement before joining NAC (sixteen of the thirty-two female respondents were members of the Women's Liberation Movement) several respondents admitted to entering the abortion campaign not because of any prior commitment to feminism, but simply because they had strong feelings about abortion. As one female respondent remarked:

"I read, in the Sunday Times, an article exposing as fraudulent the book 'Babies for Burning' which had apparently inspired James White to put forward his Abortion (Amendment) Bill. Until then I had never heard of James White, Leo Abse or the Bill, but I was horrified. I flung down the paper, and rushed out of the house to demand of my friend Margaret, a member of the women's movement, who was doing what in Nottingham to stop the dreadful duo - and if not, why not. She calmed me down and told me that there was indeed a group in Nottingham called NAC.

I insisted that we go to the next meeting, and from then on have been a dedicated and active member of the National Abortion Campaign. I have never felt so strongly about a social issue before". (NAC respondent 2).

Another female supporter of NAC, a schoolteacher in her late twenties, spoke of her reasons for joining the campaign:

"I'd never really given abortion much thought until I recently became aware of the activities of the anti-abortion people. I thought just who do these people think they are. Why should they decide whether or not a woman is allowed to have an abortion. Do you know they argue that in cases of rape the woman should carry the child to term and then place it for adoption. To me they have no concern for the feelings of the woman. This made me join NAC." (NAC respondent 40).

Three respondents initially attracted to NAC because of their strong views on abortion eventually developed a more general interest in feminist politics. In the words of one such member: "I must admit when I first joined NAC I was never very taken by the feminist thing .... it was only after being in NAC for a while that I realised that abortion is not just about the right of one woman to end an unwanted pregnancy, but its part and parcel of a struggle of all women against male domination" (NAC respondent 23).

#### The case for 'abortion on demand'

As reported earlier, from the responses of the anti-abortion supporters interviewed, it is possible to identify two broad types of supporter; those in favour of a complete abolition of legal abortion and those who would like to see the abortion law reformed and legal abortion made available only in a small number

of exceptional cases, as for example, where it could be shown that to continue a pregnancy would place the woman's life in grave danger. Individual differences among campaign participants were not so clearly evident in the sample of pro-abortionists. Regarding the availability of abortion all the NAC members interviewed expressed unqualified support for 'abortion on demand'. All were in favour of women having the right to an abortion on request, irrespective of the individual circumstances. The prevalent belief for NAC activists was that there should be no intervention in the decision making process; the decision whether or not to have an abortion was to be the woman's and the woman's alone. While medical personnel had a role to play in advising women and providing them with the necessary information to enable them to make a decision it was ultimately the woman's right to choose. Respondents repeatedly criticised the 1967 Act for failing to make provision for a woman to terminate an unwanted pregnancy out of choice. According to the law a woman could obtain an abortion only if there was something physically wrong with her or the foetus, or it could be shown that she was incapable of coping because of her mental condition or social circumstances. The view held by campaigners was that the law, apart from making abortion available when the woman's life was in danger, was designed to apply in cases of 'severe social hardship'; providing abortions for the 'sick', the 'deprived' and the 'socially inadequate'. For the pro-abortion movement supporters legislation was seen as being used to solve social problems, rather than to give women some control over their lives by enabling them to control their fertility.

As one interviewee remarked:

"At no point in the Act is there any recognition of a woman's own wish not to have children. Unless the pregnancy is endangering her life she has to be labelled 'sick' or 'deprived' before she is allowed to have an abortion. We (NAC) are fighting for the right to abortion. Women have no such rights as the law stands - even when they meet the conditions the final decision lies in the hands of the doctors."  
(NAC respondent 5).

In the arguments advanced in support of 'abortion on demand' the question of rights was raised frequently. A commonly held belief was that once abortion rights had been secured, and women had gained full control over their fertility, a considerable advance would have been achieved in the struggle for women's rights. Over three quarters of the respondents considered abortion to be an integral aspect in the campaign for women's liberation. The following comments are representative of the many which indicated that for NAC activists abortion rights were seen as essential if women were to be allowed to determine the course of their lives and obtain freedom from male oppression.

"Any laws restricting, limiting abortion facilities are repressive and further repression of personal liberty". (NAC respondent 1).

"Until the abortion laws have been reformed along the lines of 'A Woman's Right to Choose' the bulk of women will never have control over their own lives". (NAC respondent 13).

"My reason for being in NAC is the principle of individual autonomy.....as things are abortion is necessary if a woman is to have the basic human right to decide on the course her life is to take". (NAC respondent 20).

"Every woman should have the right to choose for herself whether to have, or not have, an abortion. This decision does not belong to doctors, the state or the Church; it belongs to the woman herself. If you deny this you deny all women the right to autonomy, self determination, and put somebody else in a position of control over them". (NAC respondent 23).

The right to abortion is seen as being important to these women, it matters very much to them because by gaining full control over their fertility women are seen as being able to make decisions about the future course of their own lives. Abortion means control and control means freedom. The 1967 Act is attacked because it denies women the right to decide and this prevents them having control over their own lives. Abortions are seen as being "granted" to those women who meet certain clinical or medical criteria, or who are considered, by members of the medical profession, to be socially or psychologically unfit to bear children. In cases other than where the woman's life is in danger or the foetus is malformed, in order to obtain an abortion the onus is on the woman to convince two medical practitioners that her social and material circumstances are already so intolerable that the birth of a child would place an unbearable strain on her, and any members of her family. The power to decide rests with the medical profession, it should, according to NAC supporters rest with the woman. A woman should have the right to request an abortion for no other reason than the fact that she wishes to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. In presenting their case supporters are seen not only as demanding abortion as a woman's right, but as arguing for abortion on the grounds that self determination is a basic human right.

Abortion is viewed as a means to an end as well as an end in itself. Underlying the support for abortion is a concern over the status of woman in society. Fertility control, it is argued, would enable women to exercise more choice in the organisation of their lives, enjoy greater participation in the social and economic spheres of activity and realise their full potential as individuals. This is a view endorsed by national campaign leaders and manifest in the campaign literature (ALRA, 1976).

X As commented earlier the pro-abortion campaign in the 1970's was largely defensive. The slogan 'A Woman's Right to Choose' was adopted in a spirit of defence against both the threatened parliamentary encroachments on the limited abortion rights which had been secured towards the end of the previous decade, and the growing influence of the anti-abortion movement. The defensive strategy gave the pro-abortion campaign the false appearance of a 'single issue' campaign. Only through a close analysis of the campaign literature and careful consideration of the statements made by movement activists does the full scope of the campaign become evident. As previously noted abortion became a feminist issue and consequently emerged as a symbolic issue, associated with freedom and liberation. Under these circumstances a popular misconception was that the 'right to choose' meant simply the right to choose an abortion, that is, women should have the right to demand that an unwanted pregnancy be medically terminated. However, the official stance taken by NAC was that women must have 'access to free, safe birth control;

community controlled childcare facilities; paid maternity leave; increased child benefit and more financial support for single parents....to enable a realistic choice' (Spare Rib, October 1979). According to this quotation the phrase 'a right to choose' implies the right to choose to have (not merely not to have) children. This understanding of the stance taken by NAC did not feature in the media's representation of the pro-abortion case in the 1970's, maybe this was because of the defensive posture which dominated the campaign strategy. It was, however, evident in some of the accounts of campaign participants. Four respondents rejected the term 'pro-abortion' and declared themselves to be 'pro-choice'. One such respondent remarked:

"We are commonly referred to as 'pro-abortion'... I suppose we are really, but there is more to it than that. When we say a woman should choose we mean that she should be free to choose whether or not to continue with a pregnancy. I feel that many women have abortions because they are financially unable to support a child, given a better material environment they would probably like to go through with the pregnancy. I like to think that we in NAC are concerned about choice in its widest sense". (NAC respondent 19).

Another respondent stated that:

"Women should have the right to decide, they should not be forced to have a child they do not want. Likewise they should have the right to have a child and not be forced to have an abortion because they lack the financial means to support a child". (NAC respondent 33).

Overall only six NAC supporters made reference to 'a realistic choice' in this sense; a finding which may be attributable to the fact that there was a clear pre-occupation with defending abortion rights.

Given different circumstances the pro-abortion campaign would have had a different focus. During this period the anti-abortion pressure groups held the initiative and greatly influenced the nature and content of the campaign. The pro-abortionists were forced to counter the criticisms levelled against the 1967 Act, and had to reaffirm what, in their opinion, were the major reasons why abortions should continue to be legally available. Thus there was little of strategic value to be gained from stressing that a woman's right to choose incorporated the right to have, as well as not to have, children. Nevertheless, a notion of 'a realistic choice' pervaded the campaign literature. According to a 1976 NAC pamphlet it was held that: 'What women want is a real choice between having a safe, legal abortion if they don't want children and having an adequate standard of living so that they can bring up the children they do want with dignity' (Knight and Gorton, 1976, p.7).

#### Response to anti-abortionists

In pressure group campaigns groups from opposing sides regularly engage in a form of public debate in which a kind of 'dialogue at a distance' takes place. Through the publication of pamphlets and the distribution of leaflets groups not only seek to outline and justify their own stance, but they also frequently attempt to demolish their opponent's arguments and undermine their credibility. Tactics such as these have been used by the major anti-abortion and pro-abortion pressure groups.

In the early 1970's 'Life' published a leaflet, for national distribution, in which they listed what they considered to be 'fifteen errors of the abortionists'; beneath each 'error' the official position of the 'Life' organisation was stated. The following two examples are indicative of the general style and content of the leaflet:

Statement: 'Legalised abortion stops the ghastly backstreet trade'.

Response: 'Wrong. There is no evidence that there is any less backstreet abortion since the 1967 Abortion Act than before. Indeed, there is evidence that there may even be more. In Britain as elsewhere, legalisation has tended to create a new clientele rather than wipe out an old trade. Backstreet abortion remains quicker and more private than on the NHS and also much cheaper than in a private clinic. And no one has proved that it is much more dangerous'.

Statement: 'The baby doesn't feel anything'.

Response: 'An unborn baby feels pain. When aborted by "saline injection" he struggles for about an hour before dying. When aborted by hysterotomy (ie. caesarean section) he kicks, tries to breathe and may even cry. If he is pulled out by forceps he probably won't die until the surgeon tears off his head, or for example, pierces his abdomen. When he is sucked out by machine his end will probably be swifter. But he will feel some pain'.

(Extract from a 'Life' pamphlet entitled, 'Fifteen errors of the abortionist', no date.)

The statements were presented in a bold and rather stark form, while the responses were carefully worded for maximum emotional impact.

