

# Women Are Not Incubators!



**The Assault on Abortion Rights:  
Where It's Coming From,  
What Has To Be Done About It,  
And Why All Who Hate  
Oppression Must Fight  
for Women's Liberation**

**Revolutionary Worker Special Magazine Section**

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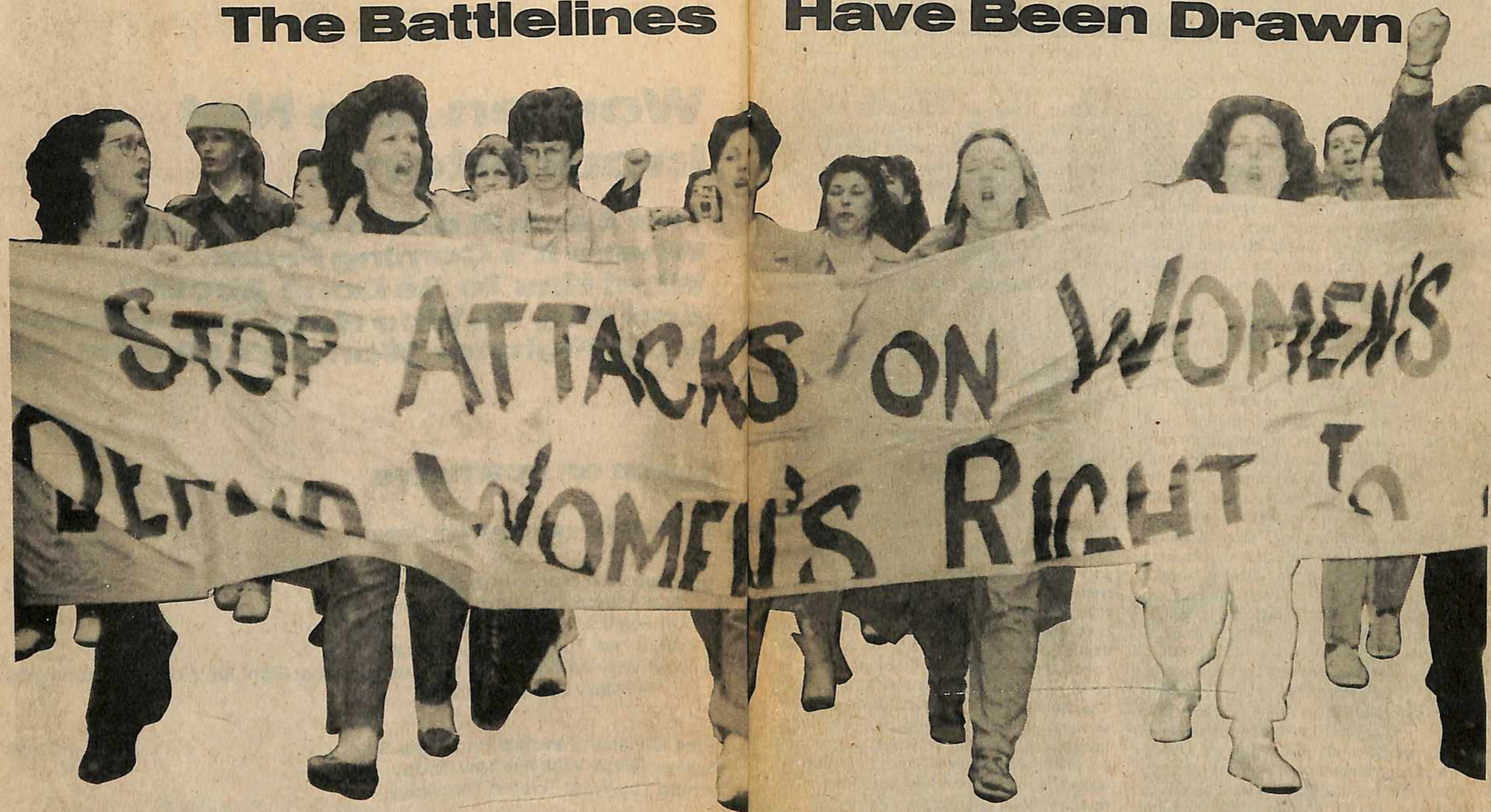
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## The Battlegrounds

## Have Been Drawn



It is being orchestrated from the highest offices of the U.S. government: a major and outrageous assault on women. The groundwork is being set for outlawing abortion altogether. July 1989 the Supreme Court gave states the right to enforce new restrictions on abortion. And this set off another round of efforts to pass state anti-abortion laws. In 1989 and 1990 the Supreme Court will hear three more cases on abortion, and *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 case which legalized abortion in the U.S., could be overturned.

This attack is part of a broader reactionary and repressive offensive aimed at creating a fascist atmosphere in society. There is an ugly, reactionary wind telling

women: "Get back in 'your place.' You're going to be dictated to and this is only the beginning." Today women are constantly bombarded with the reactionary view that a woman's main goal in life should be to tend to home and husband. Women are told they won't lead a "fulfilled and meaningful" life unless they have children. There are calls for a return to "traditional family values." And we are fed the lie that social problems like crime and drugs should be blamed on the fact that many households are headed by women. The ruling class of this country wants to stop women from raising their sights and thinking about the world and how to change it.

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"I actually didn't think it would get this serious. I kept thinking, no, it can't be getting this serious, but it has. Now it's imperative. It's beyond serious. It's just plain crucial. . . .

"If the government decides to play with women's bodies, then I intend to fight them with every fiber of my being."

Women at the April 1989 pro-choice demonstration in D.C.

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The alarm has been sounded, the complacency shattered. April 9: 500,000 people demonstrated in Washington, D.C. to declare, "WE WON'T GO BACK!" And after the July Supreme Court decision, many new forces joined the battle to defend abortion rights. Groups like NOW report their phones have been ringing off the hook with women calling from around the country asking how they can do something to beat back these attacks on abortion. And militant demonstrations have continued to confront Operation Rescue at clinics—in many cases preventing the anti-abortionists from closing the clinic doors.

There has been widespread discussion and debate over how to carry this struggle forward and win. Mainstream politics argues that women's anger should be channeled into the voting booth. But increasing numbers of people are beginning to question the strategy of "working within the system" when the system itself is so clearly the cause of these attacks in the first place. The ruling class is worried about the rage their attacks have caused. Even their own polls show a majority of people think the government should not dictate to women whether or not to have an abortion.

A very favorable situation exists to mobilize MILLIONS to take on this fight for reproductive rights. And a great deal is at stake: If the people don't succeed in taking the OFFENSIVE and defeating this assault on women, hundreds of thousands of women will suffer mutilation and death from illegal abortions. And ALL WOMEN, in the U.S. and around the world, will suffer the effects of the tightening chains. If we don't beat back this assault we will have lost ground in the struggle for full emancipation for women—and it will be a setback in the struggle to emancipate all of humanity from oppression of every sort.

They have declared war on women—it's time to declare war on them. The challenge must be met, for ourselves and for the next generation.

## WHY WOMEN MUST HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Debating whether women should have the right to abortion is like debating whether Black people should have the right not to be slaves. It's that fundamental a question.

Society is increasingly polarized around abortion—the media has said this is potentially the most divisive issue since the Vietnam War. People on both sides of the barricades in this battle feel very strongly about this question exactly because it raises larger questions about social relations between men and women and the whole way society is organized.

The anti-abortionists argue abortion is murder because "fetuses are unborn children." And they say "the life of the fetus" is central to the abortion debate. But this is a lie.

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"I resent anti-abortionists calling themselves 'pro-life.' To me human life goes beyond a few living cells. What would 'life' be without intelligence and goals and dreams? It is NOT the goal and dream of every woman to have babies, and having babies may irrevocably interfere with some women's visions of their lives."

A woman in Boston

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History has shown that one of the main ways oppressive societies have established control over women is to control women's reproduction. From the time human societies became divided along property lines and male dominance was imposed over the family and society, the right to make decisions about reproduction has been taken away from women. The church and the state dictate women's subservience to men. And religious and political institutions, laws, and the weight of reactionary ideology all work together as a coercive weight on women. And yet women have never ceased to resist this coercion.

The state claims it has a "vested interest" in protecting the life of "pre-born" Americans. But what is this vested interest? Surely not some selfless interest in children in general! Millions of children in the U.S. suffer from lack of adequate health care, nutrition, day care, education, etc., as a matter of routine and as a direct result of this system's policies. Millions of children around the world suffer the terrible repercussions of U.S. imperialist





Pro-choice demonstration  
Washington, D.C.,  
April 1989

policies ranging from starvation to the ravages of war. So what is this "vested interest?" It can only be a vested interest in regulating the lives and actions of women.

This is a stark example of how property relations—which lie at the heart of capitalist society—are also at the heart of the abortion issue. From the point of view of those who run this country, women are property to be controlled. And fetuses are property that has become politically and ideologically very useful in their efforts to put women down.

### FETUSES ARE NOT CHILDREN

There are many different reasons why women get abortions. And they are all valid. No woman should feel guilty about terminating an unwanted pregnancy. And no woman should buy the crap that having an abortion is "selfish."

The birth of a child can be a source of great joy to a woman. But it can be a nightmare for a woman who *for whatever reason* does not want to have a child at a particular time or

under particular circumstances. In such cases *forcing* a woman to continue a pregnancy is extremely cruel and sadistic. It will affect her entire life and no woman's life should be twisted in such a way. No child should be born unwanted. No woman should be forced to choose between compulsory motherhood and a back-alley butcher.

Banning abortion is like rape—the violent assertion of male domination and male supremacist society over women, the forceful and violent control of women's bodies, in the most personal dimensions. Banning abortion means suppression of women by force of law and the state. It is institutionalized violence against women.

