

## **Subject-based Zine Finding Aid: Reproductive rights justice**

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Contributors: Amanda Bartlett, Marie-France David, Motrya Kozbur, Ophelia Woods, Zoé Picard

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### **Introduction**

This finding aid groups zines on the topic of reproductive rights justice, with a specific focus on zines of an informative nature.

Morrison (2021) defines reproductive justice (also used for reproductive rights justice) as an intersectional concept built upon human rights and the political nature of women's bodies. It encompasses the movement by which women and individuals assigned female at birth (AFAB), especially those who are part of marginalized communities, seek the fundamental right to the control of their bodies and the right to self-determination. Reproductive rights justice often encompasses (but is not limited to) concepts such as abortion, women's sexual healthcare, sexual education, contraception, birth control, and family planning (including planned and unplanned pregnancy). Further, reproductive rights justice is an act of resistance to the sought control and exploitation of AFAB individuals' bodies across time and political climates.

The group responsible for this finding aid defines reproductive rights justice along these definitions but specifically focuses on zines which play in activism through educating individuals and disseminating knowledge on various aspects of reproductive rights listed above. This includes materials pertaining to the lived experiences of AFAB individuals concerning aspects of reproductive rights as well as informative materials pertaining to sexual education.

Archiving zines that address reproductive rights justice can be conceived as one way of giving a voice to AFAB individuals at a time when rights that were previously acquired are questioned. In doing so, this group "commit[s itself] to becoming agents of truth, accountability, and social justice—and to remembering that if these values do not lead to specific action, [we] are condemning archives to irrelevance, a mockery of truth, and worse, the very tools of oppression." (Punzalan, 2017, p. 304).

### *Brief Overview of Reproductive Rights Justice in Canada*

In Canada, contraception and abortion were considered criminal offences for much of the twentieth century. Albeit criminalized, these procedures, notably abortions, were still occurring, though with variable safety as many utilized “back alley” services. In 1969, the law was amended to provide for abortions under exceptional circumstances and contraception is decriminalized, while education regarding sexual health is improved (Burnett, 2019).

During the 1970s, reproductive rights in Canada progressed following the United Nations’ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which stated that individuals “had the right to liberty and security of person”. While personal rights progressed, the establishment of Henry Morgentaler’s abortion clinic (in which he performed 5,000 documented, then illegal, procedures) in Montréal led to a series of court proceedings resulting in a challenge to the constitution and the decriminalization of abortion in 1988, with Brian Dickson, Chief Justice, stating that “Forcing a woman by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a fetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman’s body and thus a violation of security of the person” (Burnett, 2019).

In the 1990s, the decriminalization of abortion was complemented by the widespread availability of contraceptives, though their application was rather uneven, with less contraceptive use amongst lower-income groups (“Canadian Contraception Consensus”, 2015; Kelly & Wu, 2000). However, even since these milestones established for reproductive justice, attempts have been made to recriminalize it (CBC News, 2009), while certain factions, both domestic and international (such as the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*), threaten the health of reproductive rights in Canada (Previl, 2023).

### **Overview of Items**

For this collection, it was important that the zines met the following criteria: 1) the zine describes, explains, or explores topics related to reproductive health. This includes but is not limited to reproductive health history, sexual education, personal experience related to navigating reproductive health, resources related to abortion, and resources for new and expecting mothers. 2) The zine offers a unique perspective that contributes to the larger objective of representing a diverse scope of experiences related to reproductive health justice. To this point, the process involved taking care to include voices of marginalized communities, incarcerated people, and racialized people—those who have been disproportionately subjected to barriers to access to

safe reproductive healthcare (Sutton et al. 2021). The selection of zines is also guided by the principle that anecdotal evidence plays an important role within an archives, as it gives voice to communities and considers contributors to be experts of their lived experiences (Wood et al., 2014).

The collection's contents are temporally situated between the 1990s and the 2010s. Certain zines within the collection are anthologies featuring many voices and perspectives, while others represent a single voice. In five zines out of the collection of ten, authors are named, while in the other five, authors remain anonymous. In *Migrant or Local, We're Vocal*: a compilation of stories by young mothers from different backgrounds, contributors are listed by first name only. Contributors offer their biographical information, and describe their experiences, socioeconomic circumstances, and emotional landscapes:

“My name is Crystale, and I'm 21. I was born and raised in Trinidad. I guess something important for me is my mom moving away at a young age . . . I somehow supported myself: with school, money, everything...” (p.13)