A similar technique was used by the Abortion Law Reform Association in an undated booklet (probably published towards the end of 1979) which was aimed at providing a critical assessment of the case presented by the anti-abortion lobby. Unlike the previous anti-abortion publication this document contained some factual material to substantiate the claims made. In a section entitled 'False Statements of the Anti-abortionists' thirteen arguments advanced by the anti-abortionists were presented as being false; the following is a typical example:

'Fantasy: Illegal abortions. They argue that these will rise if abortion is made legal. For example, the Wilkie's stated "Legalising abortion does not, has not, and apparently will not reduce the number of illegal abortions". (Handbook on Abortion, p.83) and V.M. Mullally claimed "(In Britain) Unhappily, figures so far available seem to indicate an increase rather than a decrease in illicit abortions".

'Fact: In Britain, the number of illegal abortions is down to a tenth of the level existing before the 1967 Abortion Act came into operation. (See "British Journal of Criminology", October 1976, and "Journal of Biosocial Science" October 1977). In the United States, the number of deaths from illegal abortions fell from 106 in 1970, 63 in 1971, 41 in 1972, to just 6 in 1974 and 5 in 1975. ("Abortion Surveillance", Department of Health Education and Welfare 1977:9)'.

(Extract from an ALRA booklet entitled: 'Is Anti-abortion Pro-Life?', no date.)

Material of this kind provides a useful source of data. The carefully prepared campaign literature provides a comprehensive introduction to the nature and scope of the abortion argument as advanced by the major pressure groups, as well as making it possible to obtain an insight into the reactions of various groups to the arguments advanced by the opposition.

The questionnaire survey, the semi-structured interviews with campaign activists, and the monitoring of local radio programmes in which members of NAC confronted supporters of 'Life' and SPUC in studio discussions, all provided valuable material from which to explore the images the pro-abortionists and anti-abortionists had of one another and the way in which they responded to the arguments put forward by their opponents.

According to the anti-abortionists a central feature of NAC's position is the belief that the unborn child does not possess a right to life but the mother has an irrefutable right to terminate a pregnancy for no other reason than that she finds it an inconvenience. If it is permissible to kill the unwanted baby by aborting the foetus then it is claimed that most forms of murder and genocide cease to be wrong. Legal abortion is viewed as a precedent for moral and social disaster. The foetus is seen as weak and vulnerable; a victim in need of care and protection. If society does not defend its right to life then, it is argued, other vulnerable groups, such as the old, infirm and mentally handicapped, will be threatened in so much as abortion constitutes a precursor of euthanasia. A significant number of anti-abortion respondents referred to abortion as "killing for convenience". In the words of one 'Life' member: "...if people get used to getting rid of lives for their own convenience then who knows where it will all stop, perhaps it will become legal to destroy the handicapped, the old and even the unemployed" (Life respondent 27).

Abortion and euthanasia frequently featured as twin evils in respondents' accounts, as well as in anti-abortion literature. An editorial in the 'Universe', a major Roman Catholic Newspaper, stated that:

The passing of the Abortion Act in 1967 was merely the preliminary to new invasions of the sanctity of life and further legislation was bound to come.... For the Christian all life is sacred, be it in the womb or in the geriatric ward. To break this ethic would be to offend God's law and open up a frightening prospect for the aged and infirm. (The Universe, 28 November, 1975).

NAC responded to this by attacking the anti-abortionists for distorting the facts by attributing human status to the foetus, and condemned the movement for generally playing on the genuine fears which many people had about the deteriorating conditions in society. The notion that the foetus could be equated with a human being was firmly rejected both in the campaign literature and by individual respondents. The stance taken was that the foetus was not a human being, but merely possessed the potential for life. In propounding this view respondents suggested that the foetus could not be considered to have independent life as long as it relied on the woman for its continued existence. Having no contact with the world outside (i.e. human society) it was maintained that the foetus could not be said to have human thoughts and experience human emotions. Consequently, it was held that it was erroneous to equate abortion with murder; if life had not existed in the first place then the medical termination of a pregnancy did not constitute murder.

Thus for the pro-abortionists the question as to when life begins is irrelevant, it is a topic which attracts much theological and philosophical speculation which only serves to confuse, what for them, are the 'real issues' at the centre of the abortion controversy. NAC's struggle for abortion can be seen as a struggle for women's rights. This is confirmed in the following statement by a leading member of the Nottingham NAC group who also took an active part in the national campaign.

We would never deny that the foetus is potentially a human being, but that does not mean we should lose sight of the difference between our rights as women, and the potential rights of the developing foetus. The humanity it has is abstract, and cannot be compared with that of the pregnant woman without devaluing her life, her needs and aspirations. (Knight and Gorton, 1976, p.1).

The same respondent had expressed a similar view when participating in a local radio programme. In response to an anti-abortion supporter who claimed that the unborn "child has as much right to life as your or I" she had stated that: "...the mother is a fully developed human being and what we've got to look at is this, we are putting against the needs, often the distressful and emotional needs, of a fully developed person the needs of a.... foetus....(Radio Trent 'Talk In', programme broadcast 18 August 1975). Other NAC members made similar statements. One interviewee stated: "I believe emphatically that it is the woman, and only the woman who should have the right to decide whether an unwanted pregnancy is continued or terminated. I utterly reject the argument that an undeveloped foetus has rights which over-ride those of the pregnant woman" (NAC respondent 6).

Having denied that the foetus possesses distinguishable human qualities and characteristics, and concluded that the rights of the woman are paramount NAC respondents attacked the anti-abortion movement for accusing them of gross irresponsibility by inferring that their actions to secure abortion rights for women served to undermine basic social values and would eventually create an inhumane society in which euthanasia would prevail and the lives of the old, infirm and sick would be threatened. In response to these claims NAC supporters maintained that it was not women who were responsible for threatening the very existence of these so called vulnerable groups. It was the inhumanity of present day society, so deliberately ignored by the anti-abortionists which required closer examination. The lack of respect for life was not attributable to the actions of those women who advocated legal abortion because they believed women should be in control of their fertility, but was a direct consequence of the social and economic policies pursued by the Government. It was a common belief among pro-abortion respondents that the anti-abortionists chose to ignore the inhumanity manifest in contemporary society. As stated in an official NAC publication:

It is not women who threaten other people's lives but the inhumanity of our society. A Government which can make vital cuts in the provision of health facilities, which can allow electricity, gas and food prices to go so high that people suffer malnutrition and die from hypothermia is to blame for a lack of respect for life, not women (who) want the choice to have an abortion. (Knight and Gorton, 1976), p.3).

In rejecting accusations that they were 'anti-life' and 'anti-family' some pro-abortionists argued that they were in favour of abortions for the very reason that they were concerned about 'real living people'. For them, support for legal abortion did not preclude a respect for life. Making abortion freely available to all women was seen as one way of reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies and thus curtailing such problems as child abuse. In this way abortion was associated with prevention, as indicated by the following comments.

"For some families an additional (unplanned) child can present an intolerable and indeed insurmountable financial burden. Given that contraception is not always one hundred per cent, abortion remains the only way in which women can ensure that their family, which might already be in difficult financial circumstances, is not plunged into greater hardship". (NAC respondent 31).

"Every child should be a wanted child. If this were the case I feel certain that the quality of life for many people would be improved". (NAC respondent 36).

Implicit in the first of the above statements is a belief that some women seek abortions not out of self interest but because they are conscious of the needs of others who are close to them. As one NAC member remarked, when women make a decision to have an abortion:

"..... they've often thought about the needs of living people not just themselves because when a woman has an abortion it isn't herself she is thinking about as much as the already born children and dependents she has got..... they do not take this question lightly as the anti-abortionists would have us think". (Radio Trent, 'Talk In' programme broadcast 18 August 1975).

Respondents did not consider themselves to have 'anti-life' attitudes nor did they attribute such attitudes to women seeking to have their pregnancies terminated. Women who had abortions already had children whom they cared for and wished to protect, or if single they intend to raise a family in the future when their social, emotional and economic circumstances were more suitable.

On the whole pro-abortion respondents rejected the anti-abortionist claim that any society allowing abortion was both irresponsible and inhumane. Instead they accused their opponents of inhumanity towards women. Firstly they criticised the anti-abortionists for attempting to force their particular set of moral values on society and refusing to accept that women had rights and should be allowed control over their fertility. Permissive legislation would provide individual freedom of choice by giving women the right to decide to have or not have an abortion. NAC members did not see themselves as forcing their own morals on people who did not share their beliefs, but as offering women the right to decide. In the words of one campaigner:

"The major frustrating thing is trying to make the 'anti's' see that people should be allowed freedom to act according to their own personal moral views, whereas they want to impose the consciences of their particular group's moral views on everyone else. This seems to me to be the main issue rather than whether abortion on request is 'right' or 'wrong'.  
(NAC respondent 5).

Secondly, the pro-abortion supporters castigated their opponents for disregarding women as individuals, particularly when they asserted that adoption provided a viable and humane alternative to abortion. The anti-abortionists argued that instead of having abortions women who did not want their children could place them for adoption and make a childless couple very happy. A view which in the opinion of NAC degraded women, and displayed a lack of feeling for both the woman and the child: 'It endorses the concept of women as baby breeders, and babies as commodities' (Knight and Gorton, 1976, p.7). In responding to an argument by a local SPUC member that abortion was "another outlet for the initially unplanned and perhaps eventually unwanted pregnancy" a leading Nottingham NAC activist claimed that babies were not "consumer items" and that "NAC is really fighting for the dignity of women, the pride of women, we will not be used in this way" (BBC Radio Nottingham, 'All Sides of the Question', broadcast 7 October 1975). Respondents expressed similar views and asserted that adoption had always been an option open to women; they believed that by making abortion illegal the anti-abortionists wanted to ensure that it was the only safe alternative available to pregnant women who did not want children.

Two open ended questions were included in the questionnaire, one to elicit respondents' general views on life in Britain, and the other to explore their reasons for supporting the campaign for 'A Woman's Right to Choose'. Replies received to the former fell into two broad categories; comments on the socio-economic structure of contemporary Britain and concern over the role and

status of women in society. By far the majority of responses came from female NAC members. Only two of the ten male supporters responded to these two questions, and in one of these cases the comments were very brief.

Fourteen of the respondents commenting on life in Britain denounced capitalism and condemned the continued existence of gross inequalities in the distribution of wealth, goods and resources. It was the view of one respondent, a female college lecturer, that: "Life under contemporary British capitalism has the basic characteristics of a neo-feudalistic economy with its concomitants of inequality across the most significant dimensions of class structure" (NAC respondent 9). These NAC members were all supporters of the Women's Liberation Movement. They criticised open discrimination against women, and favoured a breaking down of traditional stereotypes. What is of particular significance is that they held the view that liberation was not possible under capitalism: a belief which is clearly contained in the following two statements:

"I feel we (women) are oppressed - legally, economically and socially. Under capitalist society women (and men) will never be free - women have a separate fight for 'socialism' (of some sort) and for a non-sexist society under the new system. I feel very strongly about this oppression of women, they lack opportunities, are unable to exercise choice and have very little chance of fulfilling themselves. Unfortunately I cannot see the situation changing under a capitalist economy". (NAC respondent 10).