If abortions are outlawed women will continue to seek out abortions. But the difference will be that instead of going in early for a simple and safe medical procedure many women will find themselves trapped, forced to swallow poisons, mutilate themselves with coat hangers, or die at the hands of fast-buck butchers. All this was routine in the U.S. prior to 1973 and continues to be routine in many parts of the world today.

Abortion is a common and significant part of women having control over their own lives. And women have to stop being defensive about it. No matter how late in a pregnancy, no matter how much it *might* be able to live outside a women's body, a fetus is NOT a child. And abortion is NOT murder.

"Life" is a characteristic of everything on this planet which is capable of growth, development, active transformation of its environment, reproduction, etc. It is characteristic of every animal, every plant, and every cell for that matter. A fertilized egg is "alive." But so is a human ovum, a human sperm cell, or a human skin cell! Obviously every living thing cannot and should not be preserved.

A pregnancy is a nine-month process during which a fertilized egg grows, develops, and goes through a series of transformations before it can finally become a baby—a new human being—at the time of its birth. BEFORE birth, it is not a child or a person with an independent existence. It is a developing mass of tissue integrally connected to the woman's vital biological processes. It is part of that woman with no separate social existence. It has the *potential* to become human. But it is not yet a separate social being that should have separate social rights. For that it must have entered society as a separate entity. That is, it must have been born.

Here lies the heart of the struggle around abortion: As long as reproduction is rooted in individual women, the basis exists for the social regulation of reproduction to be an oppressive thing for women. Exactly because of this, the overall physical and social well-being of women must take priority over any subordinate processes, such as reproduction. This is a question of women's health. But even more,

it is a question of *women's right to function fully in society.*

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"Before, when I was growing up, I was always totally dependent on my boyfriends. I was terrified about being alone, and I wouldn't leave one boyfriend unless I definitely had another. And I put up with a lot of junk because of that. Then, when I was married, I was terrified to leave the house. I would never think of leaving my husband. I thought I needed him to protect me. Now I don't need anyone anymore. I've learned so much being out here. Not just about survival, about getting food and shelter, but also emotionally, what it means to be a leader, how to get along in a group of people. I'm so much more confident of my own abilities and independent than I was when I was married."

Homeless woman involved in the struggle around Tompkins Square Park in New York

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A woman who is forced to bear a child against her will is assaulted and degraded in both body and spirit. On the other hand, a woman who can control her own reproduction and decide whether and when to have children will be stronger, more independent, and better able to deal with the world at large, outside the confines of the family. She will be better able to lift up her head, better able to dream and visualize the way the world **COULD BE**. And she will be better able to act to realize these dreams. Stronger women make stronger fighters, for themselves, for their children, for all the women, men, and children everywhere who have known conditions of oppression.

**Women Must Have the Right to Choose!**

**No Forced Reproduction—No Forced Sterilization!**

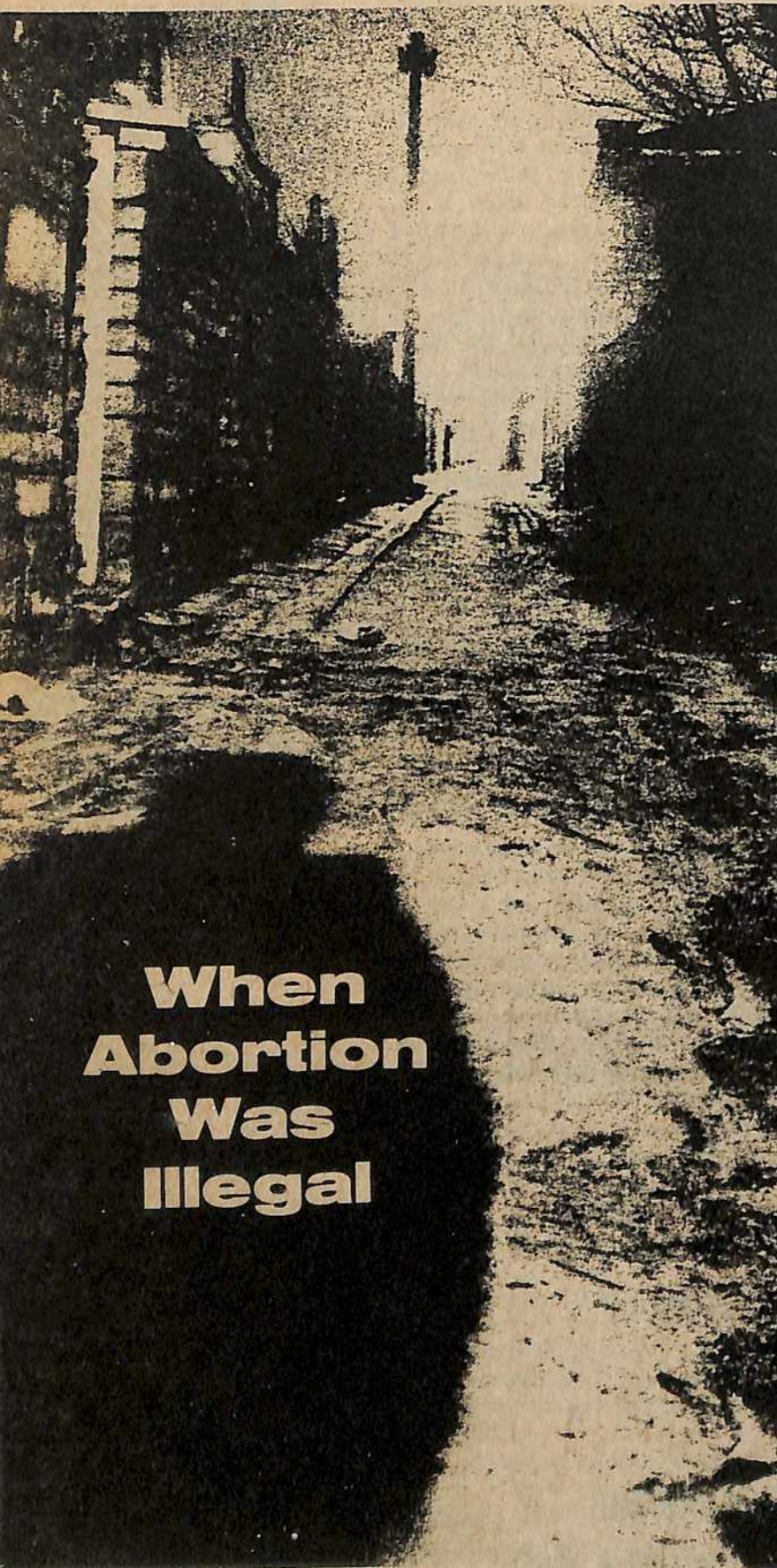
**Women are NOT Incubators!**

**Fetuses are NOT Children!**

**Abortion is NOT Murder!**

**Outlawing Abortion Was—and IS—a Nazi Program!**

**Break the Chains! Unleash the Fury of Women As a Mighty Force For Revolution!**



## When Abortion Was Illegal

1968

"By the time I was two-and-a-half months pregnant I knew I had to make a decision quickly. I would have had to go on welfare or go back home to my parents to have the baby, and I didn't want to do that. Going back home would have been a real backward step for me—they would disapprove of this baby and I would be at their mercy, and I've always been an independent person. Also, I was becoming aware of things like the Civil Rights Movement. The riots on the West Side after Martin Luther King died had just happened, and there were things I wanted to find out about. I felt my life would just end if I had this child with no support—from my family, my boyfriend. . . .

"I was making the arrangements with a go-between for the abortionist. He told me to go to a street corner downtown at a designated time and to wear a particular color scarf around my neck. A big black Cadillac pulled up with three other women in the car and he picked me up. He drove around in a circuitous route for about 45 minutes to elude any tails but also to confuse us about our location, and then suddenly the car shot into a back alley. I was very nervous but I felt determined to carry through with my decision.

"We were hustled to an apartment that acted as a makeshift doctor's office. Both the man and the woman had surgical masks on to protect their identity. It was a painful D&C because he gave me no anesthetic. After it was over they just dropped us back in downtown Chicago. I was worried about any complications because, of course, I knew that I couldn't go back to this man. I didn't even know who he was, I had no idea where he was located. But I had no abnormal bleeding.

"Having to operate in that underground kind of way like that raised some very sharp questions to me. Why are things like this? Why isn't abortion just another operation like anything else? Why should a woman have to bear the consequences of a pregnancy and be able to do nothing about it?"

"Notes From the Back Alley,"  
Revolutionary Worker, April 11, 1986

## From a Fresh Point of View

*In 1989-1990 the U.S. Supreme Court will hear two cases concerning laws that require parental consent for abortions for teenage women. Two young women in Chicago told the RW their views:*

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**Joni:** Schools totally avoid the subject, you know. They don't show you—use a condom when you have sex, then you won't die of AIDS. A lot of these teachers preach about this like you get pregnant and you have the baby. It doesn't go like that. And that's how half the girls, I think, end up dropping out in tenth grade. It's because they don't know what to do and they're scared shitless to go to their parents, and they need to learn it from something or someone because it's not happening in the schools.

**Sarah:** If abortion becomes illegal, well, I'd be afraid to have sex. You don't know if your condom's gonna break or if your pill's gonna be reliable. And when you do have sex, I think it makes it a lot more emotional because you don't know what will happen. I mean if you end up getting pregnant... I think that's a lot on you. I mean, I'm 15, I don't need to be worrying about having a kid or if I can get a safe abortion. I don't want to be worried about if I'm gonna bleed to death.

