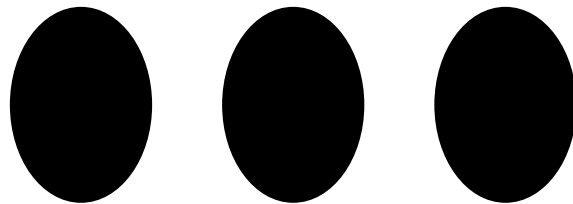




The Brutal Face of "Tolerance"

For a few tense minutes, it looked as though the situation might deteriorate into a riot, as the militants worked themselves into near fever pitch. The police drew their batons, called for reinforcements, and braced for attack. Thanks, however, to the quick reactions and pre-planning by the pro-life march organizers, the march abruptly shifted course up an alternative route and averted the violent confrontation their opponents obviously were trying to provoke.



Welcome to San Francisco, that quintessential "progressive" community that prides itself — in the words of Mayor Gavin Newsom — as "a city of freedom, tolerance, creativity, and diversity." But as the events of the January 22 West Coast Walk for Women and Life proved, San Francisco is becoming ever more *intolerant*. Its highest elected officials pander to the extreme left of the political spectrum — militant homosexuals, lesbians, feminists, environmentalists, anarchists, socialists, and communists — and deny the most basic constitutional protections to those who dissent from the dominant radical political orthodoxy.

San Francisco's political power elite is sending a message: if you're a Christian and oppose abortion as the murder of innocent, unborn children, you have no rights. Unfortunately, San Francisco may be setting a trend in political oppression that will be copied by liberal-left politicians in other major cities.

Politicians "Proud" to Be Pro-abortion

Thankfully, except for a few tussles and minor injuries, the West Coast Walk for Women and Life concluded without any major mishap. However, had the event turned into another "Battle in Seattle" — the so-called anti-WTO demonstrations that turned violent and destructive — the radicals at San Francisco's City Hall certainly would have been morally (and perhaps legally) culpable. On January 11, the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco passed a resolution by Supervisor Tom Ammiano to "commemorate the 32nd anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, and designate January 22, 2005 as 'Stand Up For Choice Day' in honor of a woman's right to choose." A press release issued by the city announced that Ammiano and five of his fellow supervisors would be holding a press conference on the steps of City Hall at noon on January 11 to "Announce Official City Policy: San Francisco Is Pro-Choice and Proud." The press release, an incendiary propaganda piece that smeared the pro-life marchers as



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on February 21, 2005

violent outside agitators, declared:

Anti-choice demonstrators plan to descend on San Francisco to protest women's health and rights with a so-called "walk for life." Anti-choice hardliners plan to demonstrate against comprehensive, medically accurate sex education, birth control services, and the right to choose. Anti-choice marchers include radical groups such as Operation Rescue, which have a history of violence and harassment of medical clinics.

Ammiano announced the city's official support for a counter-demonstration to the pro-life march. Flanked by militant pro-abortionists from Planned Parenthood, the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), and the Pro-Choice Coalition, Ammiano chastised those who think they "can come to our fair city and demonstrate against basic human rights." Supervisor Michaela Alioto-Pier said, "I am urging all women to come out to the rally to stand up for choice." Supervisor Chris Daly echoed the war cry, declaring, "Any attack on women's rights is an attack on civil rights. Progressives need to come out in force and adamantly declare that San Francisco will steadfastly remain a city that supports and defends women's reproductive freedom." Supervisor Bevan Dufty added another inflammatory ditto: "These outsiders who oppose women's right to participate fully in our society are not welcome in San Francisco."

"I was stunned when I saw that press release and heard what the Supervisors were saying," Walk for Life organizer Sue Connelly told *The New American*. "We already knew they were pro-abortion, but this was as if they were encouraging the most militant elements to come out and infringe our right to assemble peacefully and express our beliefs. As if they can completely wipe out the First Amendment for those they disagree with. That's really going too far. It's un-American and it could have resulted in serious injury, especially for the children and older people [on the march]."