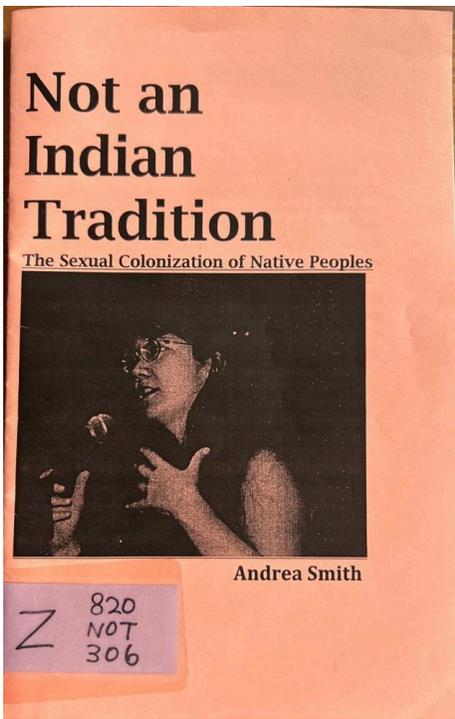
*Abortion without Apology - A Radical History for the 1990's*, is based on interviews conducted by Ninia Baehr, as well as letters solicited by Baehr for the publication of the zine. This zine was included in the collection for its historical value; its descriptions of individual activists provide a rich context to the reproductive justice movement. These interviews and letters were collected throughout the late '80s and early '90s as part of the “Abortion Rap” workshops organized by Baehr. The zine was created to document the histories of those that Baehr describes as pioneers in the fight for reproductive freedom pre-Roe v. Wade. She toured college campuses in the '90s to conduct abortion activism workshops.

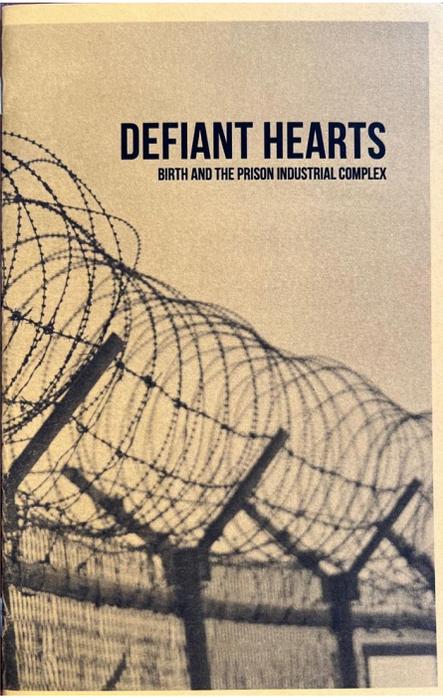
The zine *Abortion and its' predecessors* is included for its historical value, telling a story about abortion from “Way back when” (p.6) to the 1990s (last date cited in the text). Just as abortion often is, the zine is anonymous, the author and the date are unknown. However, it is Canadian as its last section provides information regarding abortion in this country.

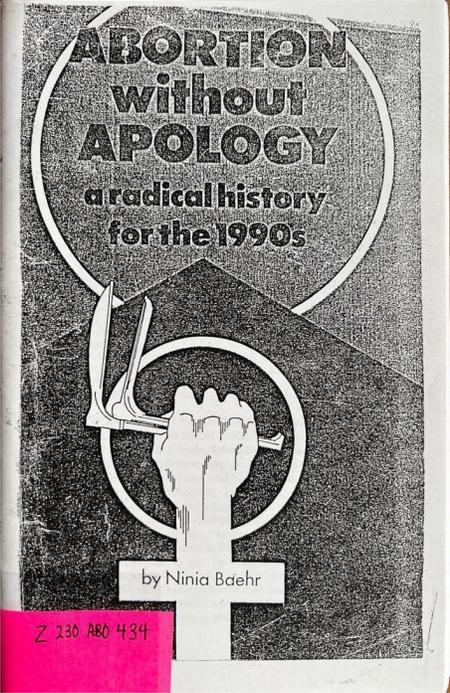
*Let's Talk about Your Uterus - an introduction to fertility awareness* is an example of zines that offer resources concerning fertility awareness and reproductive health. Ashley Hartman Annis is a health consultant who created a collection of zines on the topic of sexual health.

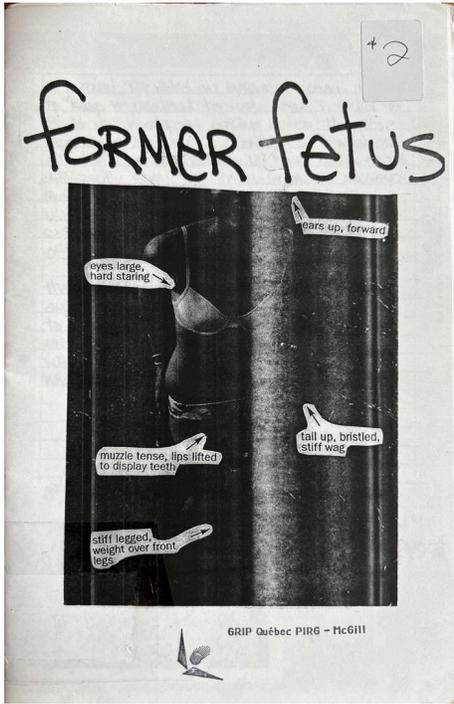
The collection is organized into two main categories: personal stories of someone's experience with abortion or motherhood; and resources around reproductive health and reproductive justice. These categories were created to meet the needs of an imagined user coming to this collection seeking information about reproductive justice, as opposed to a user casually browsing the collection.