**Joni:** When I was watching the elections and I saw Bush was elected, I said, "Wait, you know, this guy's against abortion." It all of a sudden seemed cut off. That I have no control anymore. It's all up to Mr. Bush.... And I don't want it to come down to that. I think women should go into a clinic and be counseled and explain what's going to happen—this is a process, this is what you're gonna feel, this is what you may feel afterwards. And explain to them and have them rest afterwards. It has to be socially acceptable because it is part of life. This guilt needs to be taken off these women, you know. If they make the decision they should have faith in themselves and say, "I made the right decision, I knew what I was doing" and not think, "Oh no, what's dad gonna say, what's Bobby gonna say."

What happens to these girls with these

strict hillbilly parents who say, "We want to have grandchildren"? And they have to get their parents' consent? Then they don't end up having this abortion and they end up not doing anything in their lives. And there's no reason for it. It's like a teenage woman is, I guess, in their terms, inexperienced, has no intelligence, has none of that to really decide on what she wants to do. That's what really hits me the most about this parents' consent....

**Sarah:** All it's saying is—you as a teenager have no right on your body, it's up to your parents. If my parents are very strict, I don't want to have them telling me if I should have a baby or not. I want to be able to make my own decision because I think I know what's best for me.

It's a bunch of judges sitting up in their courts thinking they know what's right for America. It's like these people have no grasp of the reality that goes on in the city. They have no idea what it's like. But they think they can make the decisions for the whole world.

"Chastity Lee" and "Virginia"—  
Pro-choice street theater,  
Chicago, 1989



# Women Are Not Incubators!

**The Assault on Abortion Rights: Where It's Coming From, What Has To Be Done About It, And Why All Who Hate Oppression Must Fight for Women's Liberation**

**By Mary Lou Greenberg**

*Mary Lou Greenberg is the spokesperson for the Revolutionary Communist Party, New York Branch. She is a reproductive rights activist and was one of those arrested July 3, 1989 in New York, protesting the Supreme Court decision restricting abortion. She was active in the women's liberation movement in the 1960s and visited revolutionary China in 1971.*

When I visited revolutionary China during the Cultural Revolution in 1971, it was like being on another planet. I never thought I could feel so different as a woman—that it would be possible to walk down a city street, head up, boldly smiling at men as well as women, with none of the caution, fear, and defensiveness that any woman feels in a public place in this country. Women walking alone at night in Shanghai? No problem. And no billboards, advertisements, magazines displaying women's bodies like cuts of meat. Bold, strong, daring and tradition-defying women were struggling alongside men in every arena—from the workplace and neighborhood to the arts, sciences, and governing bodies—to build a totally new society, and transforming themselves in the process. Here were the concrete beginnings of true women's liberation—as part of the liberation of all humanity—as I'd dreamed it. And even though China today is no longer a socialist society and is nothing like what it was during the revolutionary years under Mao Tsetung, I will never forget that liberation-feeling that inspired and energized me then. And there was something else. . . just as important. None of this would have been possible without a revolution, a mass armed struggle to seize power. Only when state power was in their hands could the workers and peasants attack the evils of the old society and begin to uproot all the relations of exploitation and domination. And in that vision of another way to live—and the way to fight to bring that about—I see the importance of this battle around abortion.



Chicago, the projects

## BIG BATTLES AND HIGH STAKES

America 1989. Women imprisoned for so-called "fetal abuse," their newborn babies taken away because they took drugs during pregnancy. Self-righteous assholes blocking clinic doors to try and prevent women from having abortions. The oppress-ident Bush guiding a whole campaign of laws and regulations to further restrict access to abortion. Already in the majority of the states this right for poor women has been basically denied. The ruling class is on a major offensive, orchestrating and unleashing all kinds of reactionary attacks on women—especially on a woman's right to control her own reproduction.

A "war on women" has been declared. It's very real, it's very vicious. Its weapons include ugly ideological campaigns and brute force, legal restrictions and outright terror.

The highest powers in the land are about to deny women a most basic and fundamental right. This seems almost unbelievable in the late twentieth century. But it's for real. And the reason this horror is raising its ugly head is exactly because the needs of this system and the needs of women are INCOMPATIBLE. This system is BOUND to go in the direction of increasing attacks on women. And they will never stop dictating to women, especially around questions of reproduction. As hard as

people fought some twenty years ago, what was won were only temporary concessions and the heart of the problem was never fully exposed and rooted out. Power has remained in the hands of an exploiting class. And now today they're lashing out with even more vengeance.

We are dealing with more than a few crazed religious fanatics or out-of-touch politicians. We are up against a system that **REQUIRES** the social subordination of women. We are dealing with capitalism in its highest imperialist stage. This is an international system of

exploitation, oppression, and plunder. And the godfathers of U.S. imperialism over the last ten years have been taking extreme measures to preserve their empire and prepare for future challenges.

The capitalist ruling class has a very definite and a very reactionary agenda on their home front. They are putting in place laws and military forces to tighten the noose around the necks of the poor and oppressed, turning ghettos and oppressed communities into armed police camps. They are militarizing the Mexican border and lashing out at

immigrants. They are perpetrating racism that declares "open season" on Black youth. They are demanding that people bow before their flag. They are trying to impose fundamentalist social and cultural values on everyone. And the attacks on abortion rights are part of this whole social clampdown.

This "war on women" has brought forth sharp resistance and fierce struggle from proud and defiant women. But as inspiring as these protests and outpourings have been, it is clear—when you consider just what we're up against—that more and even sharper struggle will be needed in the coming period. The powers-that-be are unleashing terror on the streets against women, and what they are bringing down causes enormous suffering. Sometimes the system seems so mighty. But the common thread, that ties together all the attacks on the people, is not the strength of



Pro-choice demonstration—  
Washington, D.C., April 1989



the system. These powers are in deep trouble. It's harder for them to hold things together. And the extremeness of some of their measures and policies is causing society to become ever more polarized and arousing the anger and determination of larger sections of the people.

There is growing potential for social revolution. And the fury of women is a major ingredient of a highly combustible mix. In the battle around reproductive rights, we can see the outlines of future battles, including the

potential for the oppressed to rise up and wage a revolutionary civil war. And this—a revolutionary war to overthrow the system—is what we need and what our party and our people are preparing for. How well we wage this struggle today will have a lot to do with how the future goes down.

**EVERYONE WHO HATES OPPRESSION**, not just women who suffer most directly from the assault on reproductive rights, must take up this question. It is that important.

### KNOW YOUR ENEMY AND KNOW HIM WELL: WHO WANTS TO OUTLAW ABORTION?

Randall Terry of Operation Rescue surrounded by pro-choice demonstrators.



The campaign to outlaw abortion did not originate in a mass popular movement, and it has never reflected the "will of the people." In fact, most people in the U.S. think women should have the right to choose.

What has shaped up is a sort of pincers movement trying to close in on women. On one side is the movement of Christian fascists who have been given consistent leadership, encouragement, and support from the highest levels of government and various religious authorities. These people can't win the battle for public opinion by persuasion so they resort to terror tactics. They are the ones who scream at clinic doors and wave Bibles and pieces of aborted fetuses. They are the ones who assault women and harass and threaten clinic doctors and staff, invade health facilities, destroy equipment, and bomb and torch clinics.

The police have treated these people with kid gloves and have issued what amount to traffic tickets—for actions which would have landed most people in jail for some hard time. These people, in fact, are being trained and molded into fascist shock troops to do the government's dirty work. They are like the "brown shirts" who beat up people in the streets, bullied people into going along with the program, and helped the overall fascist restructuring of Hitler's Germany.

Some people think these people are just misguided religious fanatics who should be ignored. But this is being dangerously blind. This movement of Christian fascists, and especially its leadership, has a whole reactionary agenda aimed at "saving and purifying

America"—which they see as being defiled and threatened by such things as "decaying moral values" and the breakdown of the traditional patriarchal family structure. These people don't like uppity women, unruly children, rebellious Black people, and anyone else who rejects the oppressive status quo. This movement and its agenda fit right into the overall needs and strategy of the ruling class.

Listen to this statement by Richard Viguierie, one of the social engineers of the religious right: "The abortion issue is the door through which many people come into conservative politics, but they don't stop there. Their convictions against abortion are like the first in a series of dominoes. Then we lead them to concern about sexual ethics and standards among young people. This leads to opposition to secular humanism. Then, particularly in schools with its purportedly decadent morality, we point out that secular humanism is identified with both the godfather and the royal road to socialism and communism which points the way to commitment to minimally regulated free enterprise at home and aggressive foreign and military policies to counter the communist threat from Russia and its many surrogates."

So this is one side of the pincers movement closing in on women—the Christian fascists. The other side is the state apparatus itself. The White House, the courts, officials in local, state and all branches of federal government have made statements and taken practical steps to severely restrict abortion rights and pave the way for outlawing abortion altogether. They are not responding to popular will or to an electoral mandate. Most of them know these moves will not win them any popularity contests. And these attacks are not coming down now because of staunch religious and moral convictions on the part of those who rule. In fact some of the key movers in all this, such as Bush and Reagan, were "pro-choice" at one time in their political careers.

So why is the government moving to take away women's right to abortion? Some see the source of the problem as a handful of unenlightened or even outright reactionary politicians in office who can be voted out of office. But the source of the problem is much more deeply rooted in the inner workings of the present economic and political system and is only expressed through these politicians. The fact is: we live in a world divided into classes

and where different classes have different and conflicting objective interests which they seek to advance. There is a fundamental division in society between the haves and the have-nots and this division determines the most basic political and social features of society. Politicians, courts, military structures are set up by the ruling classes to look out for their interests.