"Women still get a rough deal in many areas of their lives, in spite of legislation against sex discrimination and the introduction of equal rights in some areas. It is only with more sisters working together that we can reach a state of greater awareness. However, what we can achieve under the present system must be limited. True liberation will not be achieved under capitalism. We have a duty to fight not only for the rights of women, but also for the introduction of a socialist society - but a socialist society in which there is a place for feminism".  
(NAC respondent 14).

Thus it can be seen that a socialist-feminist position was adopted by some NAC supporters. The accounts of individual campaign participants revealed this stance to have a number of distinguishing features. Firstly, there was a firm conviction among respondents that women should have absolute control over their own bodies. Abortion and contraception were seen as issues on which individuals alone should be allowed to decide. State intervention in these areas was vigorously condemned. Socialist-feminist NAC supporters were in favour of an immediate repeal of the 1967 Abortion Act, and the introduction of free abortion on demand without any interference by the state. Secondly, they claimed that the equal rights legislation of the mid-1970's had been ineffective and had achieved very little, if anything in the way of securing an improvement in the status position of women in society. As far as they were concerned British society was still male dominated and women were forced into occupying subordinate social roles. In the words of one interviewee:

"The state and its agencies (eg. social security system) enforce and perpetrate a situation in which women are cast in the role of dependents. It is in the interests of the current economic system for this to be continued. Anti-discrimination legislation (eg. Sex Discrimination Act, Equal Pay Act Employment Protection Act) gives women a limited right to participate in a male defined way in a male dominated society. Legislation has been aimed at giving women 'equal rights', but where giving equal rights means rejecting the dependency role of women, the state has stopped short. 'Equal rights' therefore, as presented so far, is not enough". (NAC respondent 11).

Finally, the socialist-feminists believed that the only solution to the problem of female oppression was to be found in a major restructuring of society. A socialist revolution was perceived as being necessary in order to overthrow capitalism and eradicate economic and social exploitation. It was only when this had been accomplished that it was thought possible for women to achieve liberation.

Not all NAC respondents accepted the socialist-feminist point of view. Of the remaining feminist respondents some were identifiable as 'equal rights feminists' and others as 'progressive feminists'. The former were of the opinion that legislative reform provided the principal means by which the social status of women could be enhanced. On the whole they welcomed the introduction of equal rights legislation, although they expressed the feeling that in some areas the legislation was superficial.

According to the equal rights feminists more comprehensive legislation was required in order to give women certain statutory rights which could be implemented both easily and effectively. Thus women's liberation was seen as being achieved through legislative reforms.

In contrast the progressive feminists did not place the same emphasis on the use of legislation. They questioned the effectiveness of anti-discriminatory legislation and suggested that changing the law would not necessarily get to the root of the problem of female oppression. Women had to be made aware of the nature of exploitation by men, and the influence of male oriented attitudes and values in society. Anti-sexist legislation was not enough; changes were necessary in such areas as child socialisation and educational provision; to ensure that the rigid and inflexible male-female stereotypes were eradicated. Thus a major restructuring of society was not envisaged as essential; for progressive feminists liberation depended on minor social changes not revolutionary reforms.

Despite the ideological differences between the three groups of feminists the data reveals some general agreement on a number of key aspects of the abortion debate. Firstly, irrespective of their feminist perspective respondents were united in the belief that the foetus was not a living person, and could not be viewed as having equal status to a living human being, but that it had the potential to develop into an independent human being.

Thus the NAC respondents argued that as the foetus did not exist as an independent human being it could not be considered to have the same right to life as a living person. Secondly, in their condemnation of the anti-abortion movement respondents expressed broadly similar views. According to the pro-abortionists the anti-abortionists ignored the fact that abortion was frequently necessary on humanitarian and compassionate grounds and mistakenly believed that the legalisation of abortion would lead to an inhumane society. As shown above NAC respondents rejected any notion that women had abortions out of self interest, they were seen as being motivated by a concern and compassion for others. Rape was an example quoted by NAC members in this context. The pro-abortionists could not accept the anti-abortion argument that a woman who conceived as a result of involuntary sexual intercourse should continue with the pregnancy and place the child for adoption. According to NAC respondents this showed a lack of compassion for the woman. In their view the anti-abortionists failed to appreciate the needs of women; in their efforts to protect a 'potential human being' they were effectively undermining the rights of a living person. Also when the anti-abortionists claimed that abortion had to be abolished in accordance with a population policy designed to combat the growth of an ageing population feminist respondents reacted by criticising the anti-abortionists for failing to acknowledge women as anything but 'child breeders' whose primary function was 'to fulfil breeding quotas in the interests of the nation' (Knight and Gorton, 1976, p.5).

From the evidence in Chapter Seven it can be seen how there was a similarity in attitudes among the pro-abortion supporters over a wide range of issues. This is reflected in the attitude scale scores obtained by using a Likert scaling technique. Responses to some of the individual items in these scales can be singled out for special mention. Two questions in the Traditional Family Ideology Scale (TFI) refer to the exercise and distribution of power in the marital relationship (see statements 20 and 24 in question 18 on the questionnaire in Appendix 1). The former statement suggests that equality in marriage is 'a good thing', but that the husband should have the final word in family decision making. The latter statement expresses the traditional view that women are expected to obey their husbands. In a sense both items are exploring the position and status of women in the conjugal role relationship. All forty-two respondents disagreed with both statements. Of these all but one responded by selecting the strongly disagree column in the Likert response set. Thus all the subjects displayed negative attitudes towards a patriarchal type family structure.

On exploring attitudes towards the family in greater depth an important difference was discerned between the socialist-feminists on one side and the equal rights feminists, and to some extent the progressive feminists, on the other. The equal rights feminists in presenting their case for a liberal law proclaimed that abortion was not a destructive and negative force capable of undermining the family as a social institution

but had the potential to maintain and improve family life by enabling people to have as many children as they could afford. Thus they argued they were not anti-family as their opponents claimed, but that they sought to help women and families with problems. These campaign participants asserted that what they were proposing did not constitute a threat to the social order but would actually improve it. In many ways their arguments resembled those employed by the reformist supporters of Steel's Bill, yet it would be totally inaccurate to conclude from this that NAC based its campaign on reformist principles. What must be remembered is that adopting a reformist perspective and emphasising a programme of gradual change may be a tactical ploy chosen according to the nature of external circumstances. Some of the pressure group activists advancing reformist arguments in support of Steel's Bill in the 1960's may have actually held radical views in favour of a repeal of legislation against abortion but withheld such views for fear of jeopardising the campaign. This is usually the case when a single issue becomes the focus of attention in a campaign and attracts supporters from a variety of political and ideological backgrounds. In the case of the socialist feminists they did not hold with the arguments that abortion protected the nuclear family. In their opinion the family was a repressive and stultifying institution which some saw as being responsible for conditioning women and reinforcing subservient female roles. However, they were careful how and when they expressed such ideas for they saw their views as providing ammunition for the anti-abortionists.

Summary.

Comparing the findings in this chapter with data collected from the anti-abortionists it can be seen how the two sides have different views regarding social change and the purpose of legislative intervention. The anti-abortionists identified a need to reinforce traditional values in order to halt the moral decay in modern society. It was their contention that, on the whole, the social changes taking place in modern Britain were destabilising and destructive; legislation was viewed as necessary to prevent further erosion of traditional social and moral values. In contrast the pro-abortionists took the position that, by and large, social change had failed to keep pace with changing realities and therefore it was necessary to use legislation to promote social change. Thus for one group social change was the cause of many contemporary social ills and needed to be controlled by legislation, whereas for the other group legislation could be used to promote specific changes which would ultimately help people to adapt to changing social realities.

From a study of a sample of female NAC members three feminist perspectives have been identified, namely, socialist-feminism, equal rights feminism and progressive feminism. These different feminists all presented the official NAC position when questioned on their views on abortion. They regarded abortion as a feminist issue and considered abortion rights as important as far as women's status was concerned.

Differences between respondents were apparent when possible remedies to female oppression and subjugation were considered. The socialist-feminists argued that liberation depended primarily on a complete re-organisation of society, whereas the equal rights and progressive feminists expressed the belief that minor changes in the social system would be sufficient to bring about women's liberation.

Conclusion:

The purpose of this study was to identify and comment upon the social cultural roots of the anti-abortion and pro-abortion movements. Group profiles have been constructed from data obtained from a review of pressure group literature, a study of campaign rhetoric and a sample survey of campaign activists drawn from three major groups, namely, 'Life', the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child and the National Abortion Campaign.

Pressure groups which aim to control personal behaviour and influence definitions of morality have been termed moral reform movements. In explaining motivations to support or participate in such movements the majority of sociological accounts have concluded that incongruities in the stratification system have been instrumental in producing feelings of discontent and dissatisfaction. As described above, Gusfield (1963) understood the American Temperance movement to be an example of a moral reform group engaged in status protest. According to Gusfield, Temperance supporters shared a similar lifestyle and wanted to protect their way of life against declines in status. In arguing that moral reform was a rational response to declining prestige of the lifestyle of a status group Gusfield raised a number of theoretical issues which have been discussed under the following headings: cultural fundamentation, orientation to reform, expressive politics and status defence.

These theoretical issues became the subject of further investigation in an analysis of the anti-abortion movement. An initial exploratory study of the campaign literature and public statements made by leading national campaign activists revealed how the central belief system or general world view endorsed by the movement was one of cultural fundamentalism. In other words, abortion was seen as a threat to basic social values and accepted standards of sexuality; the campaign literature contained frequent appeals for a return to traditional values and moral certainty. Within this overall fundamentalist reaction it was possible to distinguish between aggressive and defensive responses as outlined by Gusfield (1963, p.144). There was ample evidence in the anti-abortion literature of overtly hostile attacks on major social institutions and the so called guardians of public morality. The latter were accused of failing to take the necessary steps to curb permissive behaviour and prevent further moral decline; in some instances they were actually viewed as being directly responsible for encouraging permissiveness. When not attempting to identify the causes of moral decline and apportion to blame accordingly, the campaign literature presented a defensive fundamentalist response by maintaining that a return to traditional moral values would solve many social problems. Much of this was confirmed by an examination of the individual accounts of campaign participants. The attitudinal data displayed above clearly illustrates the existence, among anti-abortionists, of a value system capable of producing a fundamentalist reaction.

Anti-abortion group members showed a strong adherence to traditional norms, a common respect for religious authority and a firm belief in traditional family values.