**Content warning: Some zines in this collection contain descriptions of medical procedures including abortion, and mention sexual violence and forced sterilization.**

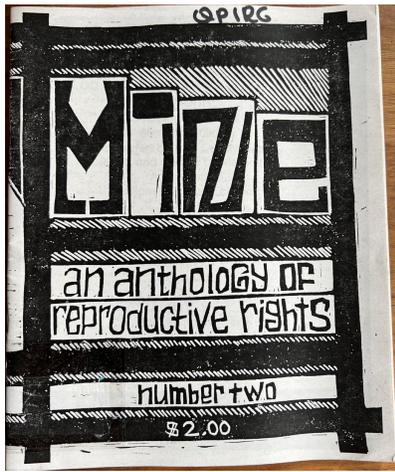
<b>Title</b>	Not an Indian - The Sexual Colonization of Native Peoples	
<b>Date</b>		
<b>Author/s</b>	Andrea Smith	
<b>Publisher</b>		
<b>Language</b>	English	
<b>Call No</b>		
<b>Subjects</b>	Sexual violence; colonialism, Indigenous Women	
<b>Description</b>	This essay describes the correlation between sexual violence and colonialism within the context of the lives of indigenous peoples in the United States. It highlights the targeted violence on indigenous women's reproductive health and forced sterilization of indigenous women.	
<b>Pages</b>	20	
<b>Dimensions</b>	5.5 x 8.5 in	
<b>Number of Copies</b>	1	

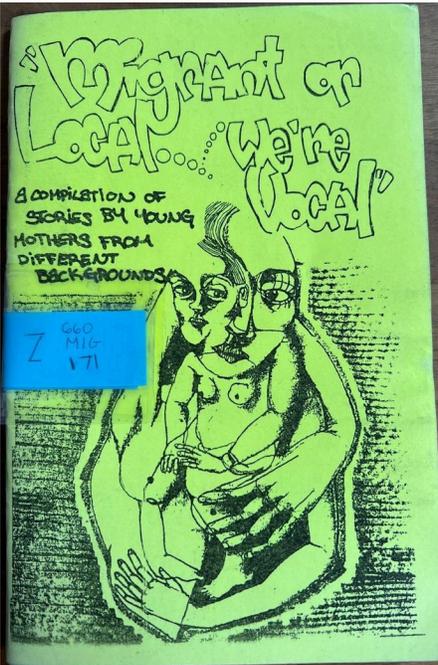
<b>Title</b>	Defiant Hearts - Birth and the Prison Industrial Complex	
<b>Date</b>	Post-2010	
<b>Author/s</b>	Adeline Lionheart	
<b>Publisher</b>		
<b>Language</b>	English	
<b>Call No</b>		
<b>Subjects</b>	Prison conditions; Women in prisons; Pregnancy	
<b>Description</b>	This zine describes the horrific conditions that pregnant people undergo in prison. It advocates for better conditions and for more activism, especially by midwives.	
<b>Pages</b>	20	
<b>Dimensions</b>	8.5 x 5.5 in	
<b>Number of Copies</b>	1	

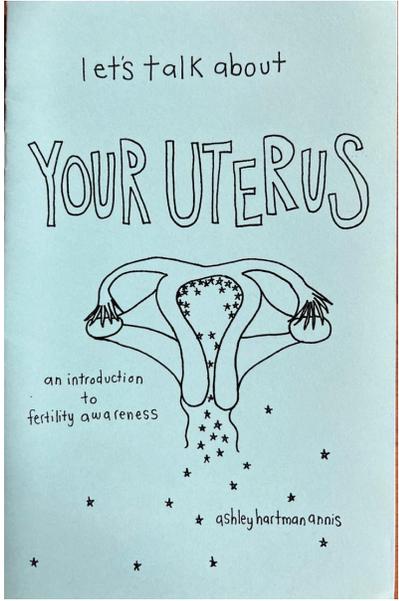
<b>Title</b>	Abortion Without Apology: A Radical History for the 1990s	
<b>Date</b>	1990s	
<b>Author/s</b>	Ninia Baehr	
<b>Publisher</b>	South End Press	
<b>Language</b>	English	
<b>Call No</b>	Z 230 ABO 434	
<b>Subjects</b>	Abortion; Radical history; Laws; Women's history	
<b>Description</b>	Inspired by their work with the «Abortion Without Apology» group, Nina Baehr presents stories of women who had abortions and the legal struggles and situations that they encountered as a result.	
<b>Pages</b>	70	
<b>Dimensions</b>	5.5 x 8.5 in	
<b>Number of Copies</b>	1	

