

## Nonviolent Femmes

From [The Writings of Vasu Murti](#)

History shows women were discriminated against, subjugated and oppressed and it led to their demanding equality. In previous centuries, for example, women were not allowed to vote nor own property.

Polls have found more women than men opposed to abortion, and abortion works to the advantage of exploitative males, relieving them of any responsibility for child support, etc. The feminist movement was pro-life from its inception through the 1960s.

According to the late pro-life feminist, historian, and vegetarian activist Mary Krane Derr (1963 - 2012), who credited me with having caused her to become a vegetarian, “The debate raging over abortion today is not the first one in American history; there was one during the Victorian era.”

Derr writes that despite the large monetary loss involved, *The Revolution*, the suffragist paper put out by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton refused to run ads for patent medicines because these were frequently thinly disguised abortifacients.

A similar policy was practiced by *Woodhull's and Claflin's Weekly*, the paper published by free love advocates Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin. The *Weekly* constantly attacked Madame Restell, a well-known New York City abortionist. Victoria Woodhull, the first woman to attempt to run for President, was a fierce opponent of abortion. The *Weekly* (December 24, 1870) proclaimed, “The rights of children as individuals begin while yet they remain the foetus.”

According to Woodhull: “Men must no longer insult all womanhood by saying that freedom means the degradation of woman. Every woman knows that if she were free, she would never bear an unwished-for child, nor think of murdering one before its birth.” (*Evening Standard*, November 17, 1875)

“Victorian feminists,” Derr observes, “were highly critical of Victorian sexual ethics. They affirmed the value of sex for pleasure and communication as well as procreation, for men and women alike... they celebrated motherhood itself as a uniquely female power and strength which deserved genuine reverence.”

According to Derr, “From early in the 19th century, Americans — even lay people — were exposed to enough information about embryology to enable them to make a critical and ethically significant distinction between contraception and abortion: the former practice did not terminate a human life but the latter one did.”

In *The Radical Remedy in Social Science* (1886), feminist and civil libertarian Edward Bond Foote crusaded for public and legal acceptance of contraception, insisting it would not only promote the well-being of women, but that it would also reduce the destruction of unborn children, which he termed “a wastefulness of human life.”

Susan B. Anthony called abortion “child-murder” and insisted, “We want prevention, not merely punishment. We must reach the root of the evil... It is practiced by those whose inmost souls revolt from the dreadful deed.”

Susan B. Anthony recognized that one of the root causes of abortion was the male exploitation of women: “All the articles on this subject that I have read have been from men. They denounce women as alone guilty, and never include man in any plans for the remedy.” (*The Revolution*, July 8, 1869)

Like Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Gage also held men accountable: “(This) subject lies deeper down in woman’s wrongs than any other... I hesitate not to assert that most of (the responsibility for) this crime lies at the door of the male sex.” (*The Revolution*, April 9, 1868)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton classified abortion along with the killing of newborns as “infanticide.” (*The Revolution*, February 5, 1868) According to Stanton: “When we consider that women are treated as property, it is degrading to women that we should treat our children as property to be disposed of as we see fit.” (*Letter to Julia Ward Howe*, October 16, 1873)

Stanton not only opposed abortion, but recognized the social factors causing women to seek it: “There must be a remedy even for such a crying evil as this,” she wrote. “But where shall it be found, at least where begin, if not in the complete enfranchisement and elevation of women?” (*The Revolution*, March 12, 1868)

Mattie Brinkerhoff also recognized that social factors such as poverty and discrimination cause women to seek abortions:

“When a man steals to satisfy hunger, we may safely conclude that there is something wrong in society — so when a woman destroys the life of her unborn child, it is an evidence that either by education or circumstances she has been greatly wronged... How shall we prevent this destruction of life and health? By the true education and independence of woman.” (*The Revolution*, September 2, 1869)

“Child murderers,” wrote Sarah Norton, “practice their profession without let or hindrance, and open infant butcheries unquestioned... Is there no remedy for all this ante-natal child murder?... Perhaps there will come a time when... an unmarried mother will not be despised because of her motherhood... and when the right of the unborn to be born will not be denied or interfered with.” (*Woodhull and Claflin’s Weekly*, November 19, 1870)

Even into the 20th century, feminists continued to oppose abortion as an injustice towards women rather than seeing it as a means to their emancipation.