There are reasons that many people are blinded to this reality. Because of its dominant and dominating position in the world, the United States is a relatively privileged society with a large middle class. And on account of their privileges, many middle-class people are able to live relatively insulated and undisturbed lives. They don't realize that America's comforts come largely off the backs of the oppressed of the world. And many of them are largely unaware of what this system does to the oppressed in this society on a daily basis. When aspects of this do come into view, and even prompt concern, it appears to many progressive middle-class people that the inequality and injustices of this society are flaws of a basically good system—instead of indictments of the criminal nature of the system itself.

Now, the ruling class will not hesitate to stomp on anyone from any class that challenges them. But it prefers to win the allegiance of the middle classes by granting them privileges rather than by employing direct force and coercion against them. And so it also appears to many middle-class people that the political system is not an instrument by which one class controls another. People in the middle classes are socialized to think that they can really influence the system. What's not so obvious to them is that society is structured in a certain way and that there are underlying needs and processes that move it in a certain direction and that set limits to change.

But that's a truth that people have to come to terms with. Those who are righteously up in arms about what the ruling class has on its agenda for women—but who find it hard to understand that this government would be doing the extreme things that it is—have to look around and wake up. After all, this is the same power structure that gave us the war in Vietnam! People have to see that the attack against women is not some sort of momentary weirdness that will eventually go away or that more "sane politicians" will eventually prevail. This attack is related to the system's deepest foundations and requirements.



Sculpture, pro-choice demonstration, San Francisco, 1989

## CLASS SOCIETY AND THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN

The oppression of women is built into the system. It is absolutely necessary to the existence of the present social order—exploitative class society. Patriarchy is the domination of men over women (and children) in the family and society generally. This patriarchy is a cornerstone of social systems based on private property, and women and children are viewed as the property of men.

I really have to “congratulate” one man from “Operation Rescue” for describing so well these dominant patriarchal values. At a rally the night before they tried to shut down a clinic in New York, this man bragged: “Ask my sons who’s their boss and they’ll point to Mommy. Ask them who’s Mommy’s boss and they’ll say ‘Daddy.’ My wife submits to me because I submit to God. Submit! Submit! Submit! It’s a dirty word in society, but it’s a holy word in the church.”

But the domination of women by men did not come from any god. It came with the development of class society. At a certain point in history, social systems developed based on the unequal accumulation and distribution of wealth and the exploitation of the “have-nots” by the “haves.” This is when women began to be counted as “property.” A whole moral code—institutions and ideas, customs and taboos, and ways of thinking about people—began to develop to enforce women’s submission to men. Keeping women subordinate to men—and the male privilege that goes with this—is key to the ongoing and orderly functioning of the economic structure and the whole set-up of exploitative society. And keeping women submissive and subordinate to men actually serves to preserve and enforce exploitative property relations passed down from generation to generation.

The Programme of the RCP says: “The dominant social relations in this society perfectly mirror the economic relations—exploitative. Not only is there the general oppression of women, but even the working class man, infected with the dominant bourgeois ideology and frustrated with his role in capitalist society, often plays the role of the bourgeois in relation to his wife and children.”

Rebellious women, even women who just show signs of wanting to take charge of their own lives, are ultimately a threat to this whole set-up. Throughout history one of the ways different societies have been able to control

women is by making use of the simple fact that it is the women who become pregnant and bear the children. Society has developed and enforced rules and customs to control women’s sexuality and reproduction and to dictate when, where, and with whom a woman can or cannot bear a child. In this way patriarchal society is able to define “women’s place” in society and set limits on what they can do. This includes preventing access to birth control and abortion. In modern society, it has also meant forcibly sterilizing women whom society brands as “unfit” to bear children.

So the question of WHO CONTROLS the reproductive functions of women is KEY to the overall status of women in society and to the workings of society itself. And this kind of social control over women’s reproduction is very important to the powers-that-be, especially in times of crisis.

In this century there have been profound changes in the situation of women and relations within the family. Capitalism is a highly anarchistic system, and its development creates needs that conflict with its ideology and social controls. For instance, as capitalist production expands, more women are drawn into the labor force. But this has the effect of undermining the traditions that confine women to the home and family. And with such changes, especially since the ‘60s in this country, have come significant changes in attitudes and expectations—and very significant strains on the fabric of the family and on social relations more broadly. All this has encouraged even more women to break with traditional roles.

## REACTIONARY MORALITY AND TRADITIONAL VALUES

Disruptions to the patriarchal set-up don’t just affect individual families or even just the state of the “traditional family” as a whole. Such breakdowns in the men-over-women order of things threaten to call into question and ultimately pose a challenge to THE WHOLE WAY societies on this planet are divided into exploiters and exploited. So the ruling class is compelled today to try and shove reactionary morality and “traditional family values” down people’s throats—even if these values fly in the face of the way most women actually live.

And this whole campaign to restrict or outlaw abortion has everything to do with strengthening “their kind of morality.” This is

“It is easy to see why our oppressors—people like ‘Drug Czar’ William Bennett and others like him—want to insist that we follow the ‘traditional morality’ of ‘The Ten Commandments’ and the Bible. It is easy to see why they need us to treat all this as some kind of ordained set of absolute orders handed down from an all-powerful ‘Lord’ on high whose ‘Word’ must be obeyed without question.

“But for those of us who are oppressed under this system—the slaves of this time, exploited in the ‘modern way’; the women subjugated, degraded, and brutalized; the youth suffocated by reactionary and know-nothing authority on many different levels; and other victims of this whole way of life—for those of us who must fight ‘the powers that be,’ this ‘traditional morality’ is the morality we definitely don’t need.”

Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP

part of a whole fascist climate taking hold in the U.S. today. And people can’t say they didn’t see it coming. Just look at the historical analogies and parallels of today’s “war on women” with what went down under Hitler. It’s both striking and chilling. And it should teach us something.

In pre-Nazi Germany reactionaries cried about a “spiritual decline” and the weakening of the family. German women, after World War 1, had broken out of traditional roles and a “new woman” had emerged—one who voted, worked outside the home, used birth control and had abortions (which were illegal but were widely obtained). Once in power, the Nazis made “motherhood” into an official honor and abortion became a symbol of degeneracy. This was the program for those women who were considered “pure” German women—while sterilization and then extermination was carried out on those considered “unfit” by the state. The obedient German woman was a major element of the Nazis’ ability to maintain control of the whole population—because the family is an important instrument of social control. And the Nazis needed to depend on women to raise the next generation of “good Germans.”

Today the U.S. ruling class needs a generation of “Good Americans.” But one big problem for them is the ghost of the ‘60s. When reactionaries today cry about “the destruction of the family” and “our nation’s rapid decline into moral anarchy,” it just goes to show how threatened they were by what went down in the ‘60s—including the women’s liberation



Frankfurt, West Germany, 1988  
Women protest laws against  
abortion

movement. Women rejected the traditional male-dominated family, the sexual "double standard," the stigma of being an "unwed mother," the idea that women have to live for and through men and that a woman is a valuable member of society only when and IF she has children. And the fact that the government and its reactionary stormtroopers are today trying so desperately to reverse the verdicts of the '60s shows how broadly society has been influenced by '60s values like anti-patriotism, Black liberation, and women's liberation.

As Mao Tsetung said, "Where there is oppression there is resistance." The rulers' attempt to clamp down on the people has only created more enemies for them. This is their logic. This is their dilemma.

Many women already have questions about what is coming down. And even if they do not yet see a solution, they are not inclined to look backward or have traditional patriarchal values and morality forced on them. For the powers-that-be, this is dangerous. But for the proletariat and all those who seek an end to tradition's chains, this is an excellent situation.

## THE BATTLE IS ON

The media has talked about how the abortion issue is going to divide the nation, how the two sides have irreconcilable differences, and how this issue could cause the deepest divisions since the Vietnam War. All this is true. And all this is fine!