<b>Title</b>	Former Fetus	
<b>Date</b>	2005	
<b>Author/s</b>	"e"	
<b>Publisher</b>	Arousal	
<b>Language</b>	English	
<b>Call No</b>	Z 220 FOR 2005	
<b>Subjects</b>	Abortion; Autobiography, Pregnancy, Health care	
<b>Description</b>	e's journal entries written on livejournal.com, copied and pasted into a zine. This zine is a personal account of e's experience of having an abortion.	
<b>Pages</b>	20	
<b>Dimensions</b>	5.5 x 8.5 in	
<b>Number of Copies</b>	1	

<b>Title</b>	Jane - Document from Chicago's Clandestine Abortion Service 1968-1973	
<b>Date</b>	2004	
<b>Author/s</b>	Arcana, Judith; Galatzer-Levy, Jeanne; Abortion Counselling Service; CWLU Herstory Project	
<b>Publisher</b>	Firestarter Press	
<b>Language</b>	English	
<b>Call No</b>	Z 220 JAN 2004	
<b>Subjects</b>	Abortion, 1960s, 1970s, activism	
<b>Description</b>	A collection of first-hand accounts covering the underground abortion movement, Jane, which operated from 1968 to 1973. Includes the transcripts of an interview conducted with a former Jane member.	
<b>Pages</b>	60	
<b>Dimensions</b>	8.5 x 5.5 in	
<b>Number of Copies</b>	1	

<b>Title</b>	Mine - An Anthology of Reproductive Rights	
<b>Date</b>		
<b>Author/s</b>	Merideth Stern	
<b>Publisher</b>		
<b>Language</b>	English	
<b>Call No</b>	Z 220 MIN	
<b>Subjects</b>	Personal stories; Abortion; Women's rights.	
<b>Description</b>	This project is a collection of personal accounts with reproductive health and the complexities of reproductive rights.	
<b>Pages</b>	48	
<b>Dimensions</b>	7 x 8.5 in	
<b>Number of Copies</b>	1	

<b>Title</b>	Migrant or Local...We're Vocal / D'ici ou Ailleurs...on s'exprime	
<b>Date</b>		
<b>Author/s</b>	Gabriel, Katania; Lessey, Leveesa; Sarah; Annie; Shawn; Althea	
<b>Publisher</b>	Head and Hands	
<b>Language</b>	English; French	
<b>Call No</b>	Z 520 MIG	
<b>Subjects</b>	Abortion; Motherhood; Pregnancy	
<b>Description</b>	A compilation of stories of/by younger mothers from various backgrounds. Scattered throughout the pages are resources for organizations that help young mothers, as well as resources to receive an abortion.	
<b>Pages</b>	48	
<b>Dimensions</b>	8.5 x 5.5 in	
<b>Number of Copies</b>	1	

<b>Title</b>	Let's Talk About Your Uterus - An Introduction to Fertility Awareness	
<b>Date</b>		
<b>Author/s</b>	Ashley Hartman Annis	
<b>Publisher</b>	Z 210 LET	
<b>Language</b>	English	
<b>Call No</b>	Z 230 YOU	
<b>Subjects</b>	Fertility awareness; Women's health; Sexual health	
<b>Description</b>	This zine introduces different elements of fertility and the menstrual cycle and specifically focuses on the «Fertility Awareness Method».	
<b>Pages</b>	16	
<b>Dimensions</b>	8.5 x 5.5 in	
<b>Number of Copies</b>	1	

<b>Title</b>	Can I Get Pregnant, Or Get Or Pass a STI From That?	 <p>Original article found on Scarleteen <a href="http://goo.gl/bpY1k9">http://goo.gl/bpY1k9</a>  (The thermometer illustrations by Molly Crabapple and some of the content of this page have been excerpted and adapted from S.E.X.: the All-You-Need-to-Know Progressive Sexuality Guide to Get You Through High School and College, available at many bookstores and libraries.)</p>
<b>Date</b>		
<b>Author/s</b>		
<b>Publisher</b>		
<b>Language</b>	English	
<b>Call No</b>	Z 210 CAN	
<b>Subjects</b>	Sex education; Pregnancy; sexually transmitted infections (STI); sexual practices	
<b>Description</b>	This is a sex-education resource describing different sexual activities grouped by level of risk of pregnancy and STI transmission.	
<b>Pages</b>	14	
<b>Dimensions</b>	8.5 x 5.5 in	
<b>Number of Copies</b>	2	

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