

The Moral Case for Abortion

FIAPAC International Congress

Unwanted Pregnancy: a Fact of Life

Edinburgh, 19-20 October 2012

Ann Furedi

Chief Executive Officer

British Pregnancy Advisory Service, UK

www.bpas.org

What do you call a woman
who's had an abortion?

Mother. Daughter. Sister. Friend.

Abortion. No more names.



@bpas1968
#nomorenames

A smaller version of the bpas logo, featuring the text "bpas" and the grid icon with a wavy line below it.

Abortion: the pragmatic case

- Abortion is a basic reproductive healthcare need – essential for the well-being of women and families
- It underpins women's right to equality
- The need for abortion is not preventable - by education or contraception, by better support for mothers or easier adoption
- It can be outlawed but not banned

We use science and statistics

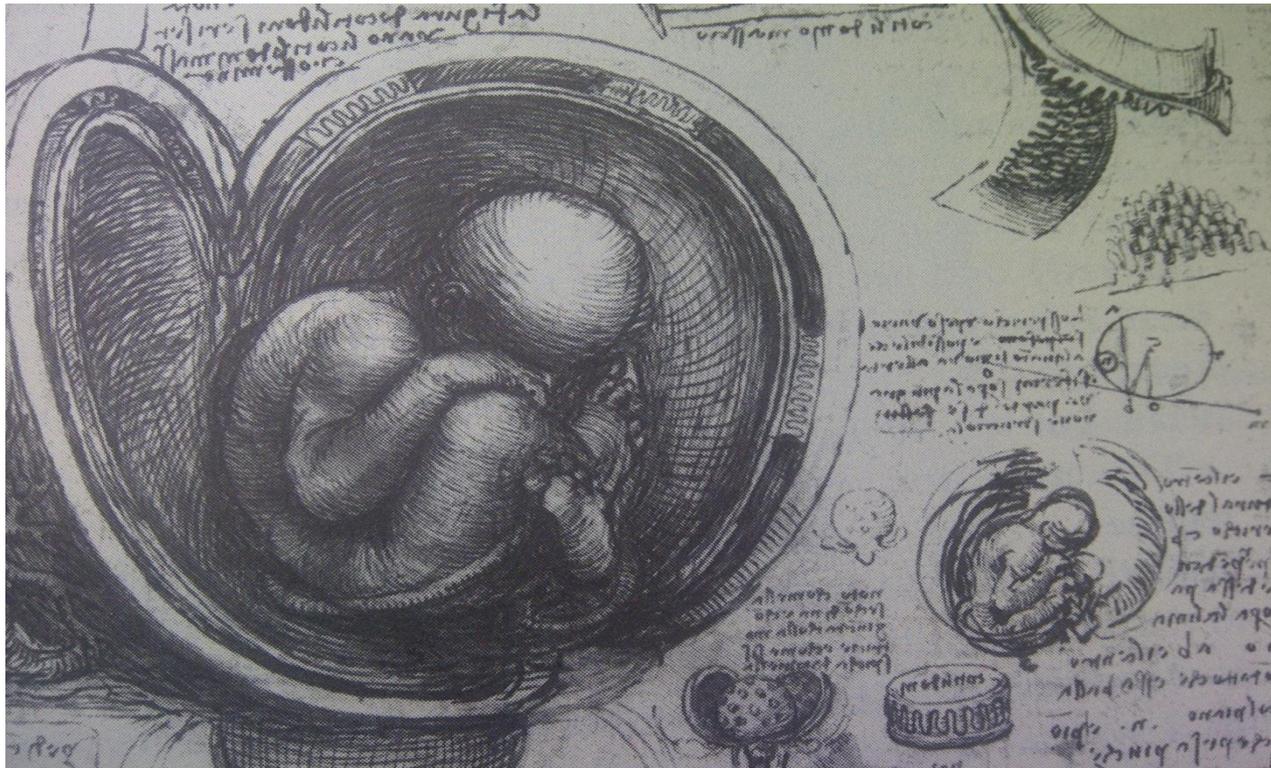


Abortion: the pragmatic case

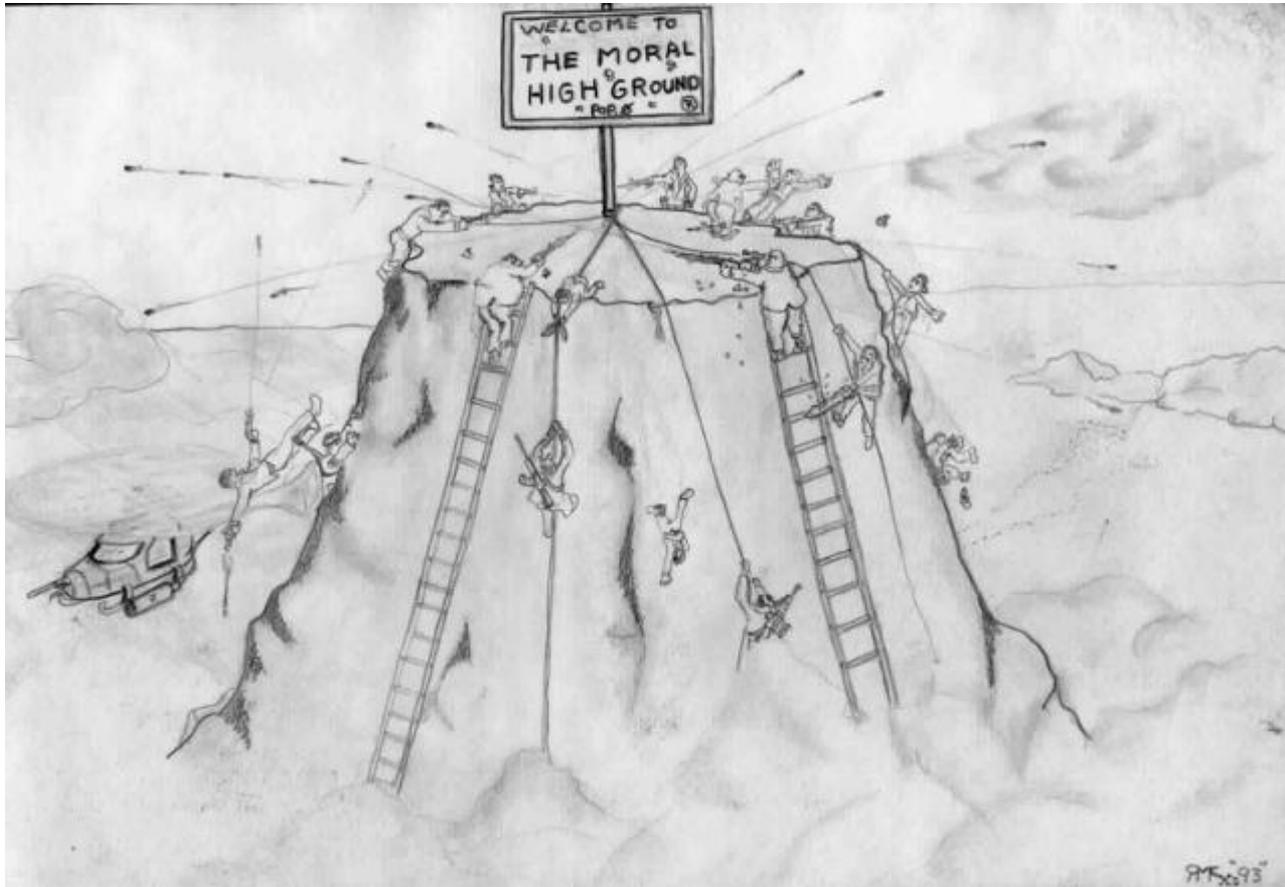
We're apologetic about women's need for abortion

- No woman ever *wants* to have an abortion
- Abortion is the *lesser of two evils* when a woman has an unwanted pregnancy
- Abortion should be safe, legal and *rare*

*We know the truth, not only by the reason,
but also by the heart,' Blaise Pascal*



Need to claim the moral high ground



<http://thedalaillama.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/moral-high-ground-640x467.jpg>

What do we mean by “moral”?