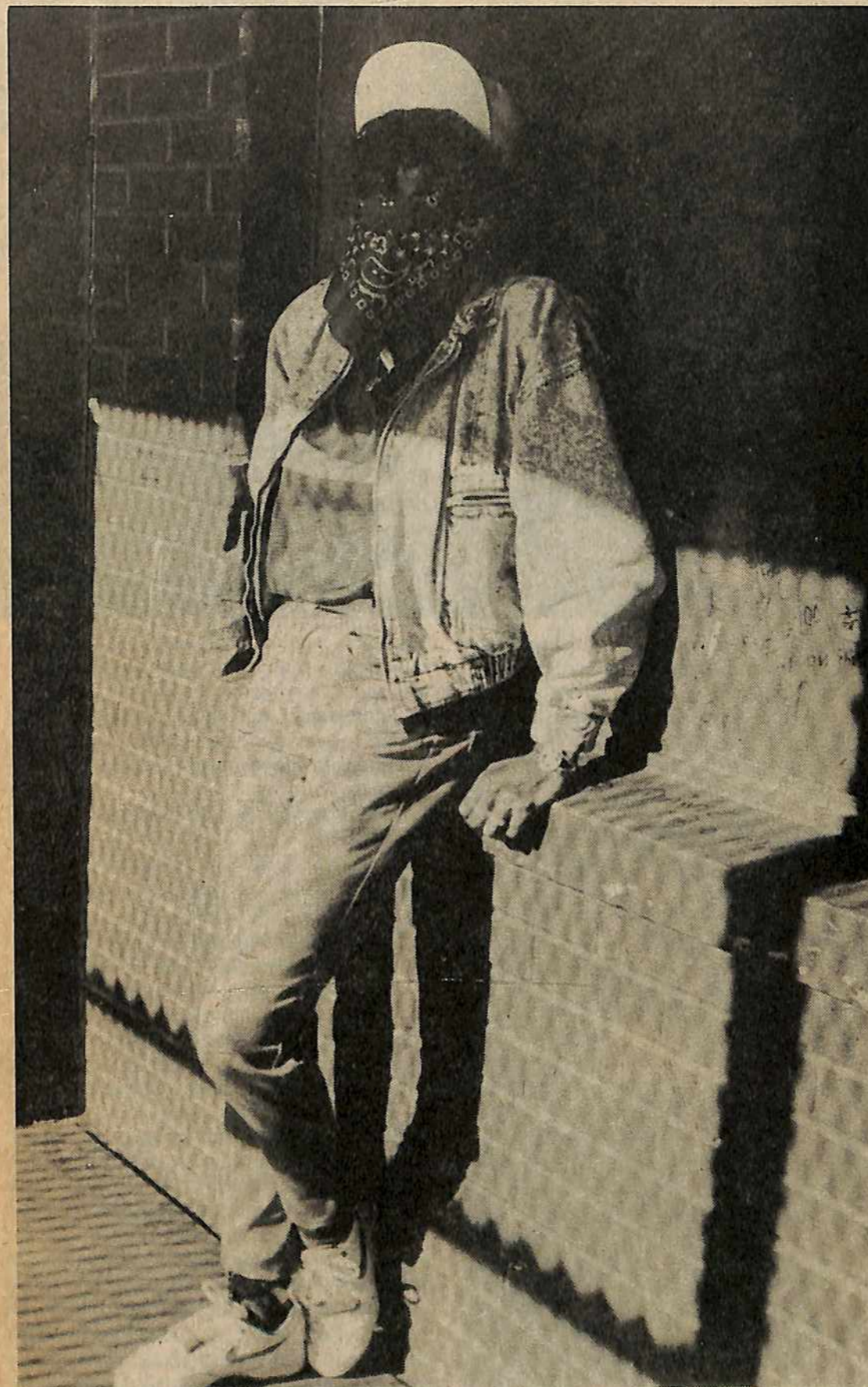
It was a fine thing when many people in the U.S. refused to keep going along with the U.S. war in Vietnam. And it was finer still when many raised the cry "Bring the war home!" which expressed their determination to no longer tolerate such a murderous government. What good is national unity if it stands for crimes of aggression against people around the world and vicious assaults against sections of the people in the U.S. itself?

Today we are at a critical juncture. In terms of our ability to keep the government from taking away the right to abortion, AND in terms of our ability to do more—to go further on the path towards the complete emancipation of women and of humanity as a whole. The next period of time in the U.S. will tell much about who are going to be the complacent sheep and who are going to be the ones who stop, draw the line, and say "ENOUGH."

The attacks on abortion must be answered with social upheaval. Our stand must be **WHATEVER THEY RULE, WHATEVER THEY DO, NOT ONE WOMAN WILL BE DENIED THE RIGHT TO AN ABORTION.**

Among those who take up this battle, there will be differences in analysis, strategy and program, and at times we will fight in our own ways and along separate paths. But we must also find the ways to come together to express the broadest unity possible of all those women and men who are determined to beat back this offensive.

Millions of people must be mobilized to take on this fight. The situation to do this is very favorable. Young women, who are sick of anti-woman and religious morality being shoved down their throats, are already on the frontlines. The voices of the poor women and women of color—who are hardest hit by these attacks—must be heard. The barriers preventing the oppressed people from joining this battle must be broken. Particular attention must be given to the concerns and rage of Black women and women of color, and we have to bring out how forced sterilization and the denial of abortion go hand-in-hand. Our





New York pro-choice demonstration, 1989

people, the basic people, exploited and oppressed, men and women, of all nationalities, have to bring their "nothing to lose" spirit into the leadership of this fight. And there are broad reserves that can and must be tapped to wage this battle—like those in the health care and medical professions.

### ENEMY MANEUVERS, DEADLY TRAPS

As the struggle advances it's inevitable that contradictions "internal" to the women's movement will sharpen up. But this is a good and necessary thing. Because we have to get straight on what the problem is and what has to be done about it.

Many people believe the struggle to defend abortion rights will be won in the electoral arena, campaigning for pro-choice candidates on the state and federal level or perhaps with a constitutional amendment to counter Bush's proposed anti-abortion amendment. "Conventional wisdom" argues this is the most "practical and realistic" way to go and therefore the most likely way to win. This view has even influenced more militant activists, especially as people have seen some maneuvering by various politicians: some state legislatures backing off their most drastic anti-abortion measures, and even a handful of

"pro-life" candidates arguing that their private views on abortion would not interfere with them carrying out the will of the majority. Mainstream women's groups have been calling for massive voter registration drives and intensified lobbying to "keep the pressure on" these politicians.

But this approach is dead wrong. **THIS IS NO TIME TO LET OUR GUARD DOWN. THIS IS NO TIME TO FALL INTO THE DEADLY TRAP OF ELECTORAL AND LEGISLATIVE POLITICS.**

What's mainly happening here is NOT that politicians are suddenly getting enlightened on woman's liberation or that all of a sudden they recognize the majority of people are pro-choice and so they are now going along with the will of the people to stay in office. Yes, some politicians do support a woman's right to choose. Yes, some politicians are being politically expedient and seem to be "going with the wind." But this is a pretty thin straw on which to rest the fate of women. And it doesn't fundamentally explain what's happening today.

The bourgeoisie is aware of broad opposition to the attacks on reproductive rights. And they are also aware that millions of people—even many who otherwise have no fundamental complaint with the status quo—are becoming very dissatisfied and disil-

lusioned and have begun to fight, maybe for the first time in their lives. A considerable section of society is coming into more fundamental opposition to the way things are and where things are going overall, and they are drawing connections with other outrages of this system. They are even making alliances with others fighting the system, including the most oppressed. The oppressors see all this and they must act to try and get things back under control.

Maneuvers by politicians which make it look like they are responding to the popular will or at least going with the wind can have the effect of channeling people's anger into safe avenues that can easily be controlled and defeated. It can have the effect of "nipping in the bud" the movement that has really only just begun to emerge. And it can have the effect of putting the whole movement on defensive terms, holding people back from fighting in the hopes that more "reasonable activity" will lead to "realistic steps forward."

We have to ask ourselves some hard questions. What does it say about the system—and what people's sights have been reduced to—when people claim it is a major victory because some congressmen proposed something as basic and as seemingly unobjectionable as *federal funds for abortions for women who have been victims of rape and incest?* And then on top of all this Bush immediately declared he was going to veto this legislation—and Congress could not even get up the votes to override his veto!

Past experience in the women's movement should warn people against the illusion that liberation can be achieved through relying on the institutions of this system. Look at the struggle for the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment). For years thousands of people went through the frustrating nightmare of the government bureaucracy trying to get the ERA passed. And where did all this get people? Not only was the ERA defeated, but women were *demobilized* and *demoralized*. The ruling class itself had a lot to do with building and leading the whole movement to pass the ERA. And they did this exactly because it was a way to put a lid on the more revolutionary aspects of the women's movement and channel people's anger into something that was essentially harmless to their rule. Even after the ERA was defeated, illusions continued to paralyze people. And the women's movement, as a result, ended up in a much weaker position overall.

### IT'S WAKE UP TIME IN AMERICA!

How "realistic" are attempts to find solutions by working within the system when it is this very system that is launching these attacks? And if the assault on abortion rights is not some "deviation" but stems from the very nature of the system, then what good will it do to change a few faces in high places? We really need to ask ourselves: what has all the "working within the system" accomplished?

Talk about a treadmill! Do we really want our daughters and granddaughters to have to keep facing the same conditions, wage the same battles, over and over again, in an endless cycle of small concessions followed by vicious renewed offensives?

How "realistic" is the attempt to find solutions through local and state elections at a time when the President and the Supreme Court are on an open rampage—not only around abortion rights but on a whole num-

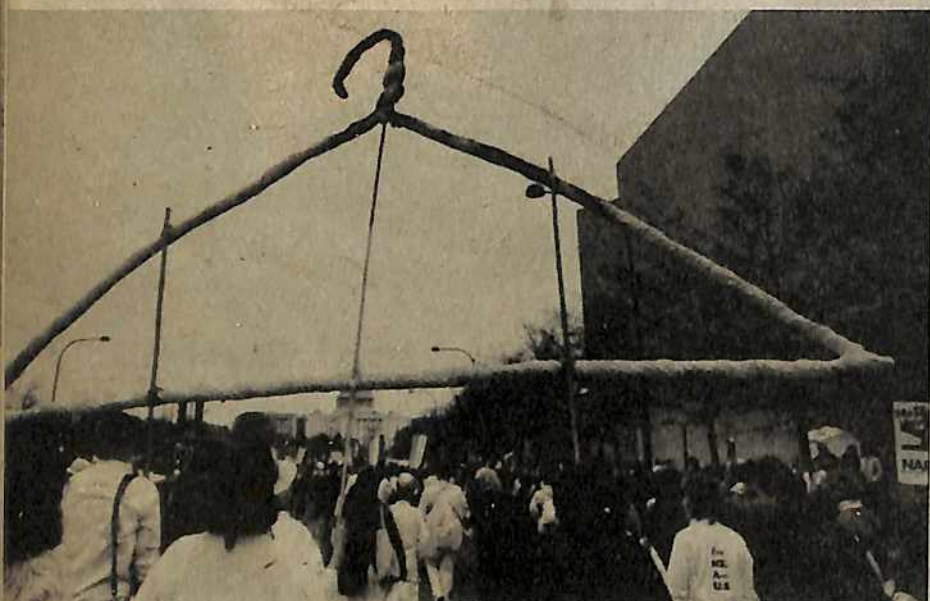
July 3, 1989, San Francisco—  
Demonstration following  
Supreme Court decision  
restricting abortion



**Break The Chains!**  
**Unleash the Fury**  
**of Women**  
**As A**  
**Mighty Force**  
**For Revolution!**



ber of questions from the rights of privacy, the rights of the accused, the death penalty and civil rights? Where senators and congressmen are rushing around to be the first on the block to restrict the Bill of Rights and make laws for compulsory patriotism? And where ALL levels of government are carrying out daily brutal measures—evictions of whole families, mass arrests of youth—aimed especially at those on the bottom of this society, all in the name of the “war on drugs?” Are these the people and the processes to which we are supposed to entrust the lives of millions of women, here and around the world?



