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Article abstract

The conflict within the Ontario New Democratic Party during 1982-1984 on the question of setting party policy in support of the feminist campaign for free-standing abortion clinics is used as a case study to develop three aspects of social movement theory: alliance and conflict systems, radical flank effects, and social movement-political party relations. A previously undocumented radical flank effect is proposed, an inequality effect, arising under conditions when the distinction between radical and dominant sectors of a social movement align with a form of fundamental social inequality. The inequality effect is consequential for creating a distinction in the alliance and conflict systems of the radical and dominant sectors of the movement. It is suggested that the relation of Canadian social democracy to social movements be read as a dynamic tension between constituency representation and brokerage politics.

Social Movement Activism in the Formation of Ontario New Democratic Party Policy on Abortion, 1982-1984

Lorna Weir

SECULAR PARTIES internationally have rarely taken party-political stands on abortion¹ except, as Joyce Outshoorn has argued, in reaction to the positions of religious parties in multiparty systems.² In Canada, however, the federal New Democratic Party and the Ontario and British Columbia New Democratic Parties formed party policy in the 1980s supporting the decriminalization of abortion and the feminist campaign for free-standing abortion clinics. They later actively opposed the Progressive Conservative Party's attempt to recriminalize abortion under Bill C-43.

This paper will focus on the formation of party policy on abortion by the Ontario New Democratic Party (ONDP) during the 1982-1984 period when the party leadership unsuccessfully resisted attempts led by the ONDP Women's Committee to pass resolutions endorsing the feminist campaign for free-standing abortion clinics. Opposition to taking a party position in support of pro-choice activism led to an unprecedented contested election in the ONDP Women's Committee in 1983, followed by divisions on the abortion question at Provincial Council. At the Party Convention in 1984, a pro-choice resolution was passed, though this again met with opposition from Party leadership.

The outcome of these struggles to establish party policy proved consequential for the ONDP in government, although party policy of course does not uniquely

¹ Alvin Cohan, "Abortion as a Marginal Issue: The Use of Peripheral Mechanisms in Britain and the United States," in Joni Lovenduski and Joyce Outshoorn, eds., *The New Politics of Abortion* (Beverly Hills 1986), 27-48; Alexander Smith, *The Comparative Policy Process* (Santa Barbara 1975); R. Tatalovich and B.W. Daynes, "Moral Controversies and the Policymaking Process: Lowi's Framework Applied to the Abortion Issue," *Policy Studies Review*, 3, 2 (1984), 207-22.

² Joyce Outshoorn, "The Rules of the Game: Abortion Politics in the Netherlands," in Lovenduski and Outshoorn, eds., *The New Politics of Abortion*, 5-26.

determine government action. After its election in 1990, the ONDP responded positively to immediate social movement pressure in the context of a federal bill (C-43) threatening to recriminalize abortion. Anne Swarbrick, the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, and the Minister of Health, Evelyn Gigantes, presented a brief that opposed Bill C-43 to the Senate Committee hearings.³ Moreover, within two months of forming the government in September 1990, the ONDP granted medicare coverage to the free-standing clinics, announced the extension by the Ministry of Health of Northern Travel Grants to include women unable to obtain abortion service delivery in their local areas, and began a series of consultations leading to a final report on problems of abortion service delivery in Ontario.⁴

The aim of this paper is both descriptive and theoretical. Its first two sections are intended as a contribution to an episode in contemporary Canadian feminist and labour politics that has little documentation other than a short account in *Giving Away A Miracle* by George Ehring and Wayne Roberts,⁵ a work of critical political journalism. My commentary foregrounds the formation of the feminist-labour alliance on pro-choice politics in Ontario and the outcomes of this alliance for the ONDP internally. During 1982 the Ontario Federation of Labour passed a motion endorsing the feminist campaign for free-standing clinics, a motion which became the basis for subsequent labour support of the pro-choice campaign in Ontario. When the ONDP leadership moved to control the ONDP Women's Committee and prevent it from supporting the feminist campaign, it was defeated by the feminist-labour alliance on two occasions, the first in a contested election of positions on the Women's Committee executive (1983), and the second at the Party Convention in 1984.

The descriptive material will subsequently be analyzed as a case study contributing to social movement theory on multiorganizational fields and social movement-political party relations. 'Multiorganizational field' is a concept denoting the alliance and conflict systems of social movement organizations, highlighting the fact that organizations in social movements have both supportive and antagonistic relations to external organizations and institutions. Drawing on recent social movement theory, I suggest that the formation of ONDP party policy on abortion be read as the outcome of changes in the multiorganizational field of Toronto feminism occurring in the late 1970s to mid-1980s, specifically the feminist-labour alliance, in combination with the constituency representation mechanisms in the ONDP which make the Party permeable to social movements.

³Government of Ontario, *Brief of the Government of Ontario to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on Bill C-43: An Act Respecting Abortion* (1991).

⁴The Task Group finished its work in December 1992: Task Group of Abortion Service Providers, *Report on Access to Abortion Services in Ontario* (1992).

⁵George Ehring and Wayne Roberts, *Giving Away a Miracle: Lost Dreams, Broken Promises and the Ontario NDP* (Oakville 1993).

Constituency representation mechanisms operate in political parties to institutionalize the representation of social groups external to the party, here feminism within the ONDP. This article is, therefore, a contribution to the remarkably small literature on relations between social movements and political parties. It is also an attempt to document and theorize a previously unrecognized form of 'radical flank effect' (defined below).

I should point out that the order of presentation, placing description prior to theory, breaks with the general conventions of social scientific writing which, following the genre rules of natural science, place theory before evidence. However, I would argue that this order of presentation fits poorly with argument from detailed case studies, and should not be applied prescriptively.

With respect to the social movement literature on multiorganizational fields, the case study demonstrates a previously undocumented pattern in social movement theories of radical flank effects, a 'radical flank' being a minority sector opposed to the dominant sector of a social movement. The case study shows how the social class politics of a social movement was diversified through the alliance system formed by the radical flank, e.g. the labour alliance of leftist pro-choice organizations. At a more general theoretical level, I suggest that, where the distinction between radical flank and dominant sector aligns with an axis of major social inequality, the alliance and conflict systems that have been formed on the basis of that form of social inequality will be introduced into the multiorganizational field of the social movement. I will call this form of radical flank effect an inequality effect.

Lastly, with respect to social movement-party relations, I argue that constituency representation mechanisms for women and labour within the ONDP acted to undercut the brokerage politics which generally lead parties to avoid taking stands on abortion. In the period 1982-1984 ONDP brokerage politics went down to a resounding defeat on the abortion question. The internal party conflicts around abortion may be part of a more general historical pattern of constituency vs. brokerage tensions in Canadian social democracy. The model of social democracy as a conflict system between constituency and brokerage politics is, I would maintain, a more productive way of understanding the relations between social movements and social democracy in Canada than posing their relation as historically sequential. The preferred model of interpreting Canadian social democracy to date has been a simplistic trajectory from a social movement earlier this century to a homogeneous brokerage party today. This analysis of social democracy has recently been contested by Alan Whitehorn on the grounds that the CCF itself was always a party, never a socialist movement.⁶ I would add that the relation between the NDP and social movements external to the Party has been a continuing one, and that the fixation of the literature on socialist protest vs. party electoralism has done much to marginalize this area of investigation. This dystopic vision has narrowed

⁶Alan Whitehorn, *Canadian Socialism: Essays on the CCF-NDP* (Toronto 1992), 19-34.

the ways leftists have written Canadian social democracy, seduced by the comforting repetition of a narrative of betrayal that constitutes the narrator as blameless and true. However satisfying this may be personally and politically, it makes for rather poor social science.

The information in this paper is based on seventeen transcribed in-person and telephone interviews with members of the ONDP, the ONDP Women's Committee, pro-choice activists outside the NDP, labour feminists and the Women's Bureau at the Ontario Ministry of Health. Those interviewed had been active in abortion politics during the 1980s and early 1990s in and around the ONDP, with the exception of the Women's Bureau representative whom I interviewed regarding the changes in health services to abortion. The text also draws upon another prior set of twenty interviews done between December 1988 and July 1992 which focused on the contributions of socialist and left feminists to pro-choice organizing in Canada. Primary sources include committee minutes and both social-movement and ONDP leaflets,⁷ and internal documents of the ONDP Women's Committee and the ONDP. I am particularly reliant on unpublished ONDP materials to characterize the position taken by those who did not want the Party to endorse the campaign for free-standing abortion clinics. These sources make clear the positions held, but not their motivations, a topic which in any case is not germane to my theoretical arguments.

Despite efforts to contact those who had opposed the ONDP taking a public policy decision in support of the pro-choice campaign, I was able to interview only one person who had maintained that position. Many of the people who spoke with me were employed in the government and the civil service at the time of the interview. They were reluctant to speak on a subject that had caused division in their Party and that might potentially cause embarrassment to themselves or the government. Several people consented to be interviewed on the grounds that they not be named. The following work thus reflects problems endemic to elite interviewing where the costs of remembering may be high.