According to Gusfield two basic types of orientation to reform are likely to be pursued by moral crusades, namely assimilative and coercive reform. The former applies when the norms and values of a moral reform movement are publicly acknowledged and respected. In circumstances such as these a benevolent attitude prevails and the movement views its primary objective as being to convert the deviant or transgressor to a morally superior way of life. However, when a movement feels that its cherished values are being abandoned and disregarded there is a tendency to pursue a policy designed to bring about conformity by force. Both of these orientations to reform were evident in the anti-abortion literature. When women seeking abortions were portrayed as the innocent victims of uncaring husbands or families they were viewed with pity, for they were not seen as presenting any challenge to the value system of the anti-abortionists. A coercive approach was reserved for those who were seen as the real enemy, that is the corrupt few who by their actions threatened the very principle of the right to life. Those women who were seen to use abortion as a method of birth control, and the abortionists who made huge profits from their private clinics (legal or illegal), were frequently condemned in the literature. They were described as intractable defenders of permissiveness who openly rejected the values espoused by the anti-abortion movement.

Their conduct could not be changed by converting them, they would have to be forced into conformity.

Both these orientations to reform featured in the individual accounts of campaign participants. Respondents claimed that many women were unaware of the medical and psychological complications following abortion and also falsely assumed that its legal availability was an indication of its moral and social acceptability. When women considering having an abortion were regarded as being ignorant of the full facts and misled by others who had a vested interest, respondents displayed an assimilative attitude to reform. However, when the foetus was viewed as the innocent victim and women were seen to demand abortion as a right a coercive reform strategy was adopted. Whereas for Gusfield, an assimilative style eventually gave way to a policy of coercion, this study confirms Wallis' view that both can exist simultaneously (Wallis, 1972). Whichever style predominates depends on how the anti-abortion case is presented and who are perceived as being the victims.

In Gusfield's theory of symbolic crusades emphasis is placed upon expressive social action or behaviour, that is action which serves a ceremonial function in that the reward is contained in the behaviour itself rather than in any change it may bring about. In other words, members of moral reform movements are seen as being engaged in expressive activity in which their protests are ends in themselves and do not have an instrumental orientation.

Although the anti-abortion movement has been shown to have many of the characteristics of a moral crusade the suggestion that symbolic crusades are a form of expressive politics was not supported by the data. A similar conclusion was reached by Wallis and Bland in their study of the Nationwide Festival of Light (Wallis and Bland, 1979). However, in comparing the anti-abortion movement to the NFOL it should be noted that the former is involved in a single issue campaign, with the specific objective of changing the law relating to abortion, and therefore should be expected to be instrumentally oriented.

Data were collected from participants in the anti-abortion campaign in order to test Gusfield's central thesis that moral crusades constitute a form of status defence. According to Gusfield declines or threatened declines in social position can produce feelings of deprivation which eventually become the basis for social movement support. Similarly Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (1976) in a study of two anti-pornography campaigns concluded that status threat was a significant motivating force; Wallis (1976a) reached a similar conclusion in his study of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association. When the educational background, occupational status and income of individual anti-abortion group members were examined status inconsistency was observed. However, there was no evidence to suggest that this status discrepancy produced moral indignation.

Very few respondents saw the attainment of high social status as a desirable goal and there was nothing to indicate that they considered their campaign to re-establish once socially dominant values as a means of enhancing their own status. This supports the view that moral indignation is a rational response to the violation of any deeply cherished value (Wallis, 1977). Any disparity between the standards of morality an individual has grown up to believe to be true and those seen to prevail in certain sections of society may be sufficient to provide a basis for commitment to a moral reform movement. The abortion controversy, for the anti-abortionists in this study, can be interpreted as a lifestyle issue rather than a conflict over declining status. Participants were engaged in cultural defence not status defence; active concern about abortion was a matter of culture not social status. Moral indignation was generated as a result of a loss of moral authority and was not therefore, a consequence of a reduction in social status. The anti-abortion activists were engaged in a battle to defend the status of their cultural values rather than protect or enhance their social position. Recent research on moral reform movements has produced similar results. Wallis (1977) criticised Gusfield (1963) for failing to recognise the politics of cultural defence in the activities of the American Temperance movement. Likewise Bland and Wallis (1977) criticised Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (1976) for emphasising status deprivation and status frustration at the expense of cultural defence in their analysis of anti-pornography movements.

A study of the anti-abortion movement in the United States of America found no support for the status discontent hypothesis and concluded that this type of moral crusade was aimed at 'controlling the nature and production of culture' (Leahy et al., 1982, p.18).

Overall, there was no empirical support in this study for status discontent predictions about anti-abortion social movement participants. A close examination of the data has shown that the conservative approach to personal morality characteristic of group members is capable of explaining the opposition to abortion far more effectively than any interpretation of the social status characteristics of group participants. A view expressed by Granberg (1981) in his study of members of the National Right to Life Committee in America.

In focusing on adherents (individuals believing in the goals of a movement) as opposed to constituents (individuals providing resources for a movement), Ward and Hughes (1984), in a recent study of American anti-pornography campaigns, have suggested that structural explanations of moral reform movements which rely heavily upon status discontent as an explanatory variable are redundant. In their opinion 'motivations to support moral reform movements are an outgrowth of socialisation processes and an expression of cultural values' (Wood and Hughes, 1984, p.89).

The general conclusion reached is that status discontent does not explain anti-pornography social movement adherence, however the authors do state that, '...it does not follow that status discontent... fails to account for movement participation by leadership and activists' (ibid, p.96, my emphasis). They suggest that if the argument is framed in terms of a 'loss of moral authority instead of loss of status' then status discontent may well explain the behaviour of activists in moral reform groups (ibid, p.96). If by this they mean that what motivates participants is a dissatisfaction with the status attributed to their values then the present findings support them. The data collected from local campaign leaders and activists in the anti-abortion movement confirms the view that participants were not concerned as much about their social position, as they were about defending the moral values inherent in their cultural position. However, it must be borne in mind that only a relatively small number of campaign activists have been studied. There is always the possibility that a sample of anti-abortion campaigners drawn from another part of the country, or from the national membership, may contain some status discontents.

During the 1970's abortion developed as a major issue within modern feminism and the cause was taken up by women not simply because it was of practical importance, but because of its significant symbolic nature. As a study of the pro-abortion campaign literature has revealed abortion came to be viewed as a critical indicator of women's status in society.

In 1975 the National Abortion Campaign, a largely feminist organisation, emerged as the principal force in the pro-abortion movement. It did not have the structure of a conventional parliamentary pressure group, but was an 'umbrella' organisation drawing support from a variety of sources. For the first time, the demand for abortion came from a mass movement. Although engaged in a national campaign to defend the 1967 Abortion Act and protect the abortion rights secured in an earlier campaign fought by the Abortion Law Reform Association, NAC was not defensive in its overall strategy. The group adopted the following campaign slogan: 'Abortion on Demand - A Woman's Right to Choose'.

The majority of female NAC members interviewed in this study adopted a feminist perspective; socialist feminists, equal rights feminists and progressive feminists were all represented. In spite of differences in socio-political outlook there was firm agreement on abortion. In presenting their case supporters not only demanded abortion as a woman's right, but also claimed that abortion on request should be granted to women on the grounds that self determination was a basic human right. Thus the campaign was not viewed as a single issue campaign, the struggle for abortion rights was seen as part of the wider struggle for women's liberation.

APPENDICES.

Appendix 1Legal Abortions Performed in England and Wales 1968-1981

YEAR	TOTAL	RESIDENTS	NON-RESIDENTS
1968	23,641	22,332	1,309
1969	54,819	49,829	4,990
1970	86,565	75,962	10,603
1971	126,777	44,570	32,207
1972	159,884	108,565	51,314
1973	167,149	110,568	56,581
1974	162,940	109,445	53,495
1975	139,702	106,224	33,478
1976	129,673	101,912	27,761
1977	133,004	102,677	30,327
1978	141,558	111,851	29,707
1979	149,746	120,611	29,135
1980	160,903	128,927	31,976
1981	162,480	128,581	33,899

Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys: Abortion  
Statistics.

Appendix 2

James White's Abortion (Amendment) Bill 1975

A  
**B I L L**

T O

Amend the Abortion Act 1967 and to make further provision with respect to the termination of pregnancy and matters consequential thereto. A.D. 1975

**B**E IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

PART I

*Termination of Pregnancy*

1. Section 1 of the Abortion Act 1967 (hereinafter referred to as "the principal Act") shall be read and have effect as if— Amendment of section 1 of Abortion Act 1967.

(a) in subsection (1) thereof— 1967 c. 87.

10 (i) after the words "two registered medical practitioners" there were inserted the words "who are not normally in practice together and of whom at least one has been registered for not less than five years"; and

15 (ii) in place of paragraph (a) there were substituted the following paragraph—

"(a) that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve:—

20 (i) grave risk to the life of the pregnant woman; or

(ii) risk of serious injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or any existing children of her family; or"; and

## PART I

(b) after subsection (3) thereof there were inserted the following subsection, namely:—

“ (3A) Without prejudice to any regulations which may be made by the Secretary of State under any enactment, it shall be a pre-condition of approval of a place for the purposes of this section that there shall be on the staff of the said place a consultant medical adviser who shall be—

(a) a consultant within the National Health Service ; or 10

(b) a person who has been such a consultant ; or

(c) a registered medical practitioner approved by the Secretary of State as being of like status to such a consultant ; 15

whose duty it shall be to superintend and approve in relation to the said place—

(a) clinical procedures,

(b) the appointment of medical staff, sessional or otherwise ; and 20

(c) the use of the said place by any registered medical practitioner for treatment of any person under this Act ”.

Restrictions on medical termination of pregnancy.

2. Notwithstanding anything in the principal Act, save as provided in subsection (4) of section 1 thereof, it shall be unlawful 25 to carry out any treatment for the termination of a pregnancy unless (except in the case of a woman whom he reasonably believes to be of British nationality) the person carrying out the treatment is reasonably satisfied that during the period of twenty weeks immediately preceding the carrying out of the 30 treatment the pregnant woman has been resident in the United Kingdom.

Notification of termination of pregnancy.

3. Notwithstanding anything in section 2 (Notification) of the principal Act or in any regulations made thereunder any person who terminates a pregnancy shall, with the written consent of 35 the woman who has been treated, give notice of the termination and of any relevant details thereof to her regular medical practitioner.

Inducements not to be offered or accepted.

4. It shall be an offence—

(a) for any person to offer or give to any other person any 40 fee or other reward, whether tangible or otherwise, in consideration of that other person referring or having referred any pregnant woman, for the purpose of

obtaining treatment for termination of pregnancy, to any registered medical practitioner, any hospital or any place approved for the purposes of section 1 of the principal Act ; and

PART I

- 5 (b) for any person to demand or accept any such fee or other reward in respect of so referring or of having so referred any pregnant woman.

