

Five years later

Abortion: The issue still burns

FIVE YEARS ago Sunday, the United States Supreme Court ruled that women have the right to abortions. To put it mildly, the decision has not been free from controversy.

John Cardinal Cody calls it "infamous." The National Organization for Women [NOW] calls it "monumental."

Those who disagree with the ruling say it violates the right to life. Those who agree with it say it upholds the right of privacy and freedom of choice.

The anti-abortion forces have been sufficiently vociferous to influence the passage of legislation forbidding the use of federal funds for abortions and requiring the consent of a minor's parents.

They also are trying to have a Human Life Constitutional Amendment passed,



which would overturn the Supreme Court ruling.

THE PRO-ABORTION forces have been quieter about their cause, partly because the law is on their side. Recently, however, they have felt threatened by the right-to-lifers' gains.

On the anniversary of the ruling both sides were tossing around a lot of rhet-

oric, much of it having to do with rights. It is interesting how the same rights were being cited by both sides.

"This infamous Supreme Court decision of 1973 broke the tradition of America to defend the freedom of human rights for all," said Cardinal Cody in a letter to the archdiocese urging Catholics to become more involved with parish anti-abortion groups.

"A major attack on your human rights is under way," said Eleanor Smeal, president of NOW in a letter urging people to join NOW and become more involved in fighting. "the well-funded efforts of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the other antichoice forces."

BOTH LETTERS also talk about the

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National Conference of Catholic Bishops. "It was to focus attention on pervasive threats to human life by abortion and to provide a means to re-establish the sanctity of life in society for all that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted a Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities in 1975," Cardinal Cody said.

"Although the Constitution guarantees separation of Church and State, the major supporter of the antichoice lobby is a religious group—the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The intimidation of the presidential candidates by the Roman Catholic hierarchy is an exercise of political power which threatens the rights of all Americans," the president of NOW said.

On a level not quite so mighty, people were making their views known on abortion Sunday.

FOR INSTANCE, Larry O'Neill of Palatine, president of the northwest chapter of the Illinois Citizens for Life was sitting in the Hillside shopping center parking lot in a chartered Greyhound bus, getting ready for the long ride to Washington and Monday's Pro-Life March.

"I first became involved when I realized abortion meant unborn babies were being killed," he said. "After I read the decision, I realized it meant abortion on demand right up to birth and anyone familiar with the development of unborn babies would realize it meant taking a human life."

O'Neill, who was being joined on the bus by other men, several women, some children, and a few nuns and priests, said the anti-abortion movement "has had a tremendous expansion" and that the march in Washington was "to bring the message loud and clear to the President and representatives that we are totally against the present abortion policy."

AT ABOUT THE same time O'Neill and the other 40 persons on the bus were to leave, the Coalition for Abortion Rights held a "Tribunal" at the First Unitarian Church of Chicago, in Hyde Park.

The "Tribunal" was a mock trial and the accused were United States Rep. Henry Hyde, the Park Ridge Republican who sponsored the legislation eliminat-

IRS tax services

The Internal Revenue Service will compute the taxes of taxpayers who qualify for the service and indicate on their form that they want it. The IRS also will compute the Earned Income Credit for eligible persons, those who earned less than \$8,000 while providing lodging for a dependent for most of the year.

Closeup

ing funds for abortions; an Illinois legislator named "Daley-Lemke-Kelly-Lieneneber;" President Carter; Joseph Califano, secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare; and a Prince of the Church.

The charges against them, as read by the "judge," were: "The women of the United States of America accuse you of these offenses against their civil, religious, and personal liberty.

"FIRST, THAT you have conspired to force poor women and young women to endure unwanted pregnancies by denying the right to abortion.

"Second, that you are attempting to impose on this nation a narrow religious belief about sexuality and reproduction.

"Third, that in doing so you have violated the constitutional guarantees of privacy and religious freedom.

"Fourth, that your acts are the cause of profound suffering and despair among women and will cost some of these women their lives."

There were "witnesses" against the accused. The first was a 28-year-old mother of two whose husband had left her. She had coped as best she could, and finally had taken job training courses. She also had become involved with a man "who has his problems, too, like trying to find a job.

"When I found out I was pregnant, I thought I would lose my mind," the "witness" said.

The "accused" were not moved. One suggested sterilization, another that she could accept what God has given her.

The next "witness" was a 17-year-old girl who worked after school, helped out at home, and was her father's hope for a better tomorrow.

"I can't tell him I'm pregnant," she said. "What am I going to do? I'm too young to have a baby. Please help me."

The "accused" were not moved.

THE THIRD "witness" was a 42-year-old mother of five children who had high blood pressure and was pregnant.

"I recommend you be very careful," the Illinois legislator said. "Tell that to the Holy Father here," said the "witness." "For years I used that rhythm method and that's where the five kids came from."

The "accused" were not moved.

The fourth witness was a "doctor" who talked about the dangers of "back-alley" abortions and how abortion allowed "high-risk women to avoid death in childbirth."

The "accused" were not moved.

There were several exchanges, including a "joint statement" by the "accused" to the "witnesses": "You are



Tribune Photo by James Mayo

At a mock trial, Madeline Schwenk portrays Rep. Henry Hyde, who sponsored legislation knocking out federal funds for abortions.

the pregnant, males are the free; yours is the burden, ours the decree, Bear ye the child, whatever the cost, Of incest or rape, or life to be lost."

There was a statement by the "judge." "Abortion is a legal operation protected by the constitutional guarantees of privacy and religious freedom," she said. "Your own religion opinions are irrelevant to that fact."

And then came the "sentence."

"American justice," the judge said, "sends you to live the lives of ordinary women, to experience the anxieties of contraception and the desperation of unwanted pregnancy."

The "accused" were moved.