Refuse & Resist! contingent—Washington, D.C., April 1989



Defending a women's clinic against Operation Rescue—Washington, D.C.

Look at the *Roe v. Wade* decision which legalized abortion. This decision DID NOT reflect any kind of fundamental restructuring of the system. It was a pragmatic political decision in response to a situation of societal crisis. Millions were defying the ban on abortion and were increasingly willing to defy the law. The ruling class feared this attitude would spread even further. General turmoil throughout society around the war in Vietnam, the oppression of Black people, and women's oppression was threatening to rip apart the social fabric and pose a serious challenge to their rule. The legalization of abortion was one of a number of concessions made during this time to defuse the discontent. And we should not forget, as with many other concessions of the '60s and early '70s, it took only a few years before they started to get taken back, like the Medicaid restrictions that came down during the Carter administration.

This is the nature of the beast we face today and no amount of reforms or temporary concessions is going to change this. The oppressors who rule are going to remain on top and run society in accordance with their own exploitative class interests, unless and until they are overthrown.

Some say—well, you may be right about how the power structure operates. But women's lives are at stake TODAY, right now, this second. And any concessions we can get from friendly politicians is worth fighting for. But the truth is: the electoral arena will NOT determine whether or not abortion is outlawed. And even more importantly, as long as this male-dominated, woman-crushing, exploitative society exists, countless women—and men and children—around the world, will continue to die every day from its countless atrocities. How can we want “in”—how can we even want to be part of a system whose whole existence is based on the continuing misery of people throughout this entire planet?

We have to fight this offensive. We have to win victories today and strengthen our forces for future battles. But we aren't going to do this by going to the ballot box. Mass resistance needs to become the order of the day. We have to create a situation where the enemy faces the highest political price and risks profound social crisis and chaos if they decide to carry through with their plans to take away women's right to abortion.

## A DECLARATION OF WAR

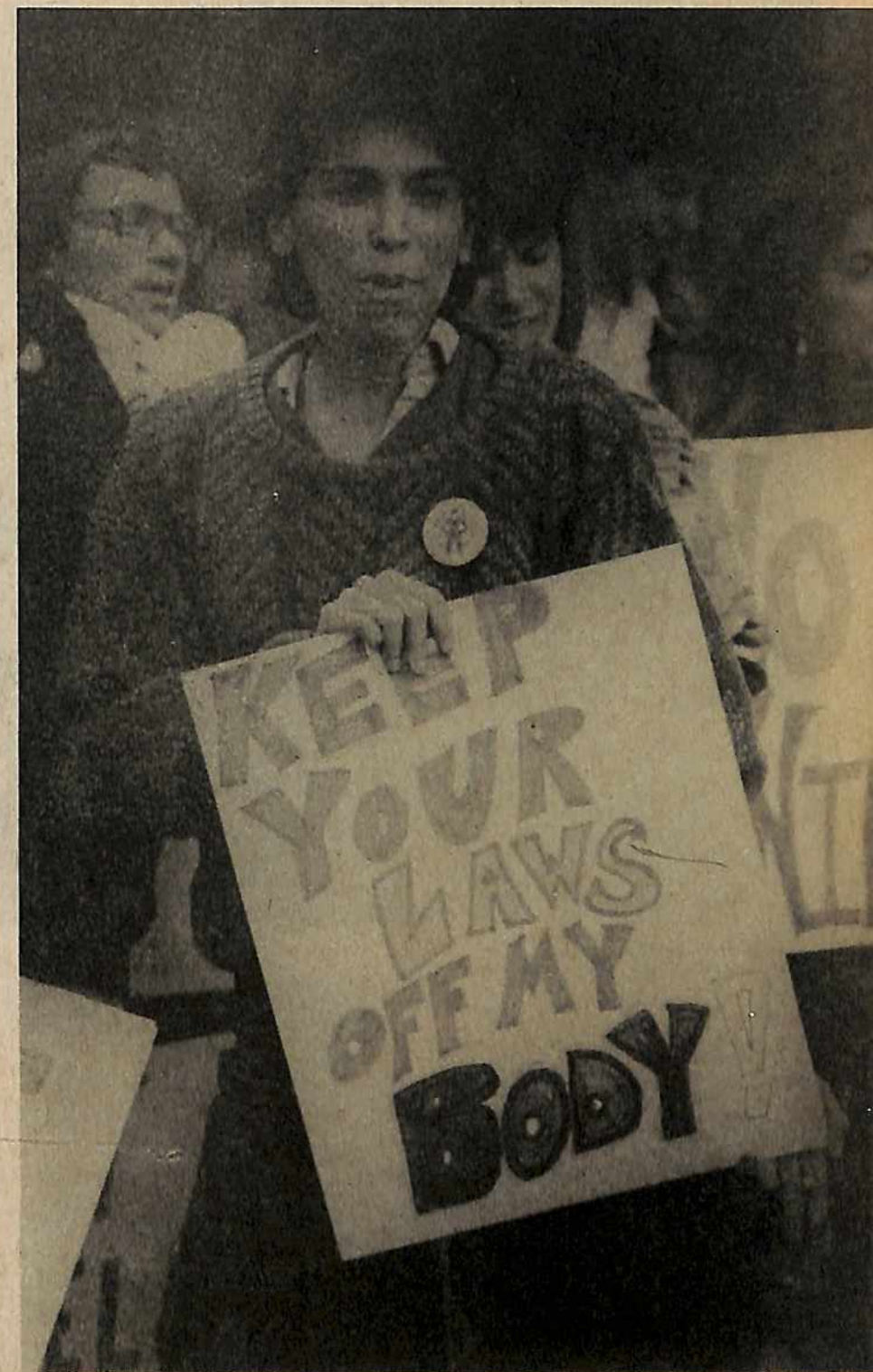
This is not a time to be on the defensive. It is a time to go on the OFFENSIVE and make the worst nightmares of the ruling class come to life—great numbers of unruly and unrepentant women taking to the streets and surfacing in every sphere of society, not asking but DEMANDING an end to these degrading conditions under which all women must now live.

It's always a dangerous illusion to think this system and its institutions can serve our interests. But in times like these, when so much is at stake, when there's the potential to mobilize mass, powerful resistance, and when the very conditions calling forth this overall reactionary offensive may lead to severe social dislocation and upheaval—and this situation could provide a favorable opening for the people to really take on these dogs—it would be criminal to water down our stand or “moderate” our demands.

There needs to be militant resistance on different fronts, and the outlines of this can already be seen. Abortion clinics must be defended and “Operation Rescue” must be confronted and taken on wherever they rear their ugly heads. Networks should be formed to assist in keeping abortions safe and available, especially as further restrictions come down. And our focus has to be on promoting very broad, very open, in-the-streets and in-your-face resistance and not going along with the program. Politicians and “Right to Life” leaders must be exposed and confronted. There must be mass mobilizations to beat back particular attacks on abortion rights. The alienation and disgust that many women are feeling towards the government and the whole power structure must be unleashed and people's understanding of the nature of the system deepened.

At the same time that we build and keep a sharp focus of struggle against the attack on abortion rights, we have to encourage people to broaden their concerns. We have to learn from and add our strength to all who stand up to oppression. Those on the bottom of society have to grasp that this is not just a question for the middle classes. It has everything to do with the proletariat's ability to seize power and remake all of society. And the downpressed must see their role in this battle and fortify it with revolutionary determination and leadership.

We have to understand that the fundamen-



tal resolution of the problem of women's oppression is going to be fought out alongside other fierce battles on a much wider battlefield. The mass resistance we build must draw in larger numbers, be linked with other struggles going on in the world, and, most importantly, be part of the struggle to topple the system.



Peru—Revolutionary fighters led by the Communist Party of Peru.

### THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT, THE CHAINS CAN BE BROKEN

Ultimately, the solution lies in remaking the whole world—without classes, without exploitation and oppression. What's called for at this stage in history is pushing forward the struggle for proletarian revolution. REVOLUTION, because there has to be a truly radical uprooting and destruction of the core of the old system, its economic and political structures, its social institutions, its values and the sick and selfish mind-set it promotes. And PROLETARIAN, because this revolution has to be led by the great mass of people on the bottom of society today who—because of their position in society—have no basic interest in continuing exploitative relations between people. Proletarian revolution is absolutely necessary to achieve the full liberation of women, and there cannot be any genuine proletarian revolution unless

**“The whole question of the position and role of women in society is more and more acutely posing itself in today’s extreme circumstances—this is a powderkeg in the U.S. today. It is not conceivable that all this will find any resolution other than in the most radical terms and through extremely violent means. The question yet to be determined is: will it be a radical reactionary or a radical revolutionary resolution, will it mean the reinforcing of the chains of enslavement or the shattering of the most decisive links in those chains and the opening up of the possibility of realizing the complete elimination of all forms of such enslavement?”**

Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP

women’s liberation is part of it.

Some might say, but you’re talking about the far-off future. Well, look again. The people ruling this country are walking a terrifying tightrope, with potential crises capable of exploding from just about any direction. They are trying to manage an empire wracked by economic and political difficulties. Despite talk of peace, they face deadly challenges from rival and competing imperialist powers—which could lead to war. In many Third World countries their continued domination is being called into question by economic turmoil, political upheaval and revolution. On the homefront there are signs of growing unrest. And within the *present-day* situation lies the possibility of contradictions rapidly sharpening in the U.S. and in the world—and leading to tremendous turmoil and upheaval. . .right here in the belly of the beast. There is the real possibility of an opening for something people say could never happen in America—revolution.