The Feminist-Labour Alliance on Abortion

THE PRO-CHOICE ALLIANCE between feminism and labour in Ontario was established outside the ONDP, and subsequently became the social base used inside the Party to defeat leadership from blocking the formation of public policy in support of free-standing clinics. This labour-feminist alliance within the ONDP was an unusual move on the part of organized labour, which generally has sided with the party leadership (although the situation is now [1994] in rapid change). In this section I will outline how the feminist-labour alliance in abortion politics was fashioned in Ontario, reserving discussion of how this alliance was deployed within

⁷Since neither the minutes of the ONDP Women's Committee Executive nor OCAC have been archived, I was dependent on the generosity of my informants for this literature, with resulting gaps.

the ONDP to the next section. Both of these sections are primarily descriptive, followed by two theoretical sections that interpret the case study as a whole. The present section on the feminist-labour alliance will later be interpreted as a change in the multiorganizational field of Toronto feminism, an instance of a radical flank effect where the left wing of the women's movement sought ongoing support from labour, support further inscribing working-class alliances into feminism as a social movement. This particular kind of radical flank effect I am provisionally calling an "inequality effect."

A new cycle of Canadian abortion activism began with Henry Morgentaler's sudden announcement at the May 1982 CARAL (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League) Annual General Meeting in Toronto that he intended to establish a free-standing abortion clinic outside Québec.⁸ Such clinics ostensibly violated Section 251 of the Criminal Code of Canada. Under this Section of the Criminal Code, all abortions were deemed criminal except those performed in an accredited hospital with the written consent of a therapeutic abortion committee comprised of three medical doctors. Therapeutic abortion committees were permitted to grant requests to terminate pregnancy on two broad grounds: danger to the life or health of the pregnant woman. Free-standing clinics challenged the Criminal Code since they were not in accredited hospitals and lacked therapeutic abortion committees. The clinics were also viewed by pro-choice groups as providing needed services and both symbolic of, and rallying points for, resistance.

In Toronto, the Committee to Establish an Abortion Clinic was founded in June 1982 after it had become clear that Morgentaler would not initially open a clinic in that city.⁹ The International Women's Day Committee (IWDC), a group which explicitly called itself socialist-feminist, realized that political mobilization would be necessary to defend the clinic and proposed to the Committee to Establish an Abortion Clinic that a separate organization be founded.¹⁰ The first meeting of this group, the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, occurred in September 1982. OCAC was the key pro-choice organization in Ontario promoting the feminist-labour alliance during the early to mid-1980s. (CARAL-National was also situated in Toronto but its activities were concentrated on co-ordinating its national network of CARAL chapters and member groups, legal fundraising and federal lobbying.) By 1983 OCAC had a paid membership of 3,000, an activist core of about 25-30, an office and one part-time worker. The organization did active media work, provided a speaker service for schools and community groups and put together public

⁸Interview with Norma Scarborough, former President of CARAL, 10 January 1989.

⁹The first clinic in Toronto was operated by Dr. Leslie Smoling in rented premises. Owners of the building seized equipment and the rental deposit when it came to their attention that purportedly illegal activities were to take place on the premises. After these events, Morgentaler agreed to buy a building suitable for operating a clinic.

¹⁰Interview with Carolyn Egan, Member of the Co-ordinating Committee, OCAC, 12 December 1988.

forums. It organized numerous demonstrations and pickets. When the Morgentaler Clinic in Toronto was picketed on a daily basis by anti-choice groups, OCAC engaged in counter-pickets and formed an escort service for women seeking abortions.

Members of the International Women's Day Committee were active in OCAC, and generally composed two of the seven members of OCAC's co-ordinating committee. A socialist feminist perspective was hence influential in OCAC. In an article signed by OCAC as an organization, the group characterizes its politics as follows:

OCAC's political perspective integrated the demand for clinics, which arose initially out of the women's health movement, with socialist feminist principles of mass action, movement building and putting the maximum pressure on the state.¹¹

Typical of left feminist and socialist feminist groups, OCAC understood abortion within a multi-issue interpretive framework of reproductive freedom that constructed abortion as one among many factors needed to secure women's reproductive security:

[OCAC] has never seen the demand for abortion in isolation, but rather as one of a number of interdependent struggles — from autonomous midwifery to universal daycare, from employment equity to the capacity to define and live independent sexualities — which must be fought and won for women to control their bodies and their lives. This reproductive and sexual freedom in its widest sense is its [OCAC's — LW] ultimate goal.¹²

Reproductive freedom/rights was a political strategy first developed by American feminists associated with the organization Committee for Abortion Rights and against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA) as a way of integrating at the level of political discourse the divergent reproductive needs of women divided on racial, class, ethnic and sexual grounds.¹³

¹¹ Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, "State Power and the Struggle for Reproductive Freedom: The Campaign for Free-Standing Abortion Clinics in Ontario," *Resources for Feminist Research* 17(3), 109.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Adele Clark and Alice Wolfson, "Socialist-Feminism and Reproductive Rights: Movement Work and Its Contradictions," *Socialist Review* 78 (1984), 110-5; Carolyn Egan, "Reproductive Rights," in Robert Argue, Charlene Gannagé, D.W. Livingston, eds., *Working People and Hard Times* (Toronto 1987), 274; Patricia Antonyshyn, B. Lee and Alex Merrill, "Marching for Women's Lives: The Campaign for Free-Standing Abortion Clinics in Ontario," in Frank Cunningham, Sue Findlay, Marlene Kadar, Alan Lennon, eds., *Social Movements/Social Change* (Toronto 1988), 131.

Carolyn Egan, active in both OCAC and RWDC from their inception, associates the pro-choice alliance that OCAC sought with the labour movement with OCAC's socialist feminist politics. She notes that:

While OCAC is not a socialist feminist group, the fact that many of its core activists are and come from RWDC in particular, give it a strategy that I see as socialist feminist ... Sharing a class analysis, the socialist feminists in OCAC have turned to the labour movement as a potentially powerful ally.¹⁴

Soon after its inaugural meeting on September 28, 1982, OCAC formed a trade union liaison subcommittee with the aim of getting a pro-choice resolution passed at the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) Convention in November of that year. Forming an alliance with labour was seen as an effective way to build support for a long-term fight against anti-choice groups and the state, as well as a means of putting pressure on the ONDP to support the pro-choice campaign:

We [OCAC — LW] chose to go off to labour first, get that in place, and have significant people like Cliff Pilkey, head of the OFL, willing to write statements why this was a labour issue, this was an issue that should be supported. It would have been quite difficult for the NDP, the party of the working class as it were, to have a contradictory position on such a question.¹⁵

The strategic orientation to organized labour was, as I will soon show, characteristic of left feminist groups in southern Ontario from the late 1970s to the present time, though not of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL).

The most powerful pro-choice organization in Canada, CARAL, operated on a national basis, but with a weak presence in Québec. In 1984 it had roughly 18,000 paid members and twenty chapters. During the period 1982-1984, CARAL concentrated its efforts on repealing all sections of the Criminal Code that regulated abortion. Although formally favouring the extension of abortion services and counselling, CARAL's chief efforts during the 1980s focused on the federal Criminal Code, federal lobbying, fundraising and connecting and co-ordinating local groups.

CARAL-National, the Toronto-based headquarters of the national organization, and left feminist pro-choice organizations¹⁶ had the same goals and worked together co-operatively. OCAC was (and is), for instance, a member organization of CARAL. However, during the 1980s CARAL-National was a firmly liberal feminist organization with no practice of working with organized labour and few group memberships from unions. It did not seek popular alliances with other social

¹⁴Egan, "Reproductive Rights," 115.

¹⁵Interview with Carolyn Egan, 20 December 1991.

¹⁶Left feminist pro-choice organizations included the Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion (Vancouver), the Coalition for Reproductive Choice (Winnipeg), the Coalition québécoise pour le droit à l'avortement libre et gratuit (Montreal and throughout Quebec).

movements in the manner undertaken by OCAC, nor did it defend abortion service delivery on the political ground of reproductive freedom. CARAL's member groups and chapters were sometimes active locally in popular alliances with non-feminist groups and unions, but this pattern did not characterize the Toronto region, where the head office, CARAL-National, and OCAC had distinctly different patterns of class alliances. CARAL-National was charged with the responsibility for representing the organization as a whole and thus given to a form of quasi-brokerage politics that foreclosed the possibility of strong working-class-inflected politics of alliances. In contrast, the discursive and organizational practice of OCAC and other left feminist organizations harmonized pro-choice politics with working-class solidarity. They interpreted Canadian abortion service delivery as elite-permissive and negative in its outcomes for working-class women, a result of the combined effects of the Criminal Code, provincial health care systems, the medical profession and provincial and regional inequalities. Left pro-choice groups argued that the reproductive health of women of colour, rural women and disabled women was likewise negatively affected by poor abortion service delivery. These groups were interpreted as sharing common problems in abortion access due to federal and provincial state practices. The politics of reproductive freedom were, therefore, able to sustain and transmit both working-class and popular forms of solidarity. Hence, the organizational division between CARAL-National and OCAC aligned with a class cleavage in complex ways.