Walk for Life organizers Dolores Meehan and Eva Muntean are, like Sue Connelly, longtime San Francisco residents (Meehan is a fourth-generation San Franciscan). They cite the supervisors' repeated references to "outsiders" as false. They note that probably 25-30 percent of the pro-life participants were from San Francisco and probably another 40-50 percent were from the surrounding Bay Area. Not that the "outsider" charges constitute a legitimate issue anyway, even if true. After all, when was the last time that liberal politicians protested Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Hillary Clinton, Alec Baldwin, or Woody Harrelson coming to town with bus loads of rent-a-mob supporters?

Provoking Confrontation

Not content with stirring up hatred in the days before the Walk for Life, San Francisco's officials turned out in force to agitate on the day of the march itself. As several thousand pro-life supporters gathered for the starting rally at Justin Herman Plaza on San Francisco's historic Embarcadero waterfront, Mayor Gavin Newsom cheered on a militant counter-demonstration a couple blocks away on Market Street. "This whole movement is about the value of choice and the empowerment of women," he told the pro-abortion crowd of 2,000-3,000. District Attorney Kamala Harris, a pro-abortion activist, was also on hand to exhort the faithful to action. As if these hardened cadres needed any encouragement to confrontation.

Mayor Newsom, District Attorney Harris, and the supervisors certainly knew that the Pro-Choice Coalition organizing the counter-demonstration included two groups — the anarchist Ruckus Society and the Communist-dominated A.N.S.W.E.R. (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism) — notorious for inciting violence and mayhem. Other radical groups listed as members of the coalition include the



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Democratic Socialists of America, Socialist Viewpoint, the International Socialist Organization, and Radical Women.

At Justin Herman Plaza, the Walk for Life gathering heard messages that were no less fervent, but certainly more prayerful and pacifist, than the fire-breathing rhetoric of the "pro-choice" militants. Catholic Archbishop William Levada of San Francisco, Feminists for Life leader Sally Winn, and Rev. Clenard Childress of the Life Education And Resource Network (L.E.A.R.N.), urged those in attendance to intensify their efforts to secure protection for the unborn and to build on the many recent pro-life political victories. In sharp contrast to the pro-abortion rally, these and other pro-life speakers repeatedly emphasized that regardless of the taunts, insults, and invective hurled by their adversaries, the pro-life marchers must not respond in kind. In fact, they were told not even to speak to or look at their tormentors, but instead to sing and pray.

Small groups of "pro-choice" demonstrators began their attacks at the plaza, attempting to disrupt the pro-life rally by yelling, blowing trumpets, and beating drums. The San Francisco Police promptly grabbed these infiltrators and escorted them away. But before the Walk for Life could begin, the radicals from Mayor Newsom's rally had descended on the Embarcadero and taken up position on the route that the pro-life march had been given a permit to use. A huge truck with a generator and giant speakers that had been used at the pro-abortion rally was parked (illegally, in front of a fire hydrant and "No Parking" signs) just a few yards from the plaza to harass the pro-lifers with a continuous deafening blast of pro-abortion slogans and rock music. At the same time, several pro-abortion militants stalked the sidewalk with electric bullhorns screaming unprintable obscenities.

Media Bias

The *San Francisco Chronicle*, which is strongly pro-abortion, nevertheless noted the stark difference in conduct between the two sides. The *Chronicle* reported:

In dueling marches, about 6,000 antiabortion activists in the Walk for Life West Coast were jeered and harangued by about 3,000 advocates for abortion rights.... For the most part, the antiabortion activists ignored taunts from pro-choice marchers, smiling politely in response to jeers, flashing peace signs and singing, "God Bless America." Abortion rights advocates, however, were anything but subdued, regarding the antiabortion marchers as invaders of the city.