5.—(1) No person other than—

- (a) a registered medical practitioner, or  
 10 (b) a person for the time being approved for the purposes of this section by the Secretary of State,

Regulation  
of advice on  
obtaining  
treatment for  
termination  
of pregnancy.

shall give to any other person any advice or information to which this section applies in circumstances in which he receives or expects payment (whether from the person to whom the  
 15 advice or information is given or from any other person, and whether under an agreement or otherwise) for so doing, or for providing, in connection with giving that advice or information, any other advice, information, services, facility or article.

(2) No person shall advise a pregnant woman to seek treatment for termination of pregnancy at a place in which that  
 20 person has any financial interest, direct or otherwise.

(3) No registered medical practitioner or person approved under subsection (1) of this section shall give to any other person under the age of 16 any advice or information to which this  
 25 section applies otherwise than in the presence of that other person's parent or guardian if such parent or guardian can reasonably be ascertained and is willing and able to be present.

(4) A person giving to any pregnant woman any advice or information to which this section applies shall at the same time  
 30 give her advice as to available alternatives to such treatment.

(5) This section applies to any advice or information (whether given to the woman to whose circumstances it relates or to any other person)—

- (a) indicating a person to whom a woman may apply for  
 35 the purpose of obtaining, or fulfilling the requirements for the purpose of obtaining, treatment for the termination of pregnancy in accordance with the provisions of the principal Act ;  
 (b) indicating a hospital or place in which such treatment  
 40 may be provided ; or  
 (c) indicating a person from whom advice or information to the effect mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b) above may be obtained ;

PART I and any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of an offence.

Approval and regulation of premises.

6.—(1) No person being a registered medical practitioner or a person approved by the Secretary of State for the purposes of the foregoing section shall use any premises for the purpose of— 5

- (a) giving treatment for the termination of pregnancy ; or
- (b) giving advice or information to which section 5 of this Act applies ;

unless those premises have been approved by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this section and are used in compliance with regulations made by the Secretary of State and for the time being in force relating to the use of such premises. 10

(2) Any person applying to the Secretary of State for the approval of premises for the purpose of this section shall disclose to the Secretary of State full details of any financial arrangement or other agreement which he may have with any persons or places approved under section 1(3) of the principal Act or this section and the Secretary of State shall be entitled, when considering any application for approval under this section, to take any such arrangement or other agreement into account. 15 20

(3) Without prejudice to the foregoing provisions of this section and of any regulations made thereunder, the use of any such premises as aforesaid shall be subject to the conditions for use of such premises set out in Schedule 1 to this Act. 25

(4) Any person who contravenes the provisions of this section or of any regulations made thereunder or of any of the conditions set out in Schedule 1 to this Act shall be guilty of an offence.

Treatment prohibited in certain cases.

7. Notwithstanding anything in any enactment it shall be an offence for any person to carry out, or assist in the carrying out of, treatment for termination of pregnancy in any case in which the woman has been pregnant for 20 weeks or more : 30

Provided that this section shall not apply in any case in which— 35

- (a) the woman has been pregnant for not more than 24 weeks ; and
- (b) a consultant within the National Health Service is reasonably satisfied that the woman is pregnant of a child which would be born with a major disability, whether physical or mental. 40

## PART II

*Experiments on Foetus and Foetal Material*

8.—(1) No person shall carry out an experiment of any kind Conditions for  
 on human foetus or foetal material which has become available experiments  
 5 as a result of the termination of a pregnancy otherwise than in on foetus.  
 accordance with the conditions laid down in Schedule 2 to this  
 Act.

(2) The Secretary of State may make regulations for the  
 purpose of the application and enforcement of the provisions of  
 10 the said Schedule and for amending or adding to the said  
 conditions.

(3) Any person who contravenes the provisions of this section  
 or of any of the said conditions for the time being in force shall  
 be guilty of an offence.

15 9.—(1) The appropriate hospital authority having jurisdiction Ethical  
 over any institution to which women in childbirth are customarily Committees.  
 admitted shall, for the purposes of ensuring compliance within  
 that institution, with the provisions of this part of this Act,  
 establish an Ethical Committee which must include at least one  
 20 doctor experienced in clinical investigation.

(2) It shall be the duty of every Ethical Committee to super-  
 vise the disposal of foetus and foetal material which has become  
 available as a result of the termination of a pregnancy and the  
 use thereof for purposes of research and experiment.

## PART III

*Miscellaneous*

25 10. It shall be an offence for any person to publish or cause Restriction on  
 to be published the identity, or any information or particulars publication  
 calculated to lead to the identification of— of identity.

- 30 (a) any woman who has been the subject of treatment for  
 the termination of pregnancy ;  
 (b) any woman who has sought or received advice or  
 information to which section 5 of this Act applies ; or  
 35 (c) any person who has given, or who has been summoned  
 to give, evidence in any proceedings under the principal  
 Act or this Act.

11. Where in any criminal proceedings brought under the Proof of  
 principal Act or this Act it has been established to the satisfac- compliance.  
 tion of the court that the accused person has carried out or has  
 40 assisted at the carrying out of treatment for the termination of

- PART III pregnancy, or has given advice or information to which section 5 of this Act applies, the onus of proof that the requirements of the principal Act or of this Act or of any regulations made thereunder, as the case may be, have been complied with in respect of any matter shall rest on the accused person. 5
- Penalties. **12.** Any person who contravenes any of the provisions of this Act or of the principal Act as amended by this Act shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable
- (a) on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,000 or to a term of not more than six months imprisonment or to both such fine and imprisonment; 10
- (b) on conviction on indictment to a fine or to a term of not more than five years imprisonment or to both such fine and imprisonment.
- Offences by bodies corporate. **13.** Where an offence under this Act which has been committed by a body corporate is proved to have been committed with the consent or connivance of, or to be attributable to any neglect or misrepresentation on the part of any director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the body corporate or any person who was purporting to act in any such capacity he, as well as the body corporate, shall be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly, and shall be disqualified from giving advice or information to which section 5 of this Act applies. 15 20
- Saving for section 3 of principal Act. **14.** For the removal of doubt it is hereby declared that nothing in this Act shall affect the operation of section 3 of the principal Act, which relates to the application thereof to visiting forces. 25
- Regulations. **15.—(1)** The Secretary of State may make regulations for any purpose for which regulations may be made under the principal Act as amended by this Act or under this Act and generally for the purpose of carrying into effect the principal Act as so amended and this Act. 30
- (2) The power to make regulations under this section shall be exercisable by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament. 35
- Short title, citation and extent. **16.—(1)** This Act may be cited as the Abortion (Amendment) Act 1975 and the principal Act and this Act may be cited together as the Abortion Acts 1967 and 1975.
- (2) This Act does not extend to Northern Ireland. 40

## SCHEDULES

## SCHEDULE 1

Section 6.

## CONDITIONS FOR USE OF APPROVED PREMISES

- 1.—(1) The premises shall be open for inspection at all times by  
5 persons appointed for the purpose by the Secretary of State.
- (2) No advertisement other than an approved advertisement shall be displayed either outside or inside the premises.
- (3) The premises must be satisfactory as regards size, lay out and the provision of facilities to ensure privacy.
- 10 (4) There must be available on the premises or at some other approved premises satisfactory arrangements for pregnancy testing.
- (5) A registered medical practitioner must be available on the premises for consultation with any person seeking treatment for termination of pregnancy or advice on such treatment.
- 15 (6) Any fee charged for giving treatment or advice at the premises shall include the fee for any such consultation.
- (7) Records must be kept showing—
- (a) identity of person interviewed or treated ;
- (b) result of interview or treatment ;
- 20 (c) details of fees charged ;
- (d) copies of receipts for payment ;
- and such records must be available for inspection by an approved person.
- (8) The books of account must be available for inspection by an  
25 approved person.
2. For the purposes of this Schedule—
- “advertisement” means any notice indicating the nature of the business carried on on the premises and any notice indicating that any treatment, facility, service or product  
30 may be obtained on the premises ;
- “approved” means approved for the purposes of this Schedule by the Secretary of State.

## SCHEDULE 2

Section 8.

## CONDITIONS FOR EXPERIMENTS ON FOETUS AND FOETAL MATERIAL

- 35 1. An experiment may only be carried out on a dead foetus and no experiment shall be carried out on any foetus which weights more than 300 grammes. The decision that a foetus is in a category which may be used for experimentation or research shall rest with the medical attendants present at its birth and any intending research  
40 worker shall be excluded from any such decision.

- SCH. 2
2. Any experimentation on foetus shall be carried out in departments directly related to a hospital and such experimentation shall not take place without the direct authority of the Ethical Committee established for the purposes of the hospital.
  3. An Ethical Committee shall not permit research of any kind on foetus unless they have first satisfied themselves—
    - (a) on the validity of the research ;
    - (b) that the required information cannot be obtained in any other way ; and
    - (c) that the investigators authorised to carry out the research have the necessary facilities and skill.
  4. No dissection of a foetus or experimentation on foetus or foetal material shall take place in the operating theatre or place of delivery.
  5. No person shall accept or demand money in exchange for a foetus or foetal material. 15
  6. Full records of experiments and the source of the foetus and the disposal of the remains of the foetus shall be kept by the institution or person carrying out research.
  7. Where a foetus is viable following the termination of a pregnancy no experiment shall be carried out on it which is inconsistent with treatment necessary to promote its life. 20
  8. No person shall administer drugs or carry out any procedures to or on a pregnant woman prior to termination of her pregnancy with the intent of ascertaining the harm that they might do to the foetus. 25

Appendix 3

William Benyon's Abortion (Amendment) Bill 1977

A

**B I L L**

T O

Amend the Abortion Act 1967 and to make further provision with respect to the termination of pregnancy and matters consequential thereto. A.D. 1977

**B**E IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

- 5 1.—(1) Section 1(1) of the principal Act shall not make lawful treatment for the termination of pregnancy in any case where the woman has been pregnant for not less than 20 weeks or such other period as the Secretary of State may by order determine, unless the two registered medical practitioners referred to in  
10 section 1 of the principal Act are of the opinion, formed in good faith—
- Treatment prohibited in certain cases.
- (a) that the pregnancy has lasted for less than 20 weeks ; or
- (b) that the pregnancy has lasted for less than 24 weeks and there is a substantial risk that if the child were born  
15 it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped ; or
- (c) that the treatment is necessary either to save the life of the pregnant woman or to prevent grave permanent injury to her physical or mental health.
- 20 (2) The Secretary of State shall not make an Order under this section unless a draft of the order has been approved by resolution of each House of Parliament.

Qualification  
of registered  
medical  
practitioner.