By the time of the November 1982 OFL Convention when OCAC tried to gain the backing of the Convention for the pro-choice campaign, the OFL already had a history of support for feminist initiatives. These included its first women's conference in 1979, the re-establishment of a women's committee in 1978,¹⁷ and its childcare policy of 1980.¹⁸ In February of 1982 the OFL Women's Committee had held a conference on affirmative action, and in the following year an affirmative action programme aimed at expanding the proportion of women on its executive bodies was implemented. The OFL Women's Committee was initially approached by OCAC prior to the 1982 OFL Convention for its co-operation in putting forward a pro-choice resolution at Convention. However, the Women's Committee believed that support for the pro-choice motion might jeopardize passage of the constitutional amendments needed for the affirmative action policy by centring debate on the choice issue.¹⁹ The proposal for a pro-choice motion instead went to the OFL Women's Caucus, a non-elected body with no official status that all women

¹⁷Julie White, *Sisters and Solidarity: Women in Unions in Canada* (Toronto 1993), 124.

¹⁸Ronnie Leah, "Organizing for Daycare," in Argue, *et al.*, eds., *Working People and Hard Times*, 260-73.

¹⁹Interview with Carolyn Egan, 12 December 1988; interview with Judy Rebick, Member of OCAC Co-ordinating Committee and Member of Executive, ONDP Women's Committee, 22 December 1988; interview with Carrol-Anne Sceviour, Human Rights Director Responsible for Women's Issues, Ontario Federation of Labour, 1986- , 20 January 1992.

delegates were welcome to attend; in practice the Caucus was a feminist body. The Women's Caucus proved strongly in favour of going forward with the debate. Subsequently, after meeting with the Caucus at convention, the OFL Women's Committee reversed its earlier position and chose to both support and actively organize around the choice motion. Judy Rebick, then spokesperson for OCAC, was asked to speak to the OFL Women's Committee soon after the Convention, and invited by the Committee to address union events.²⁰ After the 1982 Convention had passed the motions that endorsed the principle goals of the pro-choice campaign, OCAC had the full co-operation of the OFL Women's Committee.

The trade union liaison subcommittee of OCAC prepared a leaflet, "Why Trade Unions Should Support the Legalization of Medically Insured Free-Standing Abortion Clinics," expressly for the 1982 OFL Convention. The leaflet constructed abortion as "linked with the struggle for 'equal pay for work of equal value', the struggle for free and universal daycare, for maternity leave, and for an end to sexual harassments" as fundamental to "women's struggle for equality and independence."²¹ The leaflet provided information on the difficulties of obtaining abortions and a call for unity between the women's and trade union movements.

OCAC sought the support of Organized Working Women (OWW), a non-constitutional, feminist body within the OFL, founded in 1976, which had provided women from differing unions a place to compare experiences, devise tactics and press for change in their own unions and the OFL.²² Two members of OWW who were delegates to the OFL convention sponsored the motion. One of these was the first to speak during the debate on the motion; she made clear that her son had very recently died of an hereditary illness and she herself had received several backstreet abortions. She was followed by several speakers, one of whom, Wally Majesky, was head of the Metro Toronto Labour Council. The motion was passed with overwhelming support. It endorsed the decriminalization of abortion, medically-insured free-standing abortion clinics and improved access to service delivery.

It should be noted that the connections between organized labour and pro-choice activism were present throughout Canada and Québec, an alliance that had been initiated by left and socialist feminists.²³ CARAL, by contrast, had very little union support. The resolution supporting free-standing clinics passed at the 1982 Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress (an event that happened after the OFL Convention of 1982 and which was influenced by that precedent), was drafted

²⁰Interview with Judy Rebick, 22 December 1988.

²¹OCAC, "Why Should Trade Unions Support the Legalization of Medically Insured Free-standing Abortion Clinics?," unpublished mss. 1982, 2.

²²Nancy Adamson, Linda Briskin and Marg McPhail, *Feminist Organizing for Change* (Toronto 1988), 77-8; Rosemary Warskett, "Struggling to Define Who We Are: Union Culture in the Ontario Labour Movement," in C. Leys and M. Mendell, eds., *Culture and Social Change: Social Movements in Quebec and Ontario* (Montréal 1992), 109-27.

²³Lorna Weir, "Left Popular Politics in Canadian Feminist Abortion Organizing," *Feminist Studies*, 20 (2) (Summer 1994) 249-74.

by socialist feminists in the Rank and File Caucus. Pro-choice resolutions received approval in the numerous unions, including the Canadian Auto Workers, the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia Federations of Labour, the Canadian Labour Council Federation and many locals of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Union endorsers of the Vancouver-based Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion numbered 22 different labour formations in the later 1980s, among them the International Ladies Garment Workers, the Canadian Farmworkers, the British Columbia Federation of Teachers and the Vancouver District Labour Council. The Coalition Québécoise pour le droit à l'avortement libre et gratuit had strong ties with the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec and the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec. One indication of trade union support was the opening of a women's health clinic doing abortions in the CSN building in Québec City during 1979 at the impetus of labour women seeking better service delivery to working-class women.

Organized labour has been the most consistent ally of feminism in pro-choice activism. As I have shown elsewhere,²⁴ this alliance has been the achievement of left and socialist feminists committed to a broadly-conceived politics of reproductive freedom that placed abortion in the context of multiple social and economic conditions needed to secure reproductive autonomy for women. This position differs from the single-issue focus of CARAL. The discourse of reproductive freedom has become deeply embedded in Canadian unionism, as evidenced, for instance in Nancy Riche's (Vice-President, Canadian Labour Congress) testimony on behalf of the CLC to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in its hearings on Bill C-43:

... we have always believed that the trade union movement is more than about wages and working conditions. If we take a position on equality for women, we cannot stop at the point of the abortion issue. We cannot say that women must be equal economically; that we must have equal pay for work of equal value; that we must have access to all the jobs; and not say that a woman has a right to choose.²⁵

The 1988 OFL policy position paper, *Still a Long Way from Equality*, constructed abortion as an individual choice for women, emphasized the need for public funding and uniform access, and pointed out that women's reproductive needs require access to birth control, good pre-natal care and "universal, affordable and high quality child care and social policies which ensure decent economic support for families."²⁶

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵Canadian Labour Congress, "Testimony." *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs* (Ottawa 1991), 44.

²⁶Ontario Federation of Labour, *Still a Long Way From Equality* (Document 3, Thirty-second Annual Convention 1988), 6. This position paper was approved by a 2-1 majority at this Convention.

As OCAC member and long time feminist activist Carolyn Egan has written, the feminist-labour alliance in abortion politics materialized on the basis of the pre-existing ties between the women's movement and labour formed during the course of a crucial series of primarily women's strikes in the late 1970s and early 1980s: Fleck, Blue Cross, Fotomat, Mini-Skools, Puretex.²⁷ The Toronto-based socialist-feminist group, the International Women's Day Committee (now Toronto Socialist Feminist Action) played a critical role in linking feminist activism with the labour movement:

One of the IWDC's most important contributions to the Toronto Women's movement was the alliance it achieved with the women's committees in various unions, the Ontario Federation of Labour, and the Ontario New Democratic Party, as well as Organized Working Women ... The alliance was also one link in the chain that increased active trade-union support for issues such as day-care, abortion and equal pay.²⁸

IWDC was as well key in convincing the National Action Committee on the Status of Women to support the 1981 CUPW strike that included a demand for paid maternity leave. Through this alliance system between feminism and the labour movement there occurred what Heather Jon Maroney has called a "widening of the class basis of feminism."²⁹ The class widening temporally coincided with the extension of feminism across major social institutions such as the military and organized religion.³⁰

OCAC was a new social movement organization in 1982. Its members regarded their organization as part of the women's movement. In late 1982 OCAC was working to form its own organizational alliance system. Its allies were created on the basis of previous organizational alliances and personal networks found among Toronto socialist feminists, particularly through the work of IWDC, which had an overlapping membership with OCAC. Seeing the need for broad support outside the women's movement for a campaign that would last several years at various levels of the judicial system, OCAC moved to ally with organized labour. Through its intervention at the 1982 OFL Convention, OCAC was able to establish goal congru-

²⁷Egan, "Reproductive Rights," 275. For the secondary literature on the links between feminism and labour activism in this period see Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz, eds., *Union Sisters* (Toronto 1983); Meg Luxton and June Corman, "Getting to Work: The Challenge of the Women Back into Stelco Campaign," *Labour/Le Travail*, 28 (1991), 149-85; Heather Jon Maroney, "Feminism at Work," in Heather Jon Maroney and Meg Luxton, eds., *Feminism and Political Economy* (Toronto 1987), 85-108; Warskett, "Struggling to Define Who We Are."

²⁸Adamson, et al., *Feminist Organizing for Change*, 79.

²⁹Maroney, "Feminism at Work," 86.

