

# Basic Detail Report

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## A woman holds up a sign saying 'We are not in Poland' in protest at the abortion law that was passed in 1978

### Date

1969-1979

### Medium

gelatin silver print

### Description

'Non siamo in Polonia' 'We are not in Poland' Abortion in Italy became legal in May 1978, when Italian women were allowed to terminate a pregnancy on request during the first 90 days. A proposal to repeal the law was considered in a 1981 national referendum, but was rejected by nearly 68% of voters; another referendum aimed at eliminating the restrictions was rejected by 88.4% Until 1932, abortion was banned in Poland without exceptions. In that year, the new Penal Code legalized abortion only when there were medical reasons and, for the first time in Europe, when the pregnancy resulted from a criminal act. Except during the German occupation during the Second World War, this law was in effect from 1932 to 1956. In Nazi Germany, which included territories of Poland 1939-1945, the penalties for abortion were increased and in 1943, providing an abortion to an "Aryan" woman became a capital offense. Abortion was permitted if the foetus was deformed or disabled. In 1956 the Sejm legalized abortion in cases where the woman was experiencing "difficult living conditions". The interpretation of the change in the law varied from a restrictive interpretation, in the late 1950s, to one in where abortion was allowed on request, in the 1960s and 1970s. It was not uncommon that women from countries where abortions were restricted, such as Sweden, travelled to Poland to carry out abortions which were accessible and affordable there. After the fall of Communism, the

government banned abortion except in cases where abortion was the only way to save the life of the pregnant woman. In 1997, Parliament enacted a modification to the abortion bill, which permitted the termination of pregnancy in cases of emotional or social distress, but this law was deemed unconstitutional by the Polish Constitutional Court. In December of that year, the legal status of abortion in Poland was restored to that in 1993.

### **Dimensions**

Overall: 24.4 x 18.1 cm (9 5/8 x 7 1/8 in.)