2. After subsection (1) of section 1 of the principal Act there shall be added:—

“(1A) At least one of the two registered medical practitioners referred to in subsection (1) of this section must be a registered medical practitioner of not less than five years’ standing. 5

(1B) A registered medical practitioner shall not be eligible to form an opinion for the purposes of subsection (1) of this section if he—

(a) is a partner of the other registered medical practitioner, or 10

(b) is employed by the other registered medical practitioner, or

(c) obtains or is able to obtain financial benefit from a place approved by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this section or to which section 7 of the Abortion (Amendment) Act 1977 applies, if the other registered medical practitioner obtains or is able to obtain financial benefit from the same place.”. 20

Notification  
of termination  
of pregnancy.

3.—(1) Notwithstanding anything in section 2 (Notification) of the principal Act or in any regulations thereunder, any person who has terminated a pregnancy shall give notice of the termination to the regular medical practitioner of the woman whose pregnancy has been terminated by him, unless he is the regular medical practitioner of the woman; provided that the consent of the woman has been sought and obtained in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary of State. 25

(2) Any person who contravenes the provisions of the foregoing subsection shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £500. 30

(3) Regulations under subsection (1) of this section shall be made by statutory instrument subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.

Time limit  
for com-  
mencement of  
proceedings.

4. After subsection (3) of section 2 of the principal Act there shall be added:— 35

“(3A) Summary proceedings in respect of any offence under subsection (3) of this section may, notwithstanding anything in the Magistrates’ Courts Act 1952, be commenced at any time not later than three years from the date of commission of the offence.”. 40

5.—(1) In subsection (1) of section 4 of the principal Act, after the word “objection” where it first occurs, there shall be added “on religious, ethical or other grounds”. Conscientious  
objections to  
participation  
in treatment.

(2) The proviso to subsection (1), and subsection (3), of section 4 of the principal Act are hereby repealed.

6.—(1) It shall be an offence—

Licensing.

- 10 (a) for the occupier of any premises to use them for any of the purposes mentioned in subsection (7) of this section, or to permit them to be so used, unless he holds a licence in relation to those premises under this section, or
- 15 (b) for any person other than the occupier to use any premises for any of the purposes mentioned in subsection (7) of this section unless the occupier holds a licence in relation to those premises under this section.

(2) An application for a licence in relation to premises under this Act shall be made to the Secretary of State, and shall be accompanied by a fee.

20 (3) Subject to subsection (4) below, the Secretary of State shall, on receiving an application under subsection (2) above, issue to the applicant a licence in respect of the premises.

(4) The Secretary of State shall refuse to issue a licence to an applicant in relation to premises if he is satisfied—

- 25 (a) that the applicant, or any person employed or proposed to be employed by the applicant at the premises, is not a fit person (whether by reason of age or otherwise) to carry on or be employed at such premises ; or
- 30 (b) that, for reasons connected with situation, construction, state of repair, accommodation, staffing or equipment, the premises are not, or any premises used in connection therewith are not, fit to be used for any of the purposes mentioned in subsection (7) below ; or
- 35 (c) that the premises, or any premises used in connection therewith, are used, or proposed to be used, for purposes which are in any way improper or undesirable in the case of such premises ; or
- 40 (d) that the standard of medical advice offered at the premises in relation to the use in respect of which a licence under this section is required, is not likely to be adequate in the circumstances ; or

(e) that, in the case of the applicant, the occupier of the premises or any person associated or proposed to be associated with the use in respect of which a licence under this section is required on those premises, there is a financial arrangement or other agreement with persons associated with a place approved for the purpose of section 1 of the principal Act. 5

(5) Subject to subsection (6) below, a licence under this section shall remain in force for such period not exceeding 13 months as may be fixed by the Secretary of State in each case, and may be renewed for a period not exceeding 13 months at any one time. 10

(6) The Secretary of State may at any time refuse to renew a licence under this section in relation to premises—

(a) on any ground which would entitle him to refuse an application for a licence under this section in relation to those premises ; 15

(b) on the ground that the applicant for the licence has been convicted of an offence against the provisions of the principal Act or this Act, or on the ground that any other person has been convicted of such an offence in respect of those premises ; 20

(c) on the ground that the applicant has been convicted of an offence against regulations made under section 7 below. 25

(7) The purposes for which a licence is required under this section are—

(a) the provision for payment of consultation with a medical practitioner who is prepared to sign certificates under the Abortion Regulations and who is prepared subsequently to terminate the pregnancy of the person attending the consultation ; 30

(b) the provision for payment of an advisory service in relation to treatment for the termination of a pregnancy ; 35

(c) the provision for payment of a service of testing whether a woman is pregnant.

(8) Nothing in this section shall require premises to be licenced because of the use of those premises—

(a) by a registered medical practitioner for the purposes of his general practice ; or 40

(b) as a hospital vested in the Secretary of State under the National Health Service Acts ; or

(c) in accordance with an approval of the Secretary of State under section 1 of the principal Act. 45

(9) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (1) above shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,000, and to a fine not exceeding £100 for each day on which the offence is continued after conviction thereof.

5 7.—(1) The Secretary of State shall make regulations in Regulations relating to  
 relation to the use of premises for any of the purposes to which section 6 above applies, and in relation to places approved by him for the purposes of section 1 of the principal Act.

(2) Regulations under this section shall prescribe the fee to  
 10 accompany an application under section 6 above, and may be made—

- (a) with respect to the facilities and services to be provided in such premises ;
- 15 (b) with respect to the licensing of premises under section 6 above, and in particular with respect to—
  - (i) the making of applications for a licence ;
  - (ii) the refusal of a licence ; and
  - (iii) appeals to magistrates' courts against refusals to issue or renew licences ;
- 20 (c) with respect to the keeping of records relating to premises licensed under section 6 above, and with respect to the notification of events occurring in such premises ;
- 25 (d) with respect to entry into and the inspection of premises used or reasonably believed to be used for any of the purposes mentioned in section 6(7) above ;
- (e) providing that a contravention of or failure to comply with any specified provision of the regulations shall be an offence against the regulations.

30 (3) Regulations made under this section shall be made by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.

8.—(1) Subject to subsection (7)(a) of this section, after a Restriction on  
 person is accused of an offence under an Act to which this section applies, no matter likely to lead members of the public to  
 35 identify in relation to that accusation any complainant or witness—  
 of identity.

- (a) who has had an abortion which is the subject of proceedings, or
- 40 (b) who has been advised about an abortion and the advice is the subject of proceedings.

shall either be published in a written publication available to the public or be broadcast except as authorised by a direction given in pursuance of this section.

(2) If, before the commencement of a trial at which a person is charged with an offence under an Act to which this section applies, he applies to the court for a direction in pursuance of this subsection and satisfies the court—

- (a) that the direction is required for the purpose of inducing persons to come forward who are likely to be needed as witnesses at the trial ; and
- (b) that the conduct of the applicant's defence at the trial is likely to be substantially prejudiced if the direction is not given,

the court shall direct that the preceding subsection shall not apply in relation to the complainant or witness referred to in the preceding subsection.

(3) If a person who has been convicted of an offence under an Act to which this section applies and gives notice of appeal to the appellate court against the conviction, or notice of an application for leave so to appeal, applies to the appellate court for a direction in pursuance of this subsection and satisfies that court—

- (a) that the direction is required for the purpose of obtaining evidence in support of the appeal ; and
- (b) that the applicant is likely to suffer substantial injustice if the direction is not given,

the appellate court shall direct that subsection (1) of this section shall not apply in relation to any complainant or any witness referred to in subsection (1) of this section and specified in the direction.

(4) If any matter is published or broadcast in contravention of subsection (1) of this section, the following persons, namely—

- (a) in the case of a publication, in a newspaper or periodical, any proprietor, any editor and any publisher of the newspaper or periodical ;
- (b) in the case of any other publication, the person who publishes it ; and
- (c) in the case of a broadcast, any body corporate which transmits or provides the programme in which the broadcast is made and any person having functions in relation to the programme corresponding to those of an editor of a newspaper,

shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £500.

(5) For the purposes of this section a person is accused of an offence under an Act to which this section applies if—

- (a) any information is laid alleging that he has committed such an offence ; or
- 5 (b) he appears before a court charged with such an offence ;  
or
- (c) a court before which he is appearing commits him for trial on a new charge alleging such an offence ; or
- 10 (d) a bill of indictment charging him with such an offence is preferred before a court in which he may lawfully be indicted for the offence,

and references in this section and section 12(4) of this Act to an accusation alleging such an offence shall be construed accordingly ; and in this section—

15 “ a broadcast ” means a broadcast by wireless telegraphy of sound or visual images intended for general reception, and cognate expressions shall be construed accordingly ;

20 “ complainant ” in relation to a person accused of an offence under an Act to which this section applies or an accusation alleging such an offence, means the woman against whom the offence is alleged to have been committed ; and

25 “ written publication ” includes a film, a sound track and any other record in permanent form but does not include an indictment or other document prepared for use in particular legal proceedings.

(6) Nothing in this section—

- 30 (a) prohibits the publication or broadcasting, in consequence of an accusation alleging an offence under an Act to which this section applies of matter consisting only of a report of legal proceedings other than proceedings at, or intended to lead to, or on an appeal arising out of, a trial at which the accused is charged with that offence ; or
- 35 (b) affects any prohibition or restriction imposed by virtue of any other enactment upon a publication or broadcast ;

40 and a direction in pursuance of this section does not affect the operation of subsection (1) of this section at any time before the direction is given.

(7) The Acts to which this section applies are the Offences 1861 c. 100. against the Person Act 1861, the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 c. 34. 1929, the principal Act or this Act.

- Court may order inspection, etc.**
- 1861 c. 100.**  
**1929 c. 34.**
- 9.** If a chief officer of police, or a person authorised by him in that behalf, applies to a judge of the Crown Court and satisfies the judge—
- (a) that investigations are being carried out with a view to the instigation of proceedings in relation to illegal abortion under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, the principal Act or this Act; and
- (b) that there is reason to believe that such investigations would be assisted by information contained in any register or other book kept by a body to which section 7 of this Act applies,
- the judge may order that the applicant may inspect and take copies of any entries in any register or other book of the body specified in the order.
- 10.** References in the principal Act and in this Act to termination of pregnancy shall include acts done with intent to terminate a pregnancy if such exists.
- Offences by bodies corporate.**
- 11.** Where an offence under the Offences against the Person Act 1861, the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, the principal Act or this Act which has been committed by a body corporate is proved to have been committed with the consent or connivance of, or to be attributable to any neglect or misrepresentation on the part of, any director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the body corporate or any person who was purporting to act in any such capacity he, as well as the body corporate, shall be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.
- Commencement.**
- 12.—(1)** This Act, except section 6, shall come into force on the 1st January 1978 or at the expiration of six months beginning with the date on which it is passed, whichever is the later.
- (2) Section 6 of this Act shall come into force at the expiration of six months beginning with the date of the coming into force of the rest of this Act.
- (3) Section 8 of this Act shall not have effect in relation to an accusation which is made before the coming into force of this Act.
- Citation, interpretation and extent.**
- 1967 c. 87.**
- 13.—(1)** This Act may be cited as the Abortion (Amendment) Act 1977, and this Act and the principal Act may be cited together as the Abortion Acts 1967 and 1977.
- (2) In this Act, “the principal Act” means the Abortion Act 1967.
- (3) This Act does not extend to Northern Ireland.