There are millions of oppressed who would jump at the opportunity to bring this system down. There are many middle-class forces who would—under circumstances of extreme crisis and dissatisfaction—go along with or at least not actively oppose a revolutionary uprising. But we won’t have a chance of winning unless we start preparing now.

The battle around reproductive rights is a kind of test in determining where tens of millions of people stand towards this system and whether it should be changed or not. The ruling class is using this issue to mobilize and train loyal footsoldiers for its agenda of war, domestic repression, and the enforcement of existing class, racial, and sexual relations. On the other side, the attacks on abortion are



politicizing and radicalizing broad segments of society and will make it harder for the ruling class to secure its "heartland" in times of crisis.

This battle will profoundly influence the line-up for revolution in this country. The clashes around abortion will in all likelihood be part of the conditions out of which a revolutionary bid for power will be made in this country. This has profound strategic implications. The anti-abortion ideologues have to be ruthlessly exposed as the fascists that they are. The anti-abortion movement has to be hit hard and punctured if its ranks are to be weakened and demoralized. And of decisive importance, this overall reactionary offensive must be met by a powerful counteroffensive and be turned into a big rock that the enemy drops on its feet. Because if we don't do this, we will be crushed by this offensive and be in no position to wage the struggle for revolutionary power.

### AN UNCOMPROMISING STAND AND THE MOST RADICAL SOLUTION

The right of a woman to control her own reproduction is so basic—so fundamental to her emancipation—that the denial of this right stirs deep feelings of anger and rage but also provokes a tremendous amount of questioning about how this outrage is connected to some of the other ills in this society. It raises serious questions about the whole basis of social organization of human beings everywhere in the world. This is a very positive thing—people struggling not only to understand more deeply what's wrong in the world but also beginning to dream about the way things COULD BE and casting away old ideas that "this is the way it is and always will be."

WHY are we Revolutionary Communists so concerned about the abortion battle and why do we feel that everyone who hates oppression, not just women, must take up this question?

BECAUSE the struggle for abortion is about women's lives. Without this right a great many women die and a great many more are maimed in body and in spirit—their dreams and aspirations reduced to rubble

In sum, we have to learn through the battles of today to identify our friends and our enemies. We have to accumulate strength and experience for the revolutionary showdown of tomorrow. We have to promote a spirit of unity among the oppressed and all those under attack by the system. We have to be good at identifying all those on our side of the barricades, recognizing that there will be different viewpoints over the source of this attack and the ultimate solution. We will have to be very good at standing our ground and putting up a clear vision and program around which people can come together while extending an open hand to others. We must recognize and resist any attempts by the other side to pit us against each other or employ any tactics of isolating one or another section of the movement for reproductive rights.

We have to be proud, rebellious, and defiant, and cast off any remnants of slave mentality.

under the weight of compulsory motherhood. And with new restrictions on abortion it will once again be poor women and women of color who will suffer the greatest, who will be condemned to back alleys and merchants of death and harm. With each individual loss, all women suffer, all bear the burden of intensified oppression as women.

BECAUSE if women are not free to make such basic decisions about their own reproduction, their own lives, they are in essence SLAVES. They are greatly limited in their ability to participate actively and on a basis of full equality in all aspects of society, including social struggle to CHANGE society. Women's ability to control their own reproduction hits at the heart of women's liberation.

BECAUSE the crusade against abortion is part of a bigger reactionary offensive that has to be taken on now and beaten back before it blossoms into all-out fascism.

BECAUSE if we don't struggle TODAY to bust up the chains which keep women down, we won't even get the chance to get started along a new road. We won't be able to have a

revolution in the U.S., let alone have the RIGHT KIND of revolution—made by women and men who have become "fit for power," able to rule society in a completely new way with no exploitation or oppression of any kind.

So as we struggle together—and as we take to the streets and confront our enemies—in every sphere of society, we in the Revolutionary Communist Party hope that more than a few will check us out. We express the hope that you will put to the test our assertion that

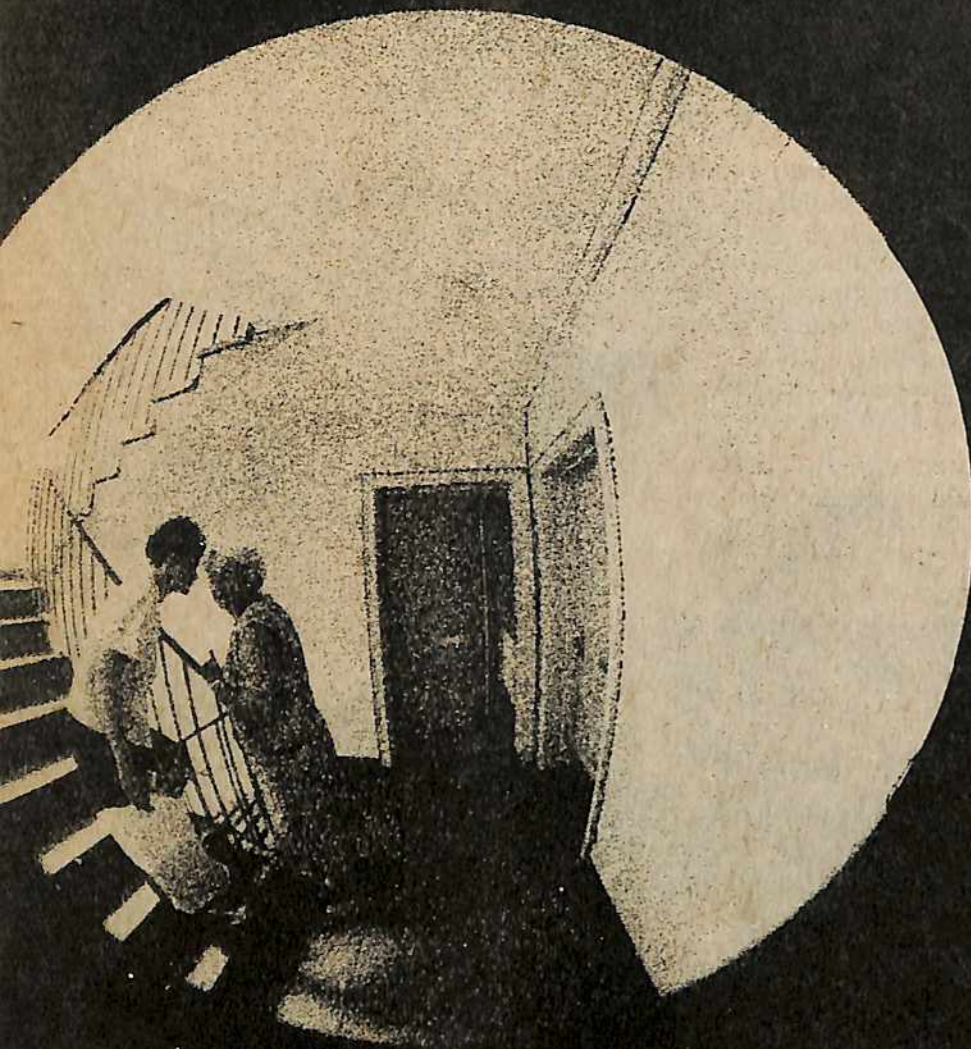
we have the organization, political line and leadership needed to make a serious go at revolution in the U.S. and begin to bring into being a new society built on completely new social relations between people, including between men and women. The most uncompromisingly radical women (and men) who are determined to do all they can to help realize such a radical vision BELONG in our Party. So check us out. It's quite possible you are one of these people. □



Homeless march to Washington, D.C.—October 1989



## When Abortion Was Illegal



### The Unlit Stairs

"I think the thing I will always remember most vividly was walking up those three flights of darkened stairs and down that pitchy corridor and knocking at the door at the end of it, not knowing what lay behind it, and not knowing whether I would ever walk back down those stairs again. More than the incredible filth of the place, and my fear on seeing it; more than the fear that I would surely become infected; more than the fact that the man was an alcoholic and was drinking throughout the procedure—a whiskey glass in one hand, and a sharp instrument in the other; more than the indescribable pain, the most intense pain I have ever been subjected to; more than the humiliation of being told, 'You can take your pants down now, but you shoulda'—ha! ha!—kept 'em on before'; more than the degradation of being asked to perform a deviant sex act after he had aborted me (he offered me 20 of my 1,000 bucks back for a 'quick blow job'); more than the hemorrhaging and the peritonitis and the hospitalization that followed; more even than the gut-twisting fear of being 'found out' and locked away for perhaps twenty years; more than all of these things, those pitchy stairs and that dank, dark hallway and the door at the end of it stay with me and chill my blood still.

"I saw in that darkness the clear and distinct possibility that at the age of 23 I might very well be taking the last walk of my life; I might never again see my two children, my husband, or anything else of this world."

Sherry

From *The Voices of Women: Abortion In Their Own Words*

In the U.S. the chance of death in a legal abortion is only 1 in 200,000.

Exact figures do not exist for the period when abortion was illegal, but estimates are that:

- Up to 720,000 illegal abortions occurred every year in the U.S.
- Up to 17,000 deaths resulted every year.

*These facts are from Planned Parenthood of New York City.*

## If the Christian Fascists Had Their Say, And the Bible Was the Law Today, Would You Want To Live This Way?

There are "Christian Soldiers" on the loose. They assault women in front of health clinics. They claim to be the saviors of unborn babies. But they are really Christian Fascists—morality police with a whole program of oppression for women and children. Not only are they against a woman's right to terminate her pregnancy—they are against birth control and against sex for women who are not married. They claim that there is justification for their views in the Bible. But people who hate oppression would rise up against many things in the Bible. There are many laws and instructions and practices that even religious people consider oppressive and would never want to be enforced.