“The custom of procuring abortions has reached such appalling proportions in America as to be beyond belief...” wrote anarchist Emma Goldman in *Mother Earth* in 1911. “So great is the misery of the working classes that seventeen abortions are committed in every one hundred pregnancies.”

*Oscar Wilde (1854 - 1900) once quipped, "I like men who have a future and women who have a past."*

When women began protesting the double-standard which said sex before and/or outside of marriage was acceptable for men but not for women, H.L. Mencken (1880 - 1956) commented in "The Suffragette," a chapter from his 1922 book, *In Defense of Women*, that women weren't demanding that men be virtuous, "but that the franchise of dalliance be extended to themselves."

Alice Paul, the author of the original Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1923, opposed the later trend of linking it with abortion rights. She insisted that “abortion is the ultimate exploitation of women.”

Whether for public relations purposes or her actual heartfelt feelings, Margaret Sanger, founder of the American Birth Control League (now known as Planned Parenthood), expressed opposition to abortion. She lamented the resort of poor people to “the most barbaric method” of family planning, “the killing of babies—infanticide—abortion.” (*My Fight for Birth Control*, 1931) Sanger told clients in her first birth control clinic that “abortion was the wrong way—no matter how early it was performed it was taking a life.” (*An Autobiography*, 1938)

Although Simone de Beauvoir supported the legalization of abortion, she described it as an injustice to women:

“Men tend to take abortion lightly; they... fail to realize the values involved. The woman who has recourse to abortion is disowning feminine values, her values... Women learn to believe no longer in what men say...the one thing they are sure of is this rifled and bleeding womb, these shreds of crimson life, this child that is not there.” (*The Second Sex*, 1952)

A 1972 Presidential commission on population growth recommended legalizing abortion, with only a few voices dissenting. One of those voices expressing opposition to legalized abortion was Graciela Olivarez, a Chicana active in civil rights and anti-poverty work.

“The poor cry out for justice and equality,” she lamented, “and we respond with legalized abortion. I believe that in a society that permits the life of even one individual (born or unborn) to be dependent on whether that life is ‘wanted’ or not, all its citizens stand in danger... We do not have equal opportunities. Abortion is a cruel way out.”

In 1972, the National Organization for Women (NOW) expelled all its pro-life members in order to stifle dissent on the abortion issue. These pro-life feminists went on to form their own organization. Feminists For Life has chapters in the United States, Canada and New Zealand.

In her article “Feminism and Abortion: The Great Inconsistency” (*The New Zealand Listener*, January 7, 1978), Daphne de Jong responded to the abortion-rights argument that the unborn child is merely part of its mother and not a separate individual human being endowed with human rights:

“Until this century, the laws of both Britain and America made women a ‘part of’ their husbands.

“By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law...our law in general considers man and wife one person.” (*Blackstone’s Commentaries*, 1768)

“The one person was, of course, the husband, who exerted absolute power over his wife and her property. She had no existence and therefore no protection under the law. The only thing a husband could not do was kill her.

“The earliest feminist battles were fought against the legal chattel status of women. Many feminists were among those who overturned the U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1857, that a black slave was ‘property’ and not entitled to the protection of the Constitution.

“Feminism totally rejected the concept of ownership in regard to human beings. Yet when the Court ruled in 1973 that the fetus was the property of its mother, and not entitled to the protection of the Constitution, ‘liberated’ women danced in the streets.”

Pro-life and pro-choice feminists alike were outraged in 1981 when Lady Diana Spencer's virginity had to be checked before she could marry Prince Charles.

(But when Diana passed away in 1997, she was known as "the People's Princess.")

There is a double-standard if sex before and/or outside of marriage is acceptable for men but not for women.

But to be fair, in the aftermath of the sexual revolution, the male is the one whose reputation is at stake!

Natalie Wood (1938 - 1981) had an affair with Elvis Presley in the 1950s.

One of her judgments of Elvis was, "He can sing but he can't do much else."

(Girls talk, too, you know.)

In *Risky Business* (1983), high school senior Joel Goodson (played by Tom Cruise) meets Lana, a call girl (played by Rebecca DeMornay) through the erotic personals.