³⁰Sue Findlay, "Feminist Struggles with the Canadian State, 1966-1988," *Resources for Feminist Research*, 17, 3 (1988), 5-9; Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, "Feminism within American Institutions: Unobtrusive Mobilization in the 1980s," *Signs*, 16, 1 (1990), 25-54.

ency between the pro-choice campaign and a significant proportion of organized labour. Subsequent to the precedent-setting vote at the OFL Convention, other unions and locals endorsed pro-choice resolutions. Ten years later Judy Rebick, then President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, who had been present at the 1982 Convention as a CUPE delegate and was simultaneously acting media spokesperson for OCAC, recalled the Convention as an historic breakthrough in the alliance between the women's and trade union movements:

For almost 15 years women in the labour movement and in the women's community have been working together to build alliances ... In my view the turning point in our alliance was the 1982 Ontario Federation of Labour Convention where the OFL decided to support free-standing abortion clinics ... The support of the OFL and later the CLC was critical to winning free choice on abortion. Just as importantly, it convinced the women's community that labour was really an ally in our struggle for equality.³¹

It might be noted that we see here in the activity of OCAC the creation of a politics that added new elements to a previously existing alliance system. Through the above-mentioned activities the new organization initiated new goal congruity in its field of allies.

Through the OFL resolution, OCAC gained both symbolic and material resources from organized labour. Unions made declarations of support in formal resolutions, and labour speakers, including Dennis McDermott, President of the Canadian Labour Congress, Cliff Pilkey, President of the OFL, Wally Majesky, President of the Metro Toronto Labour Council and Grace Hartmann, President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. The tactic of having well-known union speakers at rallies and press conferences gained media publicity for these events. Both individual unions and centrals such as the OFL, International Ladies Garment Workers, the Canadian Auto Workers, Steelworkers, the United Electrical Workers and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union also made in-kind and financial donations, although these were sharply curtailed after one member of OPSEU began a legal challenge to union political donations. In seeking the assistance of organized labour, OCAC was repeating the pattern of North American social movements, where the two most common external allies of social movements have been religious groups and organized labour, each of these having considerable resources and containing supporters of social movements.³² For organized labour, the support of the pro-choice campaign in tandem with its backing of child care and affirmative action represented an early instance of its growing alliance with the popular

³¹Judy Rebick, "Building a Movement for Social Change," in *The Importance of Coalition Building* (Toronto, Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto and York Region, Annual Yearbook 1992), 15 & 73.

³²John D. McCarthy and Mark Wolfson, "Consensus Movements, Conflict Movements, and the Co-optation of Civic and State Infrastructures," in Aldon Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven 1992), 283.

sector³³ and separate representation of its own political interests rather than indirectly through the NDP.³⁴

The Formation of ONDP Policy on Abortion, 1982-1984

THE PRO-CHOICE CAMPAIGN met with opposition in the ONDP at the Women's Committee, Provincial Council and Convention. However, by 1982 there existed strong representation from labour feminists and women's movement activists inside the ONDP Women's Committee, together with a history of cooperation between the Women's Committee and both the local Toronto women's movement and the OFL Women's Committee. The ONDP Women's Committee was a feminist organization and thus embodied social movement politics within the ONDP. The existence of the ONDP Women's Committee made the Party structurally permeable to feminist social movement organizing. The Women's Committee acted to represent the women's movement within the ONDP, and in so doing repeatedly ran into conflict with ONDP brokerage party politics. I will later argue that the documentation provided in this section illustrates the dynamic tension between the constituency representation and brokerage party mechanisms in the ONDP.

The ONDP Women's Committee was founded in December 1973 with a mandate of:

1) increasing 'the participation of women in the Party at all levels'; 2) educating 'women in the NDP in all aspects of political activity'; 3) participating 'with women outside the Party in areas of mutual interest'; and 4) '(encouraging) these women to join the Party and work with the Party.'³⁵

It functions as a subcommittee of, and reports to, the Provincial Council.³⁶ All women party members are formally considered members of the Committee and

³³A recent publication of the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto and York Region illustrates the importance of feminist politics within the growth of union popular sector alliances. *The Importance of Coalition Building* (1992 Yearbook, Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto and York Region, Toronto 1992) contains three articles on feminist activism: abortion politics by two members of OCAC, solidarity between feminist and labour movements by the President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and child care by the President of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

³⁴Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson, *Crisis, Challenge and Change* (Ottawa 1988), 304-6; Peter Bleyer, "Coalitions of Social Movements as Agencies for Social Change: The Action Canada Network," in William K. Carroll, ed., *Organizing Dissent* (Toronto 1992), 102-17.

³⁵Sylvia Bashevkin, *Toeing the Lines: Women and Party Politics in English Canada* (Toronto 1985), 85.

³⁶The ONDP Women's committee is structurally similar to the older Ontario CCF Women's Committee (est. 1942) in being a standing committee of the provincial council (Bashevkin, *Toeing the Lines*, 109). Bashevkin quotes Dean Beeby as stating that this latter group was the first women's organization to be included in a Canadian political party with a status other than that of auxiliary.

eligible to vote for members of the executive at the annual Women's Conference.³⁷ During restructuring in 1977, the Committee designated a trade union liaison position, and in 1980 the OFL Women's Committee created a permanent appointment for a representative of the ONDP Women's Committee on its executive. Labour women played a key role when the ONDP Women's Committee redrafted party policies on women during 1979.³⁸

By 1982, the year in which the debate on the pro-choice campaign first occurred in the ONDP, the Women's Committee had developed strong ties to both organized labour and the feminist movement. During the months immediately preceding the abortion controversy, the Women's Committee held a joint meeting with the OFL Women's Committee on 2 February 1982, and, at the OFL Conference on Affirmative Action in May 1982, the NDP was permitted fifty delegates. In March of that same year, the ONDP Women's Committee co-sponsored a support picket for strikers at Block Drug Company with the March 8th Coalition (a broad-based feminist coalition which annually organized the celebration of International Women's Day in the Toronto area) and the OFL Women's Committee.³⁹ It sent representatives to the annual general meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, participated in the March 8th Coalition, and both endorsed and gave a \$50 donation to an "Evening of Solidarity with Women in Central America" sponsored by the International Women's Day Committee.⁴⁰ Announcements of feminist events such as the Canadian Conference on Day Care⁴¹ were made regularly at its meetings. In addition, the Committee was occupied with party-internal matters: affirmative action, skills training workshops for women, affirmative action for women in the ONDP.

The first mention of abortion in the minutes of the ONDP Women's Committee occurred on June 28, 1982 as a motion: "that we accept recommendation of workshop on health and actively support coalition on birth control clinics."⁴² The motion was carried. Mary Rowles, who moved it, and who was at that time a legislative assistant in the NDP parliamentary caucus, recalls the impetus for the position as coming from OCAC:

I can remember sitting there when the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics came to the Women's Committee to ask us if we would take a position. When we would start fighting around the Morgentaler clinic and what was our position on abortion? It's like somebody had flirted at a dinner party. We were totally stunned. We all looked at each other and sort of went, oh golly, what is it? What is the policy? ... We were all looking at each other like,

³⁷For a short history of the ONDP Women's Committee, 1973-1982, see Bashevkin, *Toeing the Lines*, 85-6.

³⁸Janis Sarra, "Trade Unions and the NDP," in Briskin and Yanz, *Union Sisters*, 351-2.

³⁹Minutes of the ONDP Women's Committee Executive, 18 February 1982.

⁴⁰Minutes of ONDP Women's Executive Committee, 27 May 1982.

⁴¹Minutes of the ONDP Women's Committee Executive, 28 June 1982.

⁴²*Ibid.*

why wouldn't we? And then of course the people who were in charge had all sorts of ideas why wouldn't we. It sort of became a little hostile: Well, people have to think about this.⁴³

Judy Rebick likewise recalls a division in the Women's Committee on the question of support for free-standing clinics:

LW: When was the ONDP first urged to support elective clinics?

JR: It started in the NDP Women's Committee, and there was a fight in the NDP Women's Committee. ... there was at that time a caution on the part of that half of the committee that the NDP move in this direction. And that's when the division started in the Women's Committee and the whole fight around abortion became the central issue on the Committee and the Party, in relation to the Committee ... At that time, the leadership of the Committee, the President, was not in favour of us pushing this in the Party, but there was a strong group in the Women's Committee, who had always seen themselves as somewhat in opposition in the Women's Committee, who were pushing it.⁴⁴

Those on the Women's Committee who opposed taking a stand on the pro-choice campaign did so on the grounds that the Party already had a pro-choice position dating to 1971 in the first cycle of abortion activism, that supporting free-standing clinics would be divisive, and that the Women's Committee should prioritize work on affirmative action within the party.

The next mention of abortion in the Committee minutes did not occur until an announcement of a forthcoming Committee meeting on 29 November 1982 that indicated tension between the legislative caucus and the Women's Committee:

*Among the items on the agenda will be our support of the Abortion Coalition and what form this should take in view of our decision June 28th to support the Coalition, and in view of the Caucus' decision not to publicly support the coalition.*⁴⁵

Many members of the twenty-one seat NDP legislative caucus were personally anti-choice, including MPPs Elie Martel, Bob Mackenzie, Jack Stokes, Marion Bryden⁴⁶ and Odoardo Di Santo, despite the fact that the 1980 NDP policy voted at convention called for equal access to abortion for all Ontario women. Throughout

⁴³Interview with Mary Rowles, 19 March 1992. Since OCAC was not founded until September 1982, they were more likely approached by the earlier group, the Committee to Establish an Abortion Clinic (CEAC). This interpretation is consistent with the wording of the 28 June 1982 motion, which endorses the general principle of birth control clinics, not free-standing clinics specifically. During the summer of 1982 CEAC requested that the Minister of Health authorize the establishment of abortion clinics in Ontario, a request that had already been turned down in 1977-1978.