Appendix 4

John Corrie's Abortion (Amendment) Bill 1979

A  
**B I L L**

T O

Amend the Abortion Act 1967; to make further A.D. 1979  
provisions with respect to the termination of pregnancy  
by registered medical practitioners; and for connected  
purposes.

**B**E IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and  
with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and  
Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament  
assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

- 5   **1.** Section 1 of the principal Act shall be amended in sub-  
section (1)— Amendment  
of section 1  
of principal  
Act.
- (a) by adding after the words "in good faith" the words  
        "that the pregnancy has lasted for less than twenty  
        weeks and—"; and
- 10   (b) by leaving out paragraph (a) and substituting therefor  
        the words—  
            "(a) that the continuance of the pregnancy  
            involves:—
- 15           (i) grave risk to the life of the pregnant woman ;  
                or  
            (ii) substantial risk of serious injury to the phy-  
                sical or mental health of the pregnant  
                woman or any existing children of her  
                family ; or."

- Amendment of section 4 of principal Act.
2. Section 4 of the principal Act shall be amended—
- (a) in subsection (1) by—
- (i) adding after the word “objection” where it first occurs the words “on religious, ethical or any other grounds.”; and
- (ii) leaving out the proviso; and
- (b) by leaving out subsection (3).
- Amendment and extension of Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. 1929 c. 34.
3. The Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 shall be amended—
- (a) in subsection (2) of section 1, by leaving out the word “twenty-eight” and substituting therefor the word “twenty”; and
- (b) in subsection (2) of section 3 by leaving out the words “Scotland or”.
- Licensing.
- 4.—(1) A licence shall be required under this Act for premises which are used for—
- (a) the provision, for payment, of consultation with a medical practitioner with a view to his signing a certificate under the Abortion Regulations or to his subsequently terminating the pregnancy of the person attending the consultation;
- (b) the provision, for payment, of an advisory service in relation to treatment for the termination of a pregnancy;
- (c) the provision, for payment, of a service of testing whether or not a woman is pregnant.
- (2) An application for a licence in relation to premises under this Act shall be made to the Secretary of State, and shall be accompanied by a fee.
- (3) Subject to subsection (4) of this section, the Secretary of State shall, on receiving an application under subsection (2) of this section, issue to the applicant a licence in respect of the premises.
- (4) The Secretary of State shall refuse to issue a licence to an applicant in relation to premises if he is satisfied—
- (a) that the applicant, or any person employed or proposed to be employed by the applicant at the premises, is not a fit person (whether by reason of age or otherwise) to carry on, or be employed at, such premises; or
- (b) that, for reasons connected with situation, construction, state of repair, accommodation, staffing or equipment, the premises are not, or any premises used in connection therewith are not fit to be used for any of the purposes mentioned in subsection (1) of this section; or

- (c) that the premises, or any premises used in connection therewith, are used or proposed to be used for purposes which are in any way improper or undesirable in the case of such premises ; or
- 5 (d) that the standard of medical advice offered at the premises in relation to the use in respect of which a licence under this section is required, is not likely to be adequate in the circumstances ; or
- 10 (e) that, in the case of the applicant, the occupier of the premises or any person associated or proposed to be associated with the use in respect of which a licence under this section is required on those premises, there is a financial arrangement or other relevant agreement with persons associated with a place approved for
- 15 the purpose of section 1 of the principal Act.
- (5) The Secretary of State shall refuse to issue a licence to an applicant in relation to premises unless he is satisfied that the premises shall be under the care and management of a registered medical practitioner or a qualified nurse.
- 20 (6) Subject to subsection (7) of this section, a licence under this section shall remain in force until revoked.
- (7) The Secretary of State may at any time revoke a licence under this section in relation to premises—
- 25 (a) on any ground which would entitled him to refuse application for a licence under this section in relation to those premises ;
- (b) on the ground that the applicant for the licence has been convicted of an offence against the provisions of the principal Act or this Act, or on the ground that
- 30 any other person has been convicted of such an offence in respect of those premises ;
- (c) on the ground that the applicant has been convicted of an offence against regulations made under Section 5 of this Act.
- 35 (8) It shall be an offence—
- (a) for the occupier of any premises to use them for any of the purposes mentioned in subsection (1) of this section, or to permit them to be so used unless he holds a licence in relation to those premises under
- 40 this section, or
- (b) for any person other than the occupier to use any premises for any of the purposes mentioned in subsection (1) of this section unless the occupier holds a licence in relation to those premises under this
- 45 section.

(9) Nothing in this section shall require premises to be licensed because of the use of those premises—

- (a) by a registered medical practitioner for the purposes of his general practice ; or
- (b) as a hospital vested in the Secretary of State under the National Health Service Acts ; or
- (c) in accordance with an approval of the Secretary of State under section 1 of the principal Act ; or
- (d) for the termination of a pregnancy in a case to which subsection (4) of section 1 of the principal Act applies ; or
- (e) by a registered pharmacist, provided those premises are registered under section 74 of the Medicines Act 1968.

1968 c. 67.

(10) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (8) of this section shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,000 and in the event of a second or subsequent conviction to such a fine together with a fine not exceeding £100 in respect of each day on which the offence occurred or continued after the last conviction. 20

Regulations relating to premises.

5.—(1) The Secretary of State may make regulations with respect to the licensing of premises under section 4 of this Act and in particular with respect to prescribing fees to accompany applications for such licence and with respect to appeals in England and Wales to Magistrates' Courts and, in Scotland, to the Sheriff, against refusal to issue or revocation of a licence.

(2) Regulations made under this section shall be made by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.

Counselling.

6.—(1) Organisations which offer counselling and advice to pregnant women may apply to the Minister to be included in a list compiled and maintained by him for the purposes of this section.

(2) The Minister shall from time to time distribute copies of such list to all registered medical practitioners. 35

(3) Before a registered medical practitioner issues a certificate under section 1 of the principal Act or when such medical practitioner refuses, for any reason, to issue such certificate, he shall inform the woman of the existence of such list and make a copy available to her. 40

Severely handicapped children.  
1929 c. 34.

7. Notwithstanding anything in section 1 of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, where two medical practitioners certify in good faith that from the evidence of tests it appears to

them that the child will be born severely handicapped then the pregnancy may be terminated at any time until the twenty-eighth week of the pregnancy and so much of section 1 of the principal Act as refers to twenty weeks shall not apply.

5 8. Where an offence under the Offences against the Person Act 1861, the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, the principal Act, or this Act or against any regulations made under those Acts, which has been committed by a body corporate is proved to have been committed with the consent or connivance  
10 of, or to be attributable to any neglect or misrepresentation on the part of any director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the body corporate or any person who was purporting to act in any such capacity he, as well as the body corporate, shall be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be pro-  
15 ceeded against and punished accordingly.

9. Summary proceedings in respect of any offence under subsection (3) of section 2 of the principal Act or subsection (8) of section 4 of this Act may, in England and Wales, notwithstanding anything in the Magistrates' Courts Act 1952, and in Scotland,  
20 notwithstanding anything in the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975, be commenced at any time not later than three years from the date of commission of the offence.

Provided that nothing in this section shall affect the application of those Acts in respect of offences alleged to have been  
25 committed before the passing of this Act.

10. In this Act unless the context otherwise requires—  
“tests” means investigations the results of which for medical reasons are not conclusive until after the twentieth week of pregnancy: and “principal Act” means the Abortion Act 1967.

11.—(1) This Act may be cited as the Abortion (Amendment) Act 1979, and this Act and the principal Act may be cited together as the Abortion Acts 1967 and 1979.

(2) This Act does not extend to Northern Ireland.

35 (3) Section 4 of this Act shall come into force at the expiration of six months beginning with the date of the coming into force of the remainder of this Act.

APPENDIX 5

Introductory letters and questionnaire

## THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

Telephone 56101

UNIVERSITY PARK  
NOTTINGHAM  
NG7 2RD

Department of Sociology

February 1977

Dear

I am a postgraduate student at Nottingham University carrying out research into local groups actively involved in the campaigns over Abortion Law reform, and I would be most grateful for your help. In order to gather information about the composition of the campaign's membership I am sending a questionnaire to supporters of local groups. Your name has been supplied by the organiser of your branch of I am enclosing a questionnaire which I hope you will be kind enough to complete.

Most of the information asked for is of a fairly straightforward kind, such as age, occupation, and so forth, although there are also a number of questions relating to members' views about certain social and political matters. Many of the answers require only a tick in the appropriate place; however, one or two questions ask for your written comments. If you find there is insufficient space provided for these comments perhaps you could write them on a separate piece of paper.

You may be quite sure that this information will be treated as highly confidential. The data collected will be used to form the basis of statistical tables and it will be impossible to identify the answers of any one individual. The number which appears at the end of the questionnaire is merely to enable me to identify non-returns in order that a reminder may be sent out.

I should be most grateful if you could return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope within, if at all possible, the next two or three days. Once again please let me emphasise that all replies will be treated with the strictest confidence.

I would like to thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Alan H. Clarke

Telephone . (0602) 56101

UNIVERSITY PARK  
NOTTINGHAM  
NG7 2RD

## Department of Sociology

Dear

I am currently engaged in postgraduate research at Nottingham University, examining the origin and development of abortion legislation in Britain, with particular reference to the current struggle for reform. I am interested in contacting individuals who hold firm views regarding abortion and would like to see definite changes in the present situation. I have recently spoken to \_\_\_\_\_ who has given me your name and address and suggested that you may be able to assist me with my research. I am enclosing a questionnaire which I hope you will be kind enough to complete.

Most of the information asked for is of a fairly straightforward kind, such as age, occupation and so forth, although there are also a number of questions relating to individuals' views on certain social and political matters. Many of the answers require only a tick in the appropriate place; one or two questions, however, ask for your written comments. If you find there is insufficient space provided for these comments perhaps you could write them on a separate piece of paper.

You may be quite sure that this information will be treated as highly confidential. The data collected will be used to form the basis of statistical tables and it will be impossible to identify the answers of any one individual. The number which appears at the end of the questionnaire is merely to enable me to identify unreturned copies in order that a reminder may be sent out.