After making love to Lana, Joel (who'd never had a girlfriend before) suddenly becomes 'cool,' puts on the dark glasses, and warns his nerdish high school buddies taking the college entrance exams that "college women can smell inexperience like dog shit..."

And Lana (after having introduced his buddies to some of her "friends" or business associates, if you prefer), merely comments later, "God knows they needed the experience!"

As an example of the pressure put on men, consider:

Men are expected to perform well in bed, even when both men and women might experience sexual tensions from time to time.

How often are women forced to defend themselves because of their performance in bed?

Staci Keith had a bestseller with *Drive Your Woman Wild in Bed*.

Why would books like these be necessary, if making love came naturally and easily to everyone?

These kind of tensions are typical of sex between romantic partners.

But men, and not women, are the ones whose reputation suffers depending upon their performance in the bedroom. Women will continue to be pursued.

There's the old adage, "a lie can travel halfway around the world, while truth is still putting its pants on..."

Similarly, a man's reputation can be permanently scarred through public humiliation, and men are the ones expected to pursue women, whereas women, on the other hand, are merely being pursued.

There might be exceptions.

Joan Rivers appeared on a talk show in 1982, saying her thirteen year old daughter Melissa had asked her, "What is it like to have a man desire you passionately?"

Now we're both curious!" exclaimed Joan Rivers.

(Again, in the aftermath of the sexual revolution [which even conservative Christians have embraced], there is a double-standard when it comes to sexual history, but it's worse for men than for women! Otherwise, why isn't there a sex comedy movie entitled, *The 40 Year Old Spinster* ?!)

In her 1982 article, "All Abortions are Selective", pro-life feminist Jo McGowan asks about sex-selective abortions:

"What are we to make of all this? Without denying in any sense the depravity of killing baby girls simply because they are girls, I submit that the position (pro-choice) feminists have taken on this issue is morally bankrupt, without substance of any kind.

"Why? Because one cannot have it both ways. Once the abortion of any child, for any reason, is permitted, the abortion of all children becomes acceptable.

"If it is all right to kill a child because it is handicapped, or because its mother is unmarried, or because it is the third child in a family that only wanted two, why isn't it all right to kill it because it is a girl?

"This process of aborting girls when boys are wanted has been termed 'selective abortion', but in fact every abortion is a selective one. What changes from case to case are only the values of the parents, determining what they select and what they reject...

"(Pro-choice) feminists who have been so active in assuring women of the 'right to choose' can hardly complain when those same women exercise their freedom to choose something with which (pro-choice) feminists do not agree.

"Choice being such a highly personal affair, one can hardly expect everyone to choose the same things. But it is tragically ironic that what has been hailed as the 'great liberator' of women may turn out instead to be the means of their destruction...

"Perhaps, however, something good may yet emerge from this 'female feticide' outrage. Perhaps people, and (pro-choice) feminists in particular, will finally realize what is actually at stake in an abortion, any abortion.

"Perhaps from this undeniable truth that it is wrong to kill girls will emerge the larger truth that it is wrong to kill anyone."

In the 1970s, pro-life feminist Juli Loesch wrote:

"Each woman has the right (to contraception)... But once a woman has conceived, she can no longer choose whether or not to become a mother.

Biologically, she is already a mother... the woman's rights are then limited, as every right is limited, by the existence of another human being who also has rights."

Pro-life feminist Ruth Eero similarly refers to a "narrowing of choices."

This point was made in a September 2000 article, "Abortion and the Left" which appeared in the *Stanislaus Connections*, a monthly newspaper put out by the Modesto, CA Peace/Life Center:

Recognizing the rights of another class of beings limits our freedoms and our choices and requires a change in our lifestyle — the abolition of (human) slavery is a good example of this.

Are whites free to own slaves or lynch blacks?

No! Because of the civil rights movement, we've corrected that injustice.

Is domestic violence tolerated?

No! Because of the women's movement, domestic violence is unacceptable.

Should hate crimes against LGBTs be permitted under the guise of "choice"?

No! LGBTs have rights.

This isn't rocket science, but if animals have rights, then our freedoms and choices to commit crimes against animals are similarly limited.