⁴⁴Interview with Judy Rebick, 21 January 1992.

⁴⁵Undated notice c. November 1982 ONDP Women's Committee Executive.

⁴⁶Marion Bryden later reversed her position.

1982 and 1983 the only members of the caucus to publicly support the campaign for abortion clinics were Jim Renwick and Richard Johnston.

Party reaction to the pro-choice campaign became urgent during the fall of 1982 as the result of the heightened public profile of the pro-choice campaign. Henry Morgentaler had been invited to open a clinic in Toronto; OCAC was active and generating media coverage; in late October the Manitoba NDP as governing party had declared they would not intervene if criminal charges were to be laid against Morgentaler for operating a clinic in Winnipeg. At this time the ONDP was internally divided on the abortion issue, with the caucus split — thus making anything other than a reiteration of party policy unlikely — and its Women's Committee calling for a strong party stand endorsing the opening of abortion clinics.

In early December 1982 a joint caucus-party committee was struck to reach a compromise position on abortion and report to Provincial Council. Joint caucus-party committees are a device to resolve disputes between the legislative caucus and elements within the party; they meet outside provincial council, sometimes making recommendations to council or providing a rough provisional agreement among contenders until the issue(s) can be resolved at biennial party conventions. Five of the fourteen members on the joint caucus-party committee on abortion came from the Women's Committee Executive: Marion Bryden, MPP (Caucus Representative), Lynn MacDonald (President), Judy Rebick (OCAC Spokesperson and Co-ordinating Committee Member), Mary Rowles, and Janis Sarra (ONDP Women's Committee Representative to the OFL Women's Committee). The "Report of the Joint Caucus/Party Committee on Abortion" was tabled at the mid-December meeting of Provincial Council and called for the decriminalization of abortion, expanded sex education, research and development of new contraceptive methods and the establishment of women's health centres. It argued that "access to abortion must be achieved within the context of law" and stated that the Party "cannot condone the establishment of illegal clinics."⁴⁷ The line of conflict between the Women's Committee and the Joint Caucus-Party Committee on abortion is clear: the Party would not issue any statement supporting the campaign for free-standing abortion clinics. The Party would support the general principle of equal access to abortion and reproductive autonomy for women while at the same time being in disagreement with the specific form of pro-choice tactics.

The proposal to the Joint Caucus-Party Committee by the Women's Committee, while remaining within the confines of previous Party resolutions, called for medically-insured free-standing clinics and supported the OFL and OCAC "in their campaign to alert the membership and the public to the problems of the legality and accessibility of abortion."⁴⁸ On the issue of legality, the document noted that "we cannot condone an action of civil disobedience," but placed the responsibility

⁴⁷"Report of the Joint Caucus-Party Committee on Abortion," n.d. (c. mid-December 1982).

⁴⁸Undated memo from Janis Sarra to Hugh Mackenzie, (c. December 1982).

in the hands of "unjust laws and government's total insensitivity to the needs of women."⁴⁹ Conflict thus existed between the positions of the Women's Committee and the Joint Party-Caucus Committee, even within the parameters of existing ONDP positions on abortion made during the 1970s. The Women's Committee consented to the "Report of the Joint Caucus/Party committee on Abortion" as a provisional position, with the fundamental issues to be resolved at Party Convention in 1984.

Bob Rae, addressing ONDP Provincial Council in December 1982 as leader of the Party in a speech entitled, "Things that Should Be Public and Things that Should Be Private," constructed abortion as a matter of private morality within a framework that "makes clear our Party's commitment to equality of access, to public health, and to *the rule of law* in the province (my emphasis)."⁵⁰ Rae thus echoed the recommendations of the Joint Caucus-Party Committee in its Report to the same meeting of Provincial Council, drawing a fine line between abstract party policy and support for concrete pro-choice tactics. Rowles remembers the speech as:

... interesting, but infuriating. It was so beside the point, politically speaking, since the issue, and the rallies, and the marches and the street confrontations were all about Morgentaler and the clinic.⁵¹

Despite the provisional policy, the ONDP Women's Committee and the leadership were very far apart.

Throughout 1983, the Women's Committee was active in supporting the pro-choice campaign. At the January meeting of the Committee Judy Rebick began the first of her series of reports on pro-choice mobilizing.⁵² Its 2 February meeting affirmed the commitment of the Committee to undertake work begun in the previous year: skills training, and joint work with IWDC, OCAC and Action Daycare. On 13 February the Committee passed a motion moved by Judy Rebick that authorized: 1) approaching riding associations to pass the Women's Committee resolution on abortion and have them bring it forward at the next Provincial Council; 2) requesting a joint meeting of the OFL Women's Committee and the Caucus; 3) suggesting a revival of the Joint Party-Caucus Committee on abortion. This last demand was clearly never acceded to, since on 8 June 1983 Jim Renwick, MPP for Riverdale and critic for the Attorney General, read the December 1982 "Report of the Joint Party-Caucus Committee on Abortion" into Hansard.⁵³ Heavily in alliance with OCAC and the OFL Women's Committee on abortion, the ONDP Women's Committee was engaged in a confrontation course with party leadership.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰"Things that Should Be Public and Things that Should Be Private." Speech of Bob Rae to Ontario New Democratic Party Provincial Council, 12 December 1982.

⁵¹Private communication, 27 March 1992.

⁵²Minutes of ONDP Women's Committee Executive, 13 January 1983.

⁵³Legislative Assembly of Ontario, *Hansard* (1983): J-121 — J-124.

By February of 1983 the party leadership had begun to organize a slate of candidates to run for the ONDP Women's Committee Executive in the elections that March. Marilyn Roycroft, an aide to Bob Rae, had the responsibility for organizing the leadership slate.⁵⁴ Prior to this time, the elected positions on the ONDP Women's Committee had generally been filled by those who had worked with the Executive over the previous year or who were interested in doing so. Because these positions were not high-status positions in the Party, there tended to be a group consensus on the Women's Committee Executive about who would take on the responsibilities of office for each coming year. Names would be forwarded to the annual general meeting of the Women's Committee, which would in effect ratify the candidates through a formal vote by individual committee members; the elections were not contested nor were there campaigns preceding the votes. The leader's slate thus differed from previous practice in that the list of nominees for the Executive were generated outside the Women's Committee and thus challenged its control. Moreover, countermobilizing by the Executive led to an unprecedented election campaign and contested election.

Similar use of slates had occurred during the 1982 ONDP leadership race when they had been deployed in ridings by those supporting Bob Rae. Delegates to convention were customarily chosen individually and nominations were controlled by local ridings. During the 1982 leadership race, riding associations were presented with lists of Rae supporters and asked to elect the slate, a tactic that took ridings by surprise and evoked protest from the associations.⁵⁵ Slate tactics undercut the power of the riding executives and placed greater control over delegate choice in the hands of the leadership contenders. Long used in the ONDP for elections to positions on provincial council,⁵⁶ slates under Rae's leadership were extended into new areas. In the case of the ONDP Women's Committee, the leader's slate represented an attempt by the Party leadership to regain control of an increasingly militant group:

They didn't like the way the Women's Committee was bringing forward a range of issues. It wasn't just the abortion stuff, I mean, there was a pressing on pay equity, pressing on child care, pressing on women and affirmative action inside the Party ... They did not want a Women's Committee that was able to politically organize, that knew the ropes and that knew how to lobby in terms of the Council, and press all the buttons they didn't want pressed. Because traditionally the Women's Committee hadn't done that.⁵⁷

Members close to party leadership and within the Women's Committee were recruiting candidates with the intent to defeat further alliances with the pro-choice

⁵⁴Ehring and Roberts, *Giving Away a Miracle*, 103.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 83-4.

⁵⁶J. T. Morley, *Secular Socialists: The CCF/NDP in Ontario* (Kingston and Montréal, 1983), 188-9.

⁵⁷Interview with Carrol-Anne Sceviour, 20 January 1992.

campaign and attempts to change party policy on abortion. Counting on the loyalty of labour women, people close to the leader's office approached a number of labour women, including a member of the OFL Women's Committee, and Marilyn White of the Canadian Airline Flight Attendants Association, who was also on the OFL and CLC Women's Committees. Although the labour women contacted were long-time, loyal Party members, they were also feminists who strongly supported the emerging feminist-union alliance on the pro-choice campaign, and had supported the pro-choice resolutions at the OFL Convention in 1982. The Party leadership grossly miscalculated in expecting women associated with the Women's Committees of the OFL and the CLC to take a position of Party inactivity on the pro-choice campaign. White in particular had strong convictions based on her work:

... the issue of choice for flight attendants is a very real one. For many years, if you got pregnant you lost your job. This is the ingredient I guess that some of the women in the Party didn't realize ... The OFL Women's Committee people realized that, but the others did not until I got on the executive.⁵⁸

In White's case, she was encouraged to run by both sides and won the election for vice-president in absentia. She then proceeded to take activist positions in the ONDP Women's Committee consistent with union policy on abortion.

