

# DIRECT ACTION

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## ALP CONFERENCE IGNORES REAL ISSUES

**WAR**  
CAUSES  
INFLATION  
STOP BOTH!

repeal  
all  
abortion  
laws  
women's abortion  
action campaign



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# POMPIDOU BANS FRENCH TROTSKYISTS



























# HUNDREDS MARCH JUNE 30 TO REPEAL ABORTION LAWS

BY NITA KEIG

In the first major action taken by pro-abortion forces since the defeat of the McKenzie-Lamb bill in Federal Parliament, over 400 people, most of them women, marched through the streets of Sydney on June 30. They demanded repeal of all abortion laws and freely available, safe contraceptives. Marchers carried banners bearing these demands as well as others which raised the fundamental issues related to abortion, such as Abortion Is A Woman's Right To Choose, Women Unite-Abortion Is Our Right, Control Of Our Lives and Our Bodies Belong To Neither Church Nor State.

A further banner carried at the very end of the march summed up the determined attitude of those participating. It read 'This Is Only The Beginning!'

The march was enthusiastic and militant as it circled the main block of the city with the marchers chanting 'Repeal All Abortion Laws, Abolish Laws that Murder Women, Every Child Should Be Wanted, and other slogans. Scores of placards calling for the repeal of all abortion laws were also carried, along with an array of many other hand painted ones.

The response to the march of shoppers and people in the street indicated a general feeling of support for the aims of the demonstration and very little abuse was heard from opponents of abortion.

The march concluded with a rally in Hyde Park which was addressed by George Petersen, NSW Labor MLA, Brigit Gilling, vice-president of the Abortion Law Reform Association, Lynne Smith from the Macquarie University Women's Abortion Action Committee, and Nita Keig from the Women's Abortion Action Campaign. Later the platform was opened up with women from the march coming forward and relating their experiences with abortions.

All speakers took up the question of what to do in the future, stressing the need to continue challenging the existing laws. George Petersen spoke about the legal situation relating to the abortion laws in NSW and that doctors were able to perform abortions with relative impunity. This was so due to the increased reluctance of the police to press charges against doctors performing abortions in light of the legal precedent set by the acquittal of the defendants in the Heatherbrae Clinic case and other Sydney doctors charged under the abortion laws. The situation points to the fact that only the wealthy could easily obtain safe illegal abortions which are virtually unobtainable by the vast majority of women.

Brigit Gilling continued with this theme and related it to the establishment of abortion clinics. She spoke of the oppression of women which came about due to the existence of these laws and how this was enforced by the present status quo.

Raising the whole strategical question of just how the laws were to be repealed,

Lynne Smith projected that mass action by women was the only way forward. No change in the present laws which are upheld by the very nature of the system under which we live, she contended, could be won without a fight.

Nita Keig followed this and took up the dominant theme of the march, that this was only the beginning, that a long and militant campaign aimed at continuing to mobilise the widest possible numbers of women in struggle around the issue was necessary. This was seen as the first of many such actions and as a spring board for a more intensive publicity campaign aimed at strengthening WAAC as the feminist group which is fighting for the repeal of the laws.

The march received extensive coverage on Sydney television with one station screening a lengthy film cut of the march.

The June 30 march and rally was the culmination of a vigorous campaign of poster, leafleting and selling badges advertising the action. One WAAC activist personally sold 500 badges, including 200 in one evening, giving an indication of the support amongst the Australian people for an end to the present laws. Support came to build the action and the ongoing campaign which will follow it from a broad group of individuals and a number of organisations. Many people contributed to the finances of the campaign through a regular stream of donations and many more individually sponsored WAAC.

Also as a part of the June 30 activities was the screening in the evening of a slide-show compiled in the United States by the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition. The show, attended by about 40 people, traced the history of the struggle for a woman's right to abortion

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