This point was made clear by pro-life feminist Ginny Desmond Billinger, in an article entitled "Confessions of an Anti-Choice Fanatic," which originally appeared in the September/October 1982 issue of *Minnesota Feminists For Life*, and which later appeared in the *Pro-Life Feminism: Different Voices* anthology in 1985:

"Let's take a look at just a few of the other issues that I, as an avowed antichoicer, am ready to address:

"Spouse and child beating -- here, my position is unhesitatingly anti-choice. My perspective as a spouse, a parent, and a former child qualifies me to support all measures to remove from people the freedom to choose to abuse their family members--even in the privacy of their own homes.

"Drunk driving -- Again, anti-choice. I'm afraid I must impose my morality on those who would choose to operate life-threatening machines while influenced by alcohol, and ask them to temporarily abstain from one or the other.

"Gun control -- Despite the big-bucks, 'constitutional rights' lobbying by the NRA, I remain consistently anti-choice on this issue. The memory of a friend, forces me to reject any justification for handgun ownership without strict regulation.

"Endangered species protection -- Faced with a whale-hunter or seal-clubber, I'll take a hard line anti-choice stand every time.

"Hazardous waste disposal -- We're talking about the rights of corporate America vs. the average Joe here, but my anti-choice position still applies. The right to choose efficient business practices must always be weighed against the public's right to a safe environment. Ditto for occupational safety and health issues.

"I expect that these declarations will leave me open to censure; I will no doubt be labeled a heretic. The American principle of personal liberty would surely suffer with the propagation of my anti-choice philosophy...

"So call me what you will: pro-life, anti-choice, fetus-worshiper, anti-abortion. A thousand labels will never alter the certainty that the road to freedom cannot be paved with the sacrificed rights of others."

Animal rights activists have even proven themselves to be "anti-choice" depending upon the issue. A 1994 letter to *The Animals' Voice Magazine*, for example, states:

"Exit polls in Aspen, Colorado, after the failed 1989 fur ban was voted on, found that most people were against fur but wanted people to have a choice to wear it. Instead of giving in, we should take the offensive and state in no uncertain terms that to abuse and kill animals is wrong, period! There is no choice because another being had to suffer to produce that item... an eventual ban on fur would be impossible if we tell people that they have some sort of 'choice' to kill... remember, no one has the 'right to choose' death over life for another being."

Similarly, a 2003 letter in *Veg-News* reads: "I did have some concerns about (the) Veg Psych column which asserted that we must respect a non-vegan's 'right to choose' her/his food.

"While I would never advocate intolerance (quite the opposite actually), arguing that we have a 'right to choose' when it comes to eating meat, eggs, and dairy is akin to saying we have a 'right to choose' to beat dogs, harass wildlife, and torture cats.

"Each is a clear example of animal cruelty, whether we're the perpetrators ourselves, or the ones who pay others to commit the violence on our behalf.

"Clearly, we have the ability to choose to cause animal abuse, but that doesn't translate into a right to make that choice."

"Animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, or use for entertainment," insists People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), which was founded in 1980.

As the animal rights movement continues to influence mainstream society, humankind is finally ending millennia of injustices against animals.

*Pro-Life Feminism: Different Voices* (1985) contains observations by numerous pro-life feminists on the subject of abortion. According to these pro-life feminists, abortion is not the answer to the problem of unwanted pregnancy, it is merely a band-aid which prevents real reforms from taking place regarding society's treatment of women.

Susan Maronek, for example, writes: "Abortion, in the final analysis, works to the advantage of the exploitative male, not for the female. It provides an end to any and all financial, legal or social obligation which comes with childbirth by eliminating the possibility of birth. Abortion provides

the ultimate rationale when pressing for sexual favors. It makes the female a perpetual and reusable sex object. When an unwanted pregnancy occurs, the female is potentially left without any social support...

“The male can remove himself from the situation, physically or mentally because abortion is ‘her’ right. The female is left with the sole and final legal responsibility for killing their offspring. It is her body and mind which bear the scars of this destructive operation and experience... Abortion is a male sexual fantasy come true.”

Pregnancy and childbirth are natural. The ability to bear children is the one thing which truly distinguishes women from men. Demanding the right to abort in order to achieve equality implies women must become males in order to compete and survive in a man’s world. Rosemary Bottcher points out that abortion reduces women to the status of sex machines which can be “repaired,” if necessary. She refers to it as the “castration of women.”