Members of the current Women's Committee became aware that an alternate slate was being organized, and countermobilized in a meeting that was organized at Judy Rebick's residence:

... we talked about organizing our own slate, which was unheard of, I mean, you never run a slate for the Women's Committee. You just get who you can get, you know how these things are. But we would run a slate on a position in favour of free-standing clinics, and so therefore smoke them out.⁵⁹

The group contacted their allies on the OFL Women's Committee and were assured of support. Attempts were made by Party leadership to intimidate women on union staff by contacting their unions, but the attempt backfired into fuller support for the pro-choice slate proposed by the Women's Committee. Labour women reacted with anger to the general tactics of Party leadership in setting up the slate and in the election:

... they tried to pull out the heavies and they tried to overdo it. That's what really annoyed people the most. They basically took out a sledgehammer and people just got angry.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Interview with Marilyn White, 13 April 1992.

⁵⁹Interview with Judy Rebick, 21 January 1992.

⁶⁰Interview with Carrol-Anne Sceviour, 20 January 1992.

OCAC sent an invited speaker to the 1983 Women's Conference to answer questions on the pro-choice campaign.⁶¹ Richard Johnston, Community and Social Affairs critic, also spoke, defending the role of the Women's Committee as a ginger group essential to party democracy. In the aftermath of Rae's election as Party leader in 1982, Johnston was concerned with possible attempts by the Party centre to shut down internal dissent and democratic debate, seeing himself as defending a CCF social-justice agenda within the Party.⁶² From late 1982 to mid-1983 Johnston and Jim Renwick acted as caucus contacts for the Women's Committee, asking questions in the House and writing letters to the Minister of Health.

The two slates of candidates running at the 1983 Women's Conference were not divided along a pro-choice vs. anti-choice axis,⁶³ although a small minority of people such as Odoardo Di Santo did hold an anti-choice position.⁶⁴ In a speech delivered at the Conference, Arlene Perly Rae, candidate for the Executive and wife of Bob Rae, attacked the free-standing clinics as privatizing health care, a vulnerable point, for, despite the fact that the pro-choice campaign was demanding medically insured clinics, the clinics at that point fell outside the provincial health care system and were paid for on a fee-for-service basis, albeit on a sliding scale. As discussed above, the clinics were opposed in the "Report of the Joint Caucus/Party Committee on Abortion" and by Bob Rae on the grounds that they broke the law, and the Party could not be seen to counsel illegal actions. Mary Rowles, who was the candidate of the Women's Committee for President, described the Conference as "like having a debate with Philadelphia lawyers, which is about what they were ..."⁶⁵ The response of those supporting the slate proposed by the Women's Committee was to state that the Party had in the past supported illegal strikes and might consistently support quasi-legal clinics. Just before the election, an estimated one hundred twenty-five women that my informants identified as coming for the most part from York South, Bob Rae's riding, poured into the Conference to vote. However, labour women had also recruited voters for the day, with the result that the Conference elected an Executive that strongly supported a feminist, activist position on abortion. After the elections that same day the Conference approved a resolution calling on the Party to support the campaign for free-standing abortion clinics.

Within the ONDP, opposition to adopting a party position on choice in support of the contemporary campaign took a variety of forms in addition to the objections outlined above. Evelyn Gigantes, who as Minister of Health in 1990-1991 fought

⁶¹ Interview with Carolyn Egan, 20 December 1991.

⁶² Interview with Richard Johnston, MPP, 23 April 1993.

⁶³ A point emphasized to me by Julie Davis, President of the ONDP, in an interview on 24 April 1992.

⁶⁴ Odoardo Di Santo, "The Principle of Life," *The Ontario New Democrat* (November 1982), 22-3.

⁶⁵ Interview with Mary Rowles, 19 March 1992.

against Bill C-43, the federal bill recriminalizing abortion, and personally had a strong pro-choice position, remarked:

Any kind of reason you could find under the world for not supporting the Morgentaler clinic was drummed up. And it's just amazing the number of reasons people find when they are determined not to support an individual while you're saying you're supporting what he's doing.⁶⁶

Diane Meagan, who ran for the Party executive during 1986 as a member of the Campaign for an Activist Party, argued that the power holders in the Party were "pragmatic":

They felt that it was not perceived to be the right stance to be taken by the public, that if we wanted to get elected it was not the way to go, that we were going to alienate more people than we were going to bring on side with this issue.⁶⁷

Italian-Canadian MPPs had since the mid-1970s reserved, on the grounds of religious conviction, the right to speak out publicly against party policy on abortion and continued to do so during the 1980s. The stated grounds of opposition were thus wide-ranging, but uniformly involved distinguishing between support for the Party's pro-choice position dating from the 1970s and endorsing the feminist campaign for free-standing clinics.

After being elected to the executive of the Women's Committee in 1983, Judy Rebick continued to be a personal link between pro-choice organizing and the Women's Committee, giving regular reports of pro-choice activities and facilitating organizational linkages between the Women's Committee and pro-choice organizations, including CARAL. In September 1983 the Women's Committee sponsored a fundraiser for the Pro-Choice Defence Fund, the body which disbursed funds for legal cases against Dr. Morgentaler and his associates; \$2600 was donated.⁶⁸ The ONDP Women's Committee was thus drawn more deeply into the alliance system of pro-choice organizations, transferring resources in the form of members' time and other material resources into pro-choice social movement organizations.

On 15 June 1983, the Women's Committee met with Bob Rae, requesting that he demand the government give hospital accreditation to the free-standing clinic in Toronto; if successful this tactic would have legalized the Morgentaler Clinic, scheduled for opening the next day.⁶⁹ The following day, 16 June 1983, Mary Rowles, who, as a legislative assistant to the caucus worked at Queen's Park, issued

⁶⁶Interview with Evelyn Gigantes, MPP, 12 May 1992.

⁶⁷Interview with Diane Meagan, 27 February 1992.

⁶⁸Minutes of ONDP Women's Committee Executive, 6 November 1983.

⁶⁹Mary Rowles, as President of the ONDP Women's Committee, later reiterated the demand to Rae in a letter of 23 June 1983 which received no reply.

a press release for the Women's Committee lauding the opening of the Morgentaler clinic in a generous interpretation of the guidelines of the "Report of the Joint Party-Caucus Committee on Abortion." Rae independently issued a press release that had a narrower interpretation of these same guidelines, and the gap between the two accounts was noted in the press. Following the incident Rowles was reprimanded for her actions by individual members of the caucus. This incident is illustrative of the conflict between constituency representation of the feminist movement within the ONDP and its brokerage politics.

On July 5, 1983, the Morgentaler Clinic in Toronto was shut down by the police and charges laid against Drs. Morgentaler and Scott. The next day Rae issued a press release counselling that:

We do not condone or advocate breaking the law. ... The controversy surrounding the clinic in Toronto must not divert our attention from the central issue: the right of women to have access to medical services that are now offered on a discriminatory basis.⁷⁰

Subsequent to Rae's statement, the ONDP Women's Committee, although continuing its organizational linkages to pro-choice groups, issued no press releases on abortion until after the June 1984 Party Convention.

The Women's Committee had planned carefully for the 1984 Convention, but met with unanticipated forms of resistance at several points. Labour Caucus voted to oppose Resolution 3-35 on Choice in the absence of labour-feminists Frances Lankin and Wendy Cuthbertson, who were on the OFL Women's Committee and had fought hard on the choice issue within the Party.⁷¹ Arriving in Hamilton shortly after the Labour Caucus had met, Lankin and Cuthbertson were able to have it reverse its position due to the fact that OFL and CLC policies on the matter, plus those of many individual unions, were clearly in favour of supporting the free-standing clinics. Paralleling these developments, the Resolutions Committee decided to bring forward a resolution on choice that did not have the backing of the Women's Committee. This was protested by Mary Rowles, and a leaflet was issued decrying the suppression of democratic debate. As a result, the resolution did eventually reach the floor. With the support of organized labour (which comprised about one-quarter of the delegates to the Convention),⁷² particularly block voting by the Canadian Auto Workers, and the solid backing of the Women's Caucus, the Convention passed the resolution backed by the Women's Committee in support of free-standing clinics. The feminist-labour alliance had succeeded in setting Party policy on abortion. After two years of internal conflict, Party policy was in goal

⁷⁰Communiqué, *New Democrats*, 6 July 1983.

⁷¹Frances Lankin was a member of OCAC, though not an activist in the organization. She had been on the Joint Party-Caucus Committee on abortion, and had firm support for the pro-choice campaign when on Provincial Council.

⁷²Each affiliated union is permitted one delegate at convention for every 100 members or less.

congruity with the campaign for free-standing clinics, and Party resources — principally speech forms — other than those of the Women's Committee could be legitimately mobilized in support of pro-choice activism.

Reflecting on the period from 1982 to 1986 in the history of the Women's Committee in 1992, Jennifer Stephen⁷³ remarked on a basic tension between the Women's Committee and the Party: "Was the Women's Committee considered to be a place where the kind of connections with social movements and working with social movements was going to take place ... or was the role of the Women's Committee to go out and try and get more women to run for the Party? The latter was the leadership view: make the party look good on affirmative action, gender parity, and things like that."⁷⁴ Judy Rebick argued that the combination of the abortion struggle with its feminist-labour alliance and affirmative action for women have led to the ONDP's having "links to feminism (that) are the strongest links that the NDP has other than links to labour."⁷⁵ She held that the ONDP has been influenced more by feminism than by any other contemporary social movement. Certainly, the struggle for definitional control of Party public policy between the Women's Committee and the Party leadership pitted abortion politics derived through contact with mainly one social movement organization, OCAC, against an electoralist politics that maximized the autonomy of party leadership and conformed acritically to any and all law.