The ideas and values (the cement) that holds society together

Abortion challenges the ideas and values of many “conservative thinkers”

- About sexual freedom
- About women’s role in society and what is natural
- About the family
- About decision-making capacity

Their morals ... and ours

Restriction of a woman's right to decide on the future of her pregnancy is an affront to *my* moral values

- Respect for human life – persons and humanity.
- Respect for personal autonomy in decision making
“conscience”
- Value tolerance and freedom of expression
- Accept the inviolability of an individual's bodily integrity

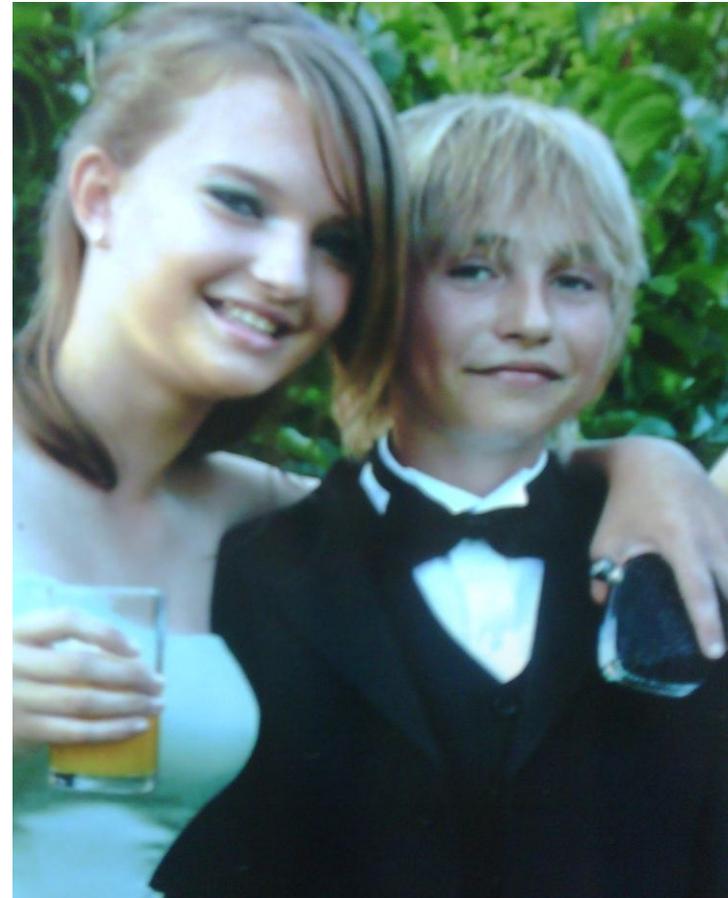
Moral basis for freedom of choice

- Kantian imperative that people are not regarded as a means to an end.
- Principle of bodily autonomy and associated decision making.
- It is morally reprehensible to deny this capacity for choice/decision making by those who are closest to the consequences.

What kind of future do we want for our children?

A future where there is true equality of opportunity

A future where individuals have the freedom to make personal choices



London Declaration of Prochoice Principles

We believe in a woman's autonomy and her right to choose whether to continue or end a pregnancy. Every woman should have the right to decide the future of her pregnancy according to her conscience, whatever her reasons or circumstances. A just society does not compel women to continue an undesired pregnancy.

We recognize that support for choice in itself is not enough. Access to abortion is an integral part of women's reproductive health care, and we believe in the right to receive this. Women need access to resources and services, including the counsel of the professionals, friends and family they choose to involve. Legal, political, social and economic changes are necessary to allow the exercise of reproductive choice, and a commitment to such changes is part of a commitment to choice.

We express solidarity with those who provide abortion care, and we recognize the moral value of their work. We recognize and respect that some health care personnel may choose not to provide abortions, but we believe it is ethically imperative for them to ensure that a woman receives a referral to a willing provider.

We believe there is a profound moral case for freedom of reproductive choice. We are committed to explaining why abortions are necessary and why women are competent to make decisions and act on them responsibly.

To be prochoice is to be committed to the right of women to make their own reproductive decisions and to:

Strive to create the conditions in which reproductive choice may be exercised.

Support reproductive autonomy.

Advocate for legal frameworks that allow autonomous decision-making.

Educate the public and policymakers globally about the value of reproductive autonomy.

Women are the only ones who can make the right decision for themselves. This is the very essence of what it means to be prochoice.

Freedom of choice is more than a right ...
It is right

ann.furedi@bpas.org