“What we need now,” writes Jo McGowan, “is a race of woman who will stand up and say NO! The violence ends here. The misogyny ends here. The destruction of our children ends here. No longer will our bodies be used to write messages of fear and hatred. We hold within our bodies the power of creation, the power to nourish and sustain life. We shall not pervert these to serve death.”

“Abortion is the destruction of human life and energy that does nothing to eradicate the very real underlying problems of women,” writes Cecilia Voss Koch. “The pregnant welfare mother begs for decent housing, a decent job and childcare or respect for her child-nurturing work. Instead, she gets direction to the local abortion clinic and is told to take care of ‘her problem.’ How convenient. Much less time and trouble than teaching her about authentic reproductive freedom and reproductive responsibility. Much cheaper than attending to her real problems: her poverty, her lack of skills, her illiteracy, her loneliness, her bitterness about her entrapment, her self-contempt, her vulnerability. After the abortion, these problems will all be there...”

“By encouraging society to consider a woman’s child as a disposable piece of property, aborting reinforces the image of woman herself as disposable property and reusable sex object — a renewable resource. It is no coincidence that the biggest single financial contributor to the cause of ‘abortion rights’ is the Playboy Foundation. When abortion is available to all women, all male responsibility for fertility control has been removed. A man need only offer a woman money for the abortion and that’s it: no responsibility, no relationship, no commitment. And there we are — recycled and used again!”

(Feminist Germaine Greer similarly commented in the late 1960s that *Playboy* was giving “the illusion that fifty year old men are entitled to fuck fifteen year old girls... and display their girls as if they were a commodity.” To be fair, on the issue of pornography, it must be pointed out that women have as much of a prurient interest in sex as men do. Paul Coughlin writes: "...as marketers know, it was always women who have fantasized about relationships with men other than their husbands through soap operas, not to mention romance novels and magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and other little sisters of porn of another kind.")

Feminist writer Mary Ann Schaefer refers to abortion-rights feminism as “terrorist feminism” because you have to be “willing to kill for the cause you believe in...”



Abortion, of course, merely reflects a larger problem. Abortion is symptomatic of the rampant sexism within our society — it is not the cure. Television advertisements, sitcoms, women's books, magazines, etc. are still sexist in nature.

Most imply that women are nothing more than homemakers, or that their only goal in life is to catch a man. Women still earn only 60 cents for every dollar a man makes. The average pay of female college graduates is equivalent to that of males who graduated from high school. Only 0.8 percent of all working women earn over \$25,000 per year.

The majority of working women are unorganized and underpaid. Working mothers are also forced to pay for childcare and still tend to be segregated into women's jobs. A 1981 survey, for example, found that 75 percent of all practicing physicians were male. Abortion itself is a huge practice run by entrepreneurs — mostly males — with \$320 million in yearly profits.

“If women must submit to abortion to preserve their lifestyle or career, their economic or social status,” writes Daphne de Jong, “they are pandering to a system devised and run by men for male convenience.”

“Collectively, society is eroded by abortion,” writes Juli Loesch. “Society at large can say: ‘Lady, we feel no particular responsibility for your little problem because there is nothing to feel responsible for; so just terminate your problem and everybody will breathe easier.’ Lacking the secure base of a caring community, women whose pregnancies are an emotional, social or financial burden are thrown onto the demands of a rather heartless individualism.”

In a 1989 opinion editorial on the subject of abortion entitled “The Bitter Price of Choice,” pro-life feminist Frederica Mathewes-Green, wrote: “It is a cruel joke to call this a woman's ‘choice.’ We may choose to sacrifice our life and career plans, or choose to undergo humiliating invasive surgery and sacrifice our offspring. How fortunate we are—we have a choice! Perhaps it's time to amend the slogan — ‘Abortion: a woman's right to capitulate.’”

In her 1991 book, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, pro-choice feminist theologian Carol J. Adams (she has a Master's degree from the Yale Divinity School) notes that throughout human history, beginning with the hunter-gatherer tribes, meat has been associated with male violence and masculinity, people with power, the aristocracy, etc.

Meat is associated with male virility, whereas vegetable and nonmeat foods are viewed as women's food. “Meat is a symbol of patriarchy” writes Adams bluntly.