As you will appreciate, the depth and quality of information obtained from a questionnaire of this nature is very limited. I therefore intend to interview individuals in order to enable them to express at greater length their views on abortion.

I should be most grateful if you could return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope within, if at all possible, the next two or three days.

/Cont.....

Once again please let me emphasise that all replies will be treated with the strictest confidence. If you have any queries concerning my research I should be happy to discuss them with you. I can be contacted at the University, or at my home, the address of which is: 5 The Grove, Calverton, telephone Woodborough 2803.

I would like to thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Alan M. Clarke

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Survey of Attitudes towards Contemporary Social Issues

Would you please answer the following questions by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate place and write your answers in the space provided.

ALL INFORMATION RECEIVED WILL BE REGARDED AS HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL.  
Please DO NOT write your name and address on the questionnaire.

1. Male .....                      2. Age: under 21 .....                      3. Marital status:
- Female .....                      21 - 25 .....                      Single .....  
26 - 30 .....                      Married .....  
31 - 40 .....                      Divorced .....  
41 - 55 .....                      Widowed .....  
over 55 .....                      Separated .....
4. What type of school/college have you attended?  
(you may tick more than one)
- a) Secondary modern .....                      g) Technical college .....  
b) Technical school .....                      h) Teacher Training college .....  
c) High school .....                      i) College of Technology .....  
d) Comprehensive .....                      j) Polytechnic .....  
e) Grammar school .....                      k) University .....  
f) Public/boarding school .....                      l) Other (please specify) .....  
.....
5. Do you hold a university/college degree, or any educational or professional qualification?  
Yes .....  
No .....
- If 'yes' please specify .....
6. What is your occupation? .....
- If married could you please state the occupation of your spouse  
.....  
(Please be as specific as possible)
7. Salary:
- a) Below £2,500 .....                      d) £3,501 - £4,000 .....  
b) £2,500 - £3,000 .....                      e) £4,001 - £4,500 .....  
c) £3,001 - £3,500 .....                      f) £4,500 + .....

(Continued)

8. Have you been a member of any voluntary organisations within the last few years? (e.g. T.U., professional association, charitable organisations, Women's Guilds, etc.). If so, could you please name them.
- i) .....
- ii) .....
- iii) .....
- iv) .....
9. Are you a member of any political party or political organisation? If so please state which .....
10. Please indicate if you have ever been elected to any particular post in the organisation(s) you have mentioned: .....
- .....
- .....
11. Are you a practising member of any religious group? If so please tick the appropriate one
- |                      |       |                           |       |
|----------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|
| a) Methodist         | ..... | e) Presbyterian           | ..... |
| b) Quaker            | ..... | f) Anglican               | ..... |
| c) Roman Catholic    | ..... | g) Jewish                 | ..... |
| d) Church of England | ..... | h) United Reform Church   | ..... |
|                      |       | i) Other (please specify) | ..... |
|                      |       |                           | ..... |
- If the answer is 'no' do you see yourself as:
- a) atheist .....  
 b) humanist .....  
 c) agnostic .....
12. In the event of a general election which party would you be most likely to vote for?
- |                 |       |                           |       |
|-----------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|
| a) Conservative | ..... | d) Other (please specify) | ..... |
| b) Labour       | ..... |                           | ..... |
| c) Liberal      | ..... | e) Don't know             | ..... |
13. Approximately how long have you been a member of .....
- .....
14. How often do you attend meetings, rallies, discussion groups or other activities organised by the group? (Please tick one of the following)
- a) More than once a month .....  
 b) At least once a month .....  
 c) Once every two months .....  
 d) Not very often .....

(Continued)

15. Do you hold an elected post or perform any official duties in your branch? If so please specify:

.....

16. How did you first hear of \_\_\_\_\_ and how did you come to be a member of your local branch? (e.g. through attendance at a public meeting, introduced by a friend, etc.):

.....  
 .....

17. Would you describe yourself as:

- a) Upper class .....
- b) Middle class .....
- c) Working class .....
- d) Other (please specify) .....

18. Below are a number of statements which express some ideas about important social, political and personal questions. Would you please indicate your measure of agreement or disagreement by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate column alongside each statement:

Statement	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
1. The solutions to many of the problems of our society may be found in the teachings of Christianity						
2. A person who has bad manners, habits and breeding can hardly expect to get along with decent people						
3. The highest form of government is a democracy and the highest form of democracy is a government run by those who are most intelligent						
4. Weaker attitudes towards discipline in both home and school has led to an increase in juvenile delinquency						
5. The raising of one's social position is one of the most important goals in life						

(Continued)

Statement	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
6. A child should learn early in life the value of a pound and the importance of ambition, efficiency and determination						
7. The family is a sacred institution divinely ordained						
8. It is only when a person devotes himself to an ideal or course that life becomes meaningful						
9. It is worth considerable effort to assure oneself of a good name with the right kind of people						
10. The most important qualities of a real man are strength of will and determined ambition						
11. With the increasing maturity and sexual awareness found amongst today's teenagers there is a case for lowering the legal age of consent						
12. My blood boils whenever a person stubbornly refuses to admit he's wrong						
13. Workers and Managements have common interests and should work together as a team						
14. Of all the different philosophies which exist in this world there is probably only one which is correct						
15. Trade Unions should have greater legal protection						
16. A woman whose children are messy or rowdy has failed in her duties as a mother						
17. The extent of a man's ambition to better himself is a pretty good indication of his character						

(Continued)

Statement	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
18. Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn						
19. There is little opportunity for talented people to get on in Britain						
20. By and large some equality in marriage is a good thing but the husband ought to have the final word in family matters						
21. The best way to solve social problems is to stick close to the middle of the road, to move slowly and avoid extremes						
22. It is difficult for a man to maintain respect for his fiancée if they have sexual relations before they are married						
23. There are two kinds of people in this world: those who are for the truth and those who are against the truth						
24. Women who want to remove the word 'obey' from the marriage service don't understand what it means to be a wife						
25. The monarchy is an institution we should be proud of						
26. A child should not be allowed to talk back to his parents, or else he will lose respect for them						
27. With so many people unemployed in this country the government should take steps to drastically reduce immigration						
28. Man on his own is a helpless and miserable creature						

(Continued)

Statement	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
29. There is a lot of evidence which shows us we have to crack down harder on young people to save our moral standards						
30. In order to merit the respect of others a person should show the desire to better himself						
31. If people would talk less and work more everybody would be better off						
32. I'd like it if I could find someone who would tell me how to solve my personal problems						
33. There is too much emphasis in British education on intellectual and theoretical topics and not enough emphasis on practical matters or on the homely virtues of living						
34. In this complicated world of ours the only way we can know what's going on is to rely on leaders or experts who can be trusted						
35. It goes against nature to place women in positions of authority over men						
36. The social, economic and political troubles currently facing this country are symptomatic of a moral crisis						
37. Although leisure is a fine thing it is good hard work that makes life interesting and worthwhile						
38. Unfortunately the virtues of thrift and diligence have lost their prestige in today's society						
39. Most people just don't know what's good for them						
40. All essential industries and services should be brought under state control						

(Continued)

Statement	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
41. If children are told too much about sex they are likely to go too far in experimenting with it						
42. It is often desirable to reserve judgment about what's going on until one has had a chance to hear the opinions of those one respects						
43. A child who is unusual in any way should be encouraged to be more like other children						
44. Britain may not be perfect but the British system has brought us about as close as human beings can get to a perfect society						
45. There is hardly anything lower than a person who does not feel a great love, gratitude and respect for his parents						
46. Certain types of crime merit the reintroduction of capital punishment						
47. It is only wishful thinking to believe that one can really influence what happens in society at large						
48. Elected officials become tools of special interests no matter what						

19. Listed below are a number of arguments in favour of the repeal of the present Abortion Law in this country. Would you please place these arguments in order of importance by numbering them one to six (i.e. number one being the most important). Please place the number in the box opposite each statement. Please give your personal opinion.
- a) More stringent rules governing the availability of abortion would eventually encourage a search for more humane solutions to many contemporary social problems:
- b) Britain should set an example by repealing the Abortion Act thus giving a moral lead to other nations:
- c) If the Abortion Law was repealed many innocent lives would be saved:
- d) A substantial reduction in the abortion rate would make it possible to redirect both medical and economic resources within the National Health Service:
- e) Restrictions on abortion would mean an end to the profiteering by many private clinics and pregnancy advisory services:
- f) Legislation making abortion illegal would enable doctors to fulfil their original role in society, that of saving life:
20. Previous Abortion (Amendment) Bills have been unsuccessful, if Benyon's Bill also fails to bring about a change in the law will you feel that your participation in the anti-abortion campaign will have been wasted?
- Yes.
- No.
- Don't know.
21. If 'NO' please state why you feel that your participation in the campaign has not been wasted.

(This page only appeared in the questionnaires sent to the anti-abortion group members).

19. Leaving aside for a moment the question of abortion, are there any other aspects of life in Britain today on which you hold strong views? Use the space below for your answer (or continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

20. The space below is for any further comments you may like to make regarding the question of abortion:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for taking the trouble to fill in this questionnaire. Could you please make sure that you have answered all the questions and then return the questionnaire in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope to:

Mr. A. Clarke,  
Department of Sociology,  
University of Nottingham,  
University Park,  
Nottingham NG7 2RD

Appendix 6.Registrar General's Classification of Occupations.

<u>Social Class</u>	<u>Occupational Category</u>	<u>Example</u>
I	Professional	Doctor, Lawyer.
II	Intermediate	Schoolteacher.
III a	Skilled non-manual	Clerk.
III b	Skilled manual	Bus driver.
IV	Semi-skilled	Postman.
V	Unskilled	Porter.

(Source: Reid, I. (1977). Social Class Differences in Britain, London: Open Books.)

Appendix 7.Co-ordinating Committee in Defence of the 1967 Abortion Act.

The following organisations are members:

Birth Control Campaign  
Birth Control Trust  
British Humanist Association  
British Pregnancy Advisory Service  
Brook Advisory Centres  
Child Poverty Action Group  
Christians For Free Choice  
Conservation Society  
Co-operative Women's Guild  
Doctors and Overpopulation Group  
Doctors for a Woman's Choice on Abortion  
Family Planning Association  
Haldane Society  
Labour Abortion Rights Campaign  
Marie Stopes House  
Medical Practitioners Union  
National Abortion Campaign  
National Association of Probation Officers  
National Association of young People's Counselling  
and Advisory Services  
National Council for Civil Liberties  
National Labour Women's Advisory Committee  
National Secular Society  
Rationalist Press Association  
Release  
Socialist Medical Association  
Tories For Free Choice  
Women in Media

A number of local women's rights groups are also members.

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