The Changing Multiorganizational Field of Toronto Feminism

THE PREVIOUS DISCUSSION has documented a system of alliances within the ONDP between the ONDP Women's Committee and labour feminists. As shown above, the labour-feminist alliance on the abortion question had initially been established outside the ONDP when, at the initiative of OCAC and in co-operation with OWW and later the OFL Women's Committee, the OFL had passed a resolution at its 1982 Convention in support of free-standing clinics and decriminalizing abortion.

Curtis and Zurcher introduced the term "multiorganizational field" into social movement theory as a way of explaining how "organizations in a community setting approximate an ordered, co-ordinated system."⁷⁶ They suggested that a multiorganizational field may be described either at the level of networks among organizations or at the level of networks of individuals and their organizational memberships.⁷⁷ Klandermans has pointed to the usefulness of multiorganizational analysis in capturing the dynamism of social movements in time, as contrasted with

⁷³Stephen was elected a member-at-large to the ONDP Women's Committee in 1985, staying with the Committee until 1988.

⁷⁴Interview with Jennifer Steven, 21 January 1992.

⁷⁵Interview with Judy Rebick, 21 January 1992.

⁷⁶Russell L. Curtis, Jr. and Louis A. Zurcher, "Stable Sources of Protest Movements: The Multiorganizational Field," *Social Forces*, 52 (1973), 53.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

analyses of single social movement organizations.⁷⁸ The multiorganizational field, Klandermans suggests, has two sectors, an alliance system and a conflict system. The alliance system acts "to support the movement organization by providing resources and creating political opportunities;"⁷⁹ the conflict system acts to deprive the organization of these. He further notes that alliance systems link social movement organizations to political parties and elites, as we have seen in the case of the relation between pro-choice activism and the ONDP. Klandermans proposes that future research investigate the determinants of the composition and change in alliance and conflict systems.⁸⁰

Research on multiorganizational fields has been sparse. Rupp and Taylor have explored conflicts among American women's movement organizations during the interphase between the First and Second Waves of the women's movement,⁸¹ and Staggenborg has done systematic work on pro-choice coalitions in the United States.⁸² A small body of research on the multiorganizational fields of social movements and social movement organizations has reported on radical flank effects: the outcomes for social movements of the actions of minority sectors. A series of publications has explored the impact of conflicts between "radical" vs. "moderate" social movement organizations in the American civil rights movement during the 1960s.⁸³ The distinction between "radical" and "moderate" codes an unexamined ideological position. I will here use 'radical' and 'dominant' in preference, with 'radical' being a component of what might be expected to be a series of analytical differences distinguishing minority sectors of social movements from the dominant sector or sectors — that is to say, not all minority sectors need be radical. The literature on radical flank effects has not examined the relations between radical sector activity and the alliance systems of social movements, nor has it explored the relation between radical and dominant sectors of social movements in terms of fundamental social cleavages such as social class, gender and race.

In the case study of pro-choice politics we see evidence of a chain effect after a new social movement organization, OCAC, was introduced into a local feminist alliance system. The new social movement organization, which was located on the left of the women's movement, soon attempted to form allies and bring them into

⁷⁸Bert Klandermans, "The Social Construction of Protest and Multiorganizational Fields," in Morris and McClurg Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, 99.

⁷⁹Bert Klandermans, "Introduction: Social Movement Organizations and the Study of Social Movements," *International Social Movement Research*, 2 (1989), 13.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 44.

⁸¹Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums* (New York 1987).

⁸²Suzanne Staggenborg, "Coalition Work in Pro-Choice Movement: Organizational and Environmental Opportunities and Obstacles," *Social Problems*, 33, 5 (1986), 374-90.

⁸³Steven Barkan, "Interorganizational Conflict in the Southern Civil Rights Movement," *Sociological Inquiry*, 56, 2 (1986), 190-209; Herbert H. Haines, "Black Radicalization and the Funding of Civil Rights: 1957-1970," *Social Problems*, 32, 1 (1984), 31-43.

goal congruity with its own objectives.⁸⁴ OCAC went successively to the OFL and the ONDP Women's Committee seeking statements of support for its pro-choice campaign; the ONDP Women's Committee then allied with labour feminists who could point to OFL and CLC policy on abortion in order to persuade labour to side with a pro-choice resolution in the ONDP. The alliance between the ONDP Women's Committee and labour feminists was further fuelled during the contested election to the Committee by the Party leadership's attack on labour feminists.

The alliance system between the feminist movement, labour and the NDP was already in existence prior to the beginnings of the feminist pro-choice campaign during the 1980s. While OCAC was in the 1982-1984 period forming its own organizational alliance system, it did so within the context of being perceived as a feminist organization in the pre-existing alliance system of the women's movement. It would be useful to introduce a sharper distinction between alliance systems of single social movement organizations and the alliance systems of entire social movements or social movement sectors into the literature, since new SMOs are interpreted by their potential allies in terms of their general social movement locations: they are indexed to a broader social movement rather than read as organizationally unique.

As Klandermans has emphasized, alliance systems are formed in time, and SMOs in an alliance system at a given point may co-ordinate their actions to persuade other members of the system to bring their organizational goals into overall congruity.⁸⁵ We see an example of such co-ordination in the joint actions of labour feminists and the ONDP Women's Committee at the 1984 ONDP Convention to persuade the Party to support the campaign for elective clinics and the decriminalization of abortion. In complex social movements which have temporal continuity, an alliance system is built or dissolved partly, though not exclusively, through successive struggles for goal congruity in the organizations of its alliance system.

OCAC may be read as a radical flank organization in Toronto feminism. The distinction between it and CARAL-National represented and produced at the level of social movement organizing a fundamental form of social inequality, social class. CARAL-National held together an organization of varying regional class composition and thus acted to maintain its disparate constituency by articulating a politics without a strong working-class alignment. As a left feminist pro-choice organization, OCAC mobilized to win the support of the labour movement and the ONDP, drawing these into its own multiorganizational field and further consolidating the alliance between labour, the ONDP and the women's movement which had already been initiated by left feminist organizations.

⁸⁴It might be remarked that goal congruity in the alliance system of social movement organizations (SMOs) is initially established in speech. The reciprocal exchange of speech acts among SMOs is integral to their relational positioning as allies.

⁸⁵Klandermans, "Social Construction of Protest," 76.

At a more general level this case study suggests radical flank effects that have not been documented or theorized in the social movement literature. In those social movements that have internal sectoral divisions based on fundamental social cleavages, it can be predicted that the alliance and conflict systems in the multiorganizational field of the social movement as a whole will be divided along the social relations of that cleavage. The radical flank SMOs act to expand the alliance and conflict system beyond the limits of those established by SMOs of the dominant sector or sectors. I have termed this form of radical flank effect an inequality effect. A further example of an inequality effect in radical flank organizing would be the racialized division in American environmental politics between White and non-White organizations, a difference falling along the axis of a form of social inequality, race. Clearly, racialization has multiple consequences for the alliance and conflict systems of social movement organizations in the U.S.A.⁸⁶

I am proposing a partial response to Klandermans' question about what determines the composition and change in the alliance and conflict systems of social movements: if the distinction between radical and dominant sectors of a social movement is aligned with a fundamental form of social inequality, social movement groups in both sectors will organize allies and opponents on the basis of the social cleavage. The composition of the resulting multiorganizational field changes over time as the organizations representing the cleavage alter, whether organizationally or ideologically. In the case of pro-choice organizing in the period under consideration, OCAC and other local pro-choice SMOs in the radical flank of abortion politics were able to develop alliances with organized labour, a constituency with which CARAL had very weak links. The alliance systems of CARAL and OCAC were divided along lines of social class, with the alliance system of OCAC acting in conjunction with other radical flank/minority sector activities in this period to extend the constituency of feminism into working-class organizations. The pattern of class alliances established by the radical flank of pro-choice organizations was a key determinant of party policy formation on abortion by the ONDP.

Social Movement-Party Relations

SURPRISINGLY LITTLE SOCIAL THEORY has dealt with social movement-party relations, though the significance of the topic has been underlined repeatedly by political sociologists.⁸⁷ Garner and Zald's classic article, "The Political Economy

⁸⁶Dorceta Taylor, "The Environmental Justice Movement: No Shortage of Minority Volunteers," *EPA Journal* 18 (1992), 23-25; Dorceta Taylor, "Blacks and the Environment: Towards an Explanation of the Concern and Petition Gap Between Blacks and Whites." *Environment & Behavior* 21 (1989), 175-205.