Adams cites a fictional illustration from Mary McCarthy's *Birds of America*. Miss Scott, a vegetarian, is invited to a NATO general's house for Thanksgiving. Her refusal of turkey angers the general.

According to Adams, “Male belligerence in this area is not limited to fictional military men. Men who batter women have often used the absence of meat as a pretext for violence against women.”

Adams compares “The Rape of Animals” to “the Butchering of Women,” as well as “Sexual Violence and Meat Eating.” She quotes the organizer of a “Bunny Bop” in which rabbits are killed by clubs, feet, stones, etc. as saying, “What would all these rabbit hunters be doing if they weren't letting off all this steam? I'll tell you what they'd be doing. They'd be drinking and carousing and beating their wives.”

Feminists For Life (FFL) compares the idea that the unborn is merely the property of its mother to the old idea that women were once the property of their husbands. According to FFL, abortion is a form of violence women are forced to turn to in a patriarchal society -- a society insensitive to the needs of a new mother.

Carol J. Adams and Feminists for Animal Rights (FAR) similarly compares the way human animals oppress nonhuman animals to the way the patriarchy oppresses women -- rejecting status quo thinking that nonhuman animals are the property of human animals.

A pamphlet distributed by Milwaukee SOUL (Save Our Unwanted Lives) points out that under current U.S. law, corporations are considered legal persons, while humans in prenatal development are denied this moral status.

(reprinted in *Pro-Life Feminism: Different Voices*, 1985)

In 1989, Presbyterian minister and environmental activist Richard Cartwright Austin similarly discussed proposals to amend the Constitution:

"It is time to affirm that all creatures within the boundaries of our nation deserve constitutional recognition, and that rights extend beyond the human community...

"To secure their rights within our legal system they would, of course, require human agents willing to argue their case, just as agents now represent the perceived interests of infants, the comatose, and others who cannot speak on their own behalf.

"Corporations, which are legal constructions and not natural beings, have standing in court to protect their interests now...

"A constitutional amendment to recognize the rights of a vast new constituency -- all God's creatures--will not succeed without broad popular support. Animals ask us for considerate treatment and the earth cries for loving care."

(Austin's words reflect the rising tide of environmental concern in America and the emergence of an *animal liberation theology* in the United States.)

Both movements (FFL and FAR) have a common agenda on feminist issues: opposition to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, the feminization of poverty, lack of affordable childcare or healthcare, wage differences, the diversion of resources from social services to the military industrial complex, etc.

The Feminists for Animal Rights newsletter (Vol. VI, Nos. 1-2, 1991) for example, cites vegan author John Robbins' EarthSave Foundation as stating that taxpayer subsidies to the livestock industry in California for 1991 totaled \$24 million, while the yearly budget for child welfare was only \$125,000.

Polls have found more women than men opposed to abortion. The vegetarian and animal rights movements also tend to have a greater proportion of women than men. Women are more likely to become vegetarian than men.

*"The reasons for legal intervention in favor of children apply not less strongly to the case of those unfortunate slaves — the animals."*

--John Stuart Mill

Henry Bergh, founder of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), successfully prosecuted a woman for child abuse in 1873, at a time when children had no legal protection, under the then currently existing animal protection statutes. This case started the child-saving crusade around the world.

While it is known that the feminist movement originally opposed abortion as “child-murder” (Susan B. Anthony’s words) and as a form of violence that women are forced to turn to in a patriarchal society, a society that shows virtually no concern or respect for new mothers, it is generally not known that many of the early American feminists—including Lucy Stone, Amelia Bloomer, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton—were connected with the 19th century animal welfare movement. Together, they would meet with anti-slavery editor Horace Greeley to toast “Women’s Rights and Vegetarianism.”

Many of the early American feminists thus saw animal rights as social progress in the tradition of women’s rights and civil rights. Count Leo Tolstoy similarly described ethical vegetarianism as social progress:

“And there are ideas of the future, of which some are already approaching realization and are obliging people to change their way of life and to struggle against the former ways: such ideas in our world as those of freeing the laborers, of giving equality to women, of ceasing to use flesh-food, and so on.”

The animal rights movement began as a secular and nonsectarian movement, and is now courting organized religion and the religious community for inspiration, blessings, and support.