The *Chronicle's* report, though, does not begin to convey the enormity, intensity, and viciousness of the pro-abortion attacks, or the heroic restraint exercised by the pro-life forces. But the *Chronicle* was better than other media, which didn't put the least bit of effort toward accurately describing the events. *U.S. Newswire's* story, which went out to print and broadcast media across the land, could qualify as rip-and-read propaganda from the pro-abortion coalition's press desk. The story's falsehoods began with the headline claiming the pro-abortionists far outnumbered the Walk for Life participants. The headline declared: "More Than 6,000 Pro-Choice Bay Area Residents Stand Up for Women's Health and Rights; Pro-Choice Crowd Outnumbers Anti-Choice Marchers by More Than 3 to 1 in Peaceful Demonstration." In truth, the pro-life march, which began with around 6,000-8,000 at Justin Herman Plaza, picked up many additional marchers along the way, ending with 10,000 to 12,000 at the Marina Green near the Golden Gate Bridge.

U.S. Newswire reported: "Outnumbering anti-choice demonstrators by more than three to one, an estimated 6,000 took to the streets of San Francisco to stand up for women's health and rights on Saturday, January 22, 2005.... Pro-choice marchers peacefully lined the route of the anti-choice march



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chanting slogans such as 'Get up, get down! San Francisco is a pro-choice town!'"

Eyewitness Accounts

But it's *pro-choice* only insofar as one chooses to follow the politically correct line dictated by the political powers-that-be and their radical street enforcers. Ron Laney of Los Gatos told The New American he witnessed a "pro-choice" demonstrator rush up and push an older pro-life marcher, knocking him to the ground. The perpetrator then dashed back into the pro-abortion crowd before anyone could react. The pro-life gentleman was helped back up and continued the walk, apparently unhurt.

Several people were hit with eggs or rocks hurled by "peaceful" pro-abortion activists. Several blocks into the walk an elderly pro-life gentleman was overcome by the ordeal and had to sit down on the curb to rest. Accompanied only by his daughter and one of the walk organizers, it was quickly apparent to this reporter that he was in harm's way from the surging pro-abortion mob. Although several pro-abortion activists did show genuine compassion for the man's condition and offered to help, they were the exceptions. Most were either indifferent to, or maliciously gleeful at, his plight. "One down, a thousand more to go!" snarled one activist who brushed by. "Serves you right! Stay out of our town!" said another, while others jeered or cheered. Still another drew his leg back as though getting ready to kick the disabled marcher. When I moved between him and the downed man and gave him a serious look, the would-be aggressor moved away and rejoined a pack of cohorts who were harassing the marchers. Whether he actually would have kicked the old man if someone had not been there to block him, there is no way of knowing. But even to pretend mockingly to do something vicious in those super-charged circumstances is a terrible thing and belies the heroic, compassionate image that the pro-abortion industry so assiduously cultivates.

When the "peaceful" pro-abortion militants blocked the Walk for Life on Fisherman's Wharf, they not only were breaking the law and inconveniencing the pro-life marchers; they also came close to inciting a riot — which they clearly were hoping to do. Squads of the activists working in concert cut through the pro-life ranks and attempted a surrounding maneuver, while their forces built up on the wharf side of the street and began pressing more aggressively on the trapped marchers. The situation intensified when two pro-abortion activists were arrested for assaulting police officers. However, because the Walk for Life leaders quickly redirected the march on an alternative route to avoid confrontation, the pressure point was relieved and the "critical mass" of pro-abortion shock troops was dissipated as many of their heckling comrades streamed after the continuing march.

If the peaceful Walk for Life had turned into a bloody riot (as it very nearly did), would Mayor Newsom, District Attorney Harris, and the supervisors who supported and agitated the lawbreakers have been held criminally and civilly responsible for the damages? Elected officials should be put on notice that they *will* be held accountable for such flagrant acts of inciting violence and the violation of other people's rights.

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