⁸⁷Mayer N. Zald, "Looking Backward to Look Forward: Reflections on the Past and Future of the Resource Mobilization Program," in Morris and McClurg Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, 326-48.

of Social Movement Sectors," was unequivocal in its estimation of the importance of political parties to social movements: "Movements can only be understood as one part of a range of options that also includes political parties.... Both are organizational forms for pursuing political ends."⁸⁸ They suggest that the degree of integration of social movements into political parties is dependent on variations in party structure, with parties varying in their degree of "permeability" to social movements.⁸⁹ Classic brokerage parties which are centralized, leader-dominated and have strong party discipline are, they argue, relatively impermeable to social-movement organizations inside their ranks, whereas parties that tend to aggregate interest groups and have minimal centralization tend to incorporate social movements, permitting movements to set policy in their area of expertise.⁹⁰

A separate literature on the Canadian party system and the NDP circles around the question of whether or not Canadian social democracy retains elements of its socialist movement heritage ("the social movement") or has become a brokerage party.⁹¹ However, it might be objected that social movements are many and do not consist solely of class politics in socialist groups. The present paper, in placing another social movement under consideration, contemporary feminism, departs markedly from the parameters of this previous literature.

Kitschelt's *The Logics of Party Formation* echoes Garner and Zald in proposing that two differing "logics" of party formation operate within liberal democracies: a logic of constituency representation and a logic of electoral competition. In parties acting according to a logic of constituency representation, organization, strategy and programs are based on what Kitschelt terms "the ideology of core support groups in society." These "core support groups," Kitschelt maintains, may be constituted on a variety of social bases, among them, gender, class fractions, and defensive struggles against the state. European Green Parties represent an instance of parties formed according to principles of constituency representation. Kitschelt's logic of electoral competition is equivalent to what is more commonly known as brokerage politics: parties operate to maximize their electoral support by adopting policy that attracts marginal sympathizers. Kitschelt confirms Garner and Zald's observation that parties dominated by constituency representation are highly permeable to social movements. Parties based on constituency representation are formed under conditions of social change where centralized, leader-dominated, formalized brokerage parties have been resistant to

⁸⁸Roberta Ash Garner and Mayer N. Zald, "The Political Economy of Social Movement Sectors," in Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy, eds., *Social Movements in an Organizational Society* (New Brunswick, NJ 1987), 312.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 313.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*

⁹¹M. Cross, *The Decline and Fall of A Good Idea* (Toronto 1974); R. Hackett "The Waffle Conflict in the NDP," in H. Thorborn, ed., *Party Politics in Canada* (Scarborough 1979); L. Zakuta, *A Protest Movement Becalmed* (Toronto 1964).

social movements. On the basis of empirical work, Kitschelt shows that parties that run according to a logic of constituency representation suffer from a "lack of internal cohesion, integration and consistency, seizing on demands not represented by existing groups and parties but cannot aggregate and co-ordinate interests to the extent necessary for successful party influence in a liberal corporatist society."⁹² At its limit, the party organization of pure constituency representation leads, he argues, to unrecognized internal stratification, and parties neither responsive to constituencies nor accountable to constituents. However, Kitschelt may be confounding the cultural hostility of many Western European social movements to organizational discipline with the general principle of constituency representation.

Kitschelt's outline of the two "logics" of party formation is helpful in explaining the relation of the ONDP to the women's movement on the issue of free-standing abortion clinics. The ONDP evidenced elements of *both* constituency representation and brokerage politics in its handling of the pro-choice campaign and its relation to the women's movement. The ONDP Women's Committee represented a principle of constituency representation in the ONDP, and the party leadership a logic of electoral competition struggling to control and demobilize the constituency representation occurring through the Party's Women's Committee.

Understanding the struggle within the ONDP over pro-choice politics as a conflict between party logics of electoral competition and constituency representation provides a way of theorizing Sylvia Bashevkin's acute observation of tensions between women's associations in contemporary political parties, other party organizations, and the feminist movement.⁹³ Bashevkin notes that: "the expectation that newer caucuses and commissions would function as a conduit for feminist policy initiatives and for ascendant female activists has proved difficult to achieve for all three major parties — even though the mandate for such groups rests precisely in this area of numerical and substantive representation."⁹⁴ The associations of party women have become potential sites where the logics of constituency representation and electoral competition enter into conflict. Since in English Canada the New Democratic Party has historically had the most strongly developed mechanisms and discourse of constituency representation of major political parties, it can be predicted that conflicts between constituency representation and brokerage politics are more prevalent in the NDP, federally and provincially, than in the Liberal or Conservative Parties. While this analysis of dual party logic in Canadian social democracy has been developed from a case study of abortion politics in the ONDP, it could be extended to other terrains of contestation in social democracy, such as labour and ecological politics, with due attention to their specific constituency representation mechanisms.

As I have shown, the ONDP Women's Committee was heavily linked to labour

⁹²Herbert Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation* (Ithaca 1989), 288.

⁹³Sylvia Bashevkin, *Toeing the Lines*, 100.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

and the feminist movement on the abortion question. The Committee both developed policy and mobilized on party-internal matters and was also, even prior to the revitalization of abortion politics, in alliance with organizations outside the Party, particularly the OFL Women's Committee and a series of socialist feminist organizations: OWW, IWDC, and the March 8th Coalition. Moreover, those Party women who did not have a personal practice in feminist or labour politics identified overwhelmingly as feminists. The position of the ONDP Women's Co-ordinator on the OFL Women's Committee made the ONDP permeable to labour feminism, and the structural ties of organized labour to the ONDP facilitated the entry of a new generation of post-Fleck labour women who were newly feminist identified.

The direct ties of the ONDP Women's Committee to party-external, feminist pro-choice social movement organizations were displayed at many points in the above account. The impetus for the Committee's taking a position on free-standing clinics in 1982 had occurred as a result of being approached by OCAC for a formal statement of support. The chief media spokesperson for OCAC sat on the Women's Committee from 1982 to 1986, and was instrumental in organizing a Women's Committee slate of candidates who fought the Party slate. The media spokesperson for OCAC gave regular reports on the pro-choice campaign to the Women's Committee and was able to mobilize Committee resources for the campaign. OCAC representatives spoke to the 1983 Women's Conference at the time of the contested leadership race.

On the abortion issue, the permeability of the Party to labour, due to the structural mechanisms for its representation at Convention and on Provincial Council, assisted the strength of pro-choice, social movement representation within the ONDP. The alliance between labour and the pro-choice campaign had been fashioned outside the Party, part of a broader alliance system being established between left feminist social movement organizations and the labour movement. The alliance system was deployed within the ONDP and defeated the Party leadership twice on abortion politics, the first being the contested leadership race for executive positions at the Women's Committee and the second being the Choice Resolution at 1984 Convention. On both occasions the party leadership attempted to exercise control over and prevent the articulation of a social movement politic within its Women's Committee, but was defeated by party-internal alliances, in the first instance between labour feminists and non-labour feminists inside the Women's Committee. Failing to gain control of the Women's Committee in the elections to its executive during 1983, leadership moved to a second line of defence at the 1984 Convention. Leadership tried to block the formation of party policy in support of a social movement campaign which it regarded as contrary to its electoral interests, and was again defeated, on this occasion by the alliance of the Women's Committee and on Labour Caucus as a whole via the mediation of labour feminists. A social movement politic on abortion was thus able to prevail in the ONDP on the

basis of the separate structural mechanisms in the Party for the constituency representation of organized labour and the representation of women.

Conclusion

THIS CASE STUDY of the formation of ONDP policy on abortion has proved the importance of social movement organizing, specifically feminist organizing, for Ontario social democrats. More generally, the relation of Anglo-Canadian social democracy to social movements is an ongoing one. It did not end with the rise of electoral social democratic parties from the 1930s onwards. I have additionally underlined the desirability of studying the relation of Canadian social democratic parties to social movements other than socialist groups and working-class mobilization. Contrary to those who would write the ONDP as a brokerage party, the paper has shown that this is an oversimplification. In Kitschelt's terms, the ONDP operates according to logics of both electoral competition and constituency representation, with these being in a state of dynamic tension. The case herein described has shown an unusual instance of feminist constituency representation in and through the Women's Committee prevailing over the usually dominant logic of electoral competition found in brokerage parties on an international basis in their dealings with the issue of abortion. This analysis of the internal Party mechanisms which enable social movements to enter social democratic parties could be extended to other cases and other social movements. An obvious case to study would be the Campaign for an Activist Party (CAP), which, arguing that the ONDP should align with social movements, contested the leadership of the Party at the 1986 Convention, polling 35 per cent of votes.

The study has also documented a series of radical flank effects not found in social movement theory. I have shown how OCAC, a new, left-aligned social movement organization, was able to enter into alliance with both organized labour and the ONDP. In the long term, this alliance proved consequential for abortion health service delivery when the ONDP took office in 1990. Radical flank organizations may expand the alliance and conflict systems of a social movement beyond the social groups mobilized by SMOs of the dominant sector. Here, OCAC operated to extend the constituency of pro-choice politics to working-class organizations. It may be anticipated that where the distinction between radical flank(s) and dominant sector(s) of a social movement is generated on the basis of a fundamental social cleavage, the alliance and conflict systems formed in the multiorganizational field of the social movement as a whole will be divided along the lines of the cleavage. Further study of radical and dominant sector differences in relation to the multiorganizational fields of social movements is indicated, with the understanding that the fundamental social cleavages (re)produced in social movements may be multiple and the radical flanks disparate.

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