Although one major problem with the theological approach to animal rights is that arguments can be made on both sides of the coin, that’s true of abortion, too!

An article on meditation appearing in *The People's Almanac* (1975), said meditation is endorsed by all the world’s great religions. Steven Rosen (Satyaraja dasa) similarly tries to show in his 1987 book, *Food for the Spirit: Vegetarianism and the World Religions*, that all the world’s great religions all support the vegetarian way of life... to win people of different faiths over to the vegetarian way of life through friendly moral persuasion.

In a 1991 essay, "The Bible and Killing for Food," Reverend Andrew Linzey, author of *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, and the foremost theologian the field of animal-human relations, writes:

"...it often comes as a surprise for Christians to realize that the modern vegetarian movement was strongly biblical in origin. Inspired by the original command in Genesis 1, an Anglican priest, William Cowherd, founded the Bible Christian Church in 1809 and made vegetarianism compulsory among its members. The founding of this Church in the United Kingdom and its sister Church in the United States by William Metcalfe, effectively heralded the beginning of the modern vegetarian movement."

Feminists differ on a number of issues. Some feminists oppose pornography (which is arguably a subtle form of prostitution: women using their own bodies for income.) Others do not. Some

feminist groups like COYOTE ("Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics") support the legalization of prostitution.

So it's disingenuous for pro-choice feminists to claim pro-life feminists aren't real feminists, especially when the history of the feminist movement shows otherwise.

In his 1983 article, "Feminists: Developing a 'Party Line'," which originally appeared in the *Washington Post*, Richard Cohen writes:

"If I considered abortion to be murder, I would try through the political process to ban it. This is how I feel about capital punishment, and no one is going to tell me I shouldn't use the political process to try to abolish it. Politics is the proper forum for the abortion controversy...

"...feminists, especially the more doctrinaire ones, are developing their own party line. They are attempting to define a movement very narrowly: You can't be against abortion. You can't be blasé about pornography. You have to be blind to the real differences between men and women. You have to be this and you have to be that.

"But the fact of the matter is that all you need to be a feminist is to believe in, and work for, the equality of women. It's my club, too -- and anyone can join."

Animal activists have embraced the past five hundred years of secular social progress, including the sexual revolution: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has supermodels posing nude, saying "We'd rather go naked than wear fur!"... while Life Cycle Books (the biggest distributor of pro-life literature in North America) still has pamphlets aimed at teenage girls pushing abstinence, entitled "Dating and Your Right to Choose," and still has buttons aimed at teenage girls pushing abstinence, saying, "I'm worth waiting for!"

*(Interesting the way the boys are always LeftOut of the equation, huh?!)*

Even if the views of pro-life feminists do not represent the feminist majority but are in the minority, like Feminists For Animal Rights... Feminists For Life and their pro-life feminist views should similarly be welcomed by other feminists for serious discussion.

In her article, "The Feminist Case Against Abortion," which originally appeared in the September 13, 1999 issue of *The Commonwealth*, Serrin Foster, Executive Director of Feminists For Life, wrote:

"The feminist movement was born more than two hundred years ago when Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. After decrying the sexual exploitation of women, she condemned those who would 'either destroy the embryo in the womb, or cast it off when born.' Shortly thereafter, abortion became illegal in Great Britain.

"The now revered feminists of the 19th century were also strongly opposed to abortion because of their belief in the worth of all humans. Like many women in developing countries today, they opposed abortion even though they were acutely aware of the damage done to women through constant child-bearing. They opposed abortion despite knowing that half of all children born died before the age of five. They knew that women had virtually no rights within the family or the political sphere. But they did not believe abortion was the answer.

“Ironically,” noted Foster, “the anti-abortion laws that early feminists worked so hard to enact to protect women and children were the very ones destroyed by the *Roe v. Wade* decision one hundred years later — a decision hailed by the National Organization for Women (NOW) as the ‘emancipation of women.’

“The goals of the more recent NOW-led women’s movement with respect to abortion would have outraged the early feminists,” concluded Foster. “What Elizabeth Cady Stanton called a ‘disgusting and degrading crime’ has been heralded by Eleanor Smeal, former president of NOW and current president of the Fund for a Feminist Majority, as a ‘most fundamental right.’”

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