Check out some of the rules and laws written in the Bible. If these things were put into practice, the world would be a cruel and horrible place. These quotations are ammunition to be used against those who pick up the Bible *to keep women down*. The Christian Fascist crusaders against abortion should be forced to say whether this is the kind of world they want and the kind of morality they want to impose on the people.

### DO YOU REALLY WANT TO FOLLOW THIS?

#### THE BIBLE UPHOLDS SLAVERY:

##### Slaves Must Obey Their Masters— Even the Most Cruel Masters

*Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward.*

1 Peter 2:18

##### Wives Are Slaves To Their Husbands

*Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

Ephesians 5:22

##### Foreigners Should Be Bought and Sold as Slaves

*Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possessions.*

Leviticus 25:45

#### IN THE BIBLE WOMEN ARE PROPERTY OF HUSBANDS AND FATHERS:

##### A Man Can Sell His Daughter but She Can't Even Go Out Like a Man Slave and If Her Master Doesn't Like Her, He Can Sell Her Back—But Not to Foreigners

*And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do.*

*If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power.*

Exodus 21:7-8

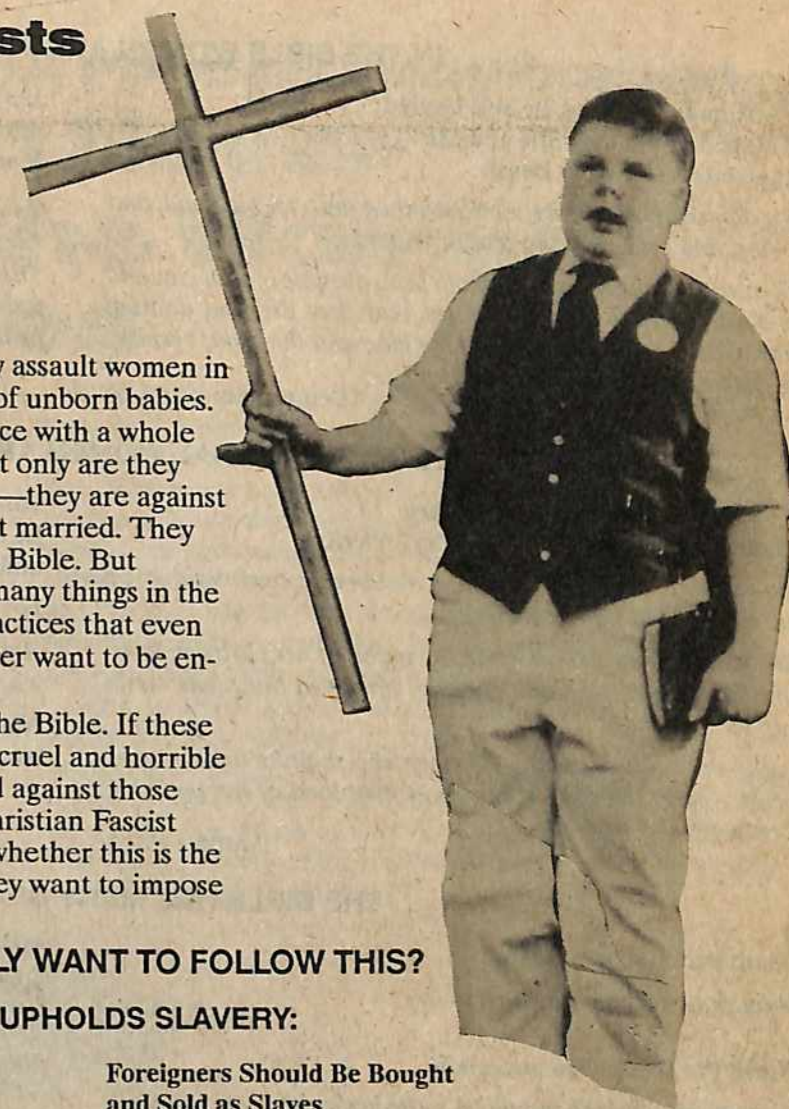
##### Brides Whose Fathers Cannot Prove They Are Virgins Are Stoned to Death

*If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her,*

*And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid. . . if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel:*

*Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die.*

Deuteronomy 22:13-21



### IN THE BIBLE WOMEN ARE PUNISHED FOR RAPE:

#### If a Woman Engaged To Be Married Is Raped in the City She and the Rapist Are Stoned to Death

*If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;*

*Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife.*

Deuteronomy 22:23-24

#### If a Man Is Caught Raping a Girl Who Is Not Engaged, the Rapist Must Pay the Girl's Father, and the Girl Must Marry the Rapist!

*If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her and lie with her, and they be found;*

*Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.*

Deuteronomy 22:28-29

### THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT WOMEN ARE UNCLEAN AND INFERIOR

#### If You Give Birth to a Boy You Are Unclean For a Week, If It's a Girl 2 Weeks!

*If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days. . .*

*And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, not come into the sanctuary. . .*

*But if she bears a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks. . .and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.*

Leviticus 12:2-5

#### Women Are No Good But They Can Be Saved If They Have Babies and Behave Themselves

*For Adam was first formed, then Eve.*

*And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.*

*Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*

1 Timothy 2:13-15

### THE BIBLE HAS MANY DEATH PENALTIES

#### Death Penalty for Witches

*Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.*

Exodus 22:18

#### Death Penalty for Homosexuals

*If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them. . .shall surely be put to death.*

Leviticus 20:13

#### Death Penalty for Children Who Cuss, Hit, Disobey, or Rebel Against Their Parents

*If a man have a stubborn or rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother. . .All the men of his city shall stone him with stones.*

Deuteronomy 21:18-21

*For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.*

Matthew 15:4

### THE BIBLE SUPPORTS WARS OF CONQUEST:

#### Instructions for Taking Women as Prisoners of War

*But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.*

Deuteronomy 20:14

**WE WON'T GO BACK!  
Women Are Not Incubators!  
Fetuses Are Not Children!  
Abortion Is Not Murder!**

## Forced Reproduction, Forced Sterilization A People Can Never Free Itself If the Women Remain Slaves

If abortion becomes illegal...incredible numbers of poor women, including many women of oppressed nationalities, will die horrible deaths. Many more will be forced to bear children they did not want and cannot afford adequate care for. More women will see their hopes and their children's hopes sink further into the swamp of state-enforced poverty, brutal living conditions, and despair. And this is just what the powers-that-be want. Because the more people lose what little control they have over their own lives, the harder it is to summon up what is needed to fight these oppressive conditions.

Already restrictions on abortion have drastically affected women of color. And in fact, there is a very racist side to the bourgeoisie's attacks on abortion. When women of color are denied control of their own reproduction, this contributes to the overall conditions of national oppression in this country. And this is something that needs to be more widely understood, exposed, and fought against.





I am going to say this straight up, some of these guys out here will say, yeah, they dig revolution but they cannot go along with this part about equality between men and women. Bullshit! If you are serious about making revolution, if you are serious about abolishing every form of exploitation and oppression, if you are serious about sweeping away this system and all its monstrous crimes, how are you going to tell me that you want to eliminate every form of oppression except one, every form of inequality among the people except one, every form of degradation in society except one? You can't do it! How are we going to achieve equality and unity between different races among the masses of people and overcome all the other divisions they put in our ranks and yet still maintain among ourselves a position of slavemaster and slave, of commodity-owner and owned, of possessor and possessed between men and women? No, we cannot do that!

And why should we want to? We want a world free of any form of exploitation, oppression, discrimination, and degradation among the masses of people. We do not want, it is not the outlook of our class, and it is no consolation—let's say for men—to have somebody to kick around and somebody to lord it over. Our class, the working class, is going to rise up and remake this whole world in our image and advance humanity to a whole new stage where nobody owns anybody or oppresses anybody in any form whatsoever! And if we are going to do this, we cannot break all of our chains but one; we cannot break all of our mental shackles but one, We have to break and smash and bury them all forever!

From: *Bullets, From the Writings, Speeches & Interviews of Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*

The fight for reproductive rights cannot be waged apart from taking up the battle against national oppression. A weakness of the women's movement in the '60s was that it was not able to draw in many Black women and other women of color. Today, with the stakes of this battle even higher, the movement to defend abortion rights must find the ways to speak to the particular questions that have kept women of the oppressed nationalities from adding their strength and experience to this struggle. And further, the voices of poor women and women of color, who continue to most sharply bear the brunt of attacks on abortion, must be heard and their power must be felt. The poor, exploited, and oppressed must infuse their strength and "nothing to lose" spirit into this crucial battle.

### POOR WOMEN

In the United States, as in other countries, restrictions and denial of reproductive rights affect poor women the most. The poor are the most likely to not have good access to adequate birth control, information, education, and access to clinics. They face the highest rates of teen pregnancies and they and their families suffer the most from an unplanned addition of another child. Added to this, government restrictions on abortion, like the banning of Medicaid funds for abortion, have specifically targeted the poor. In 1977, the first year of reduced Medicaid benefits, there was an INCREASE in the number of illegal abortion deaths for the first time since abortion became legal in 1973.

With added restrictions on abortion, poor women have the fewest options: no money to travel out of the state or out of the country to obtain a legal abortion or to locate and pay for a safe underground abortion. And if abortion is outlawed this will be even more true. Poor women, more than anyone else, will face the choice of forced childbearing or possible mutilation or death at the hands of back-alley butchers.

### WOMEN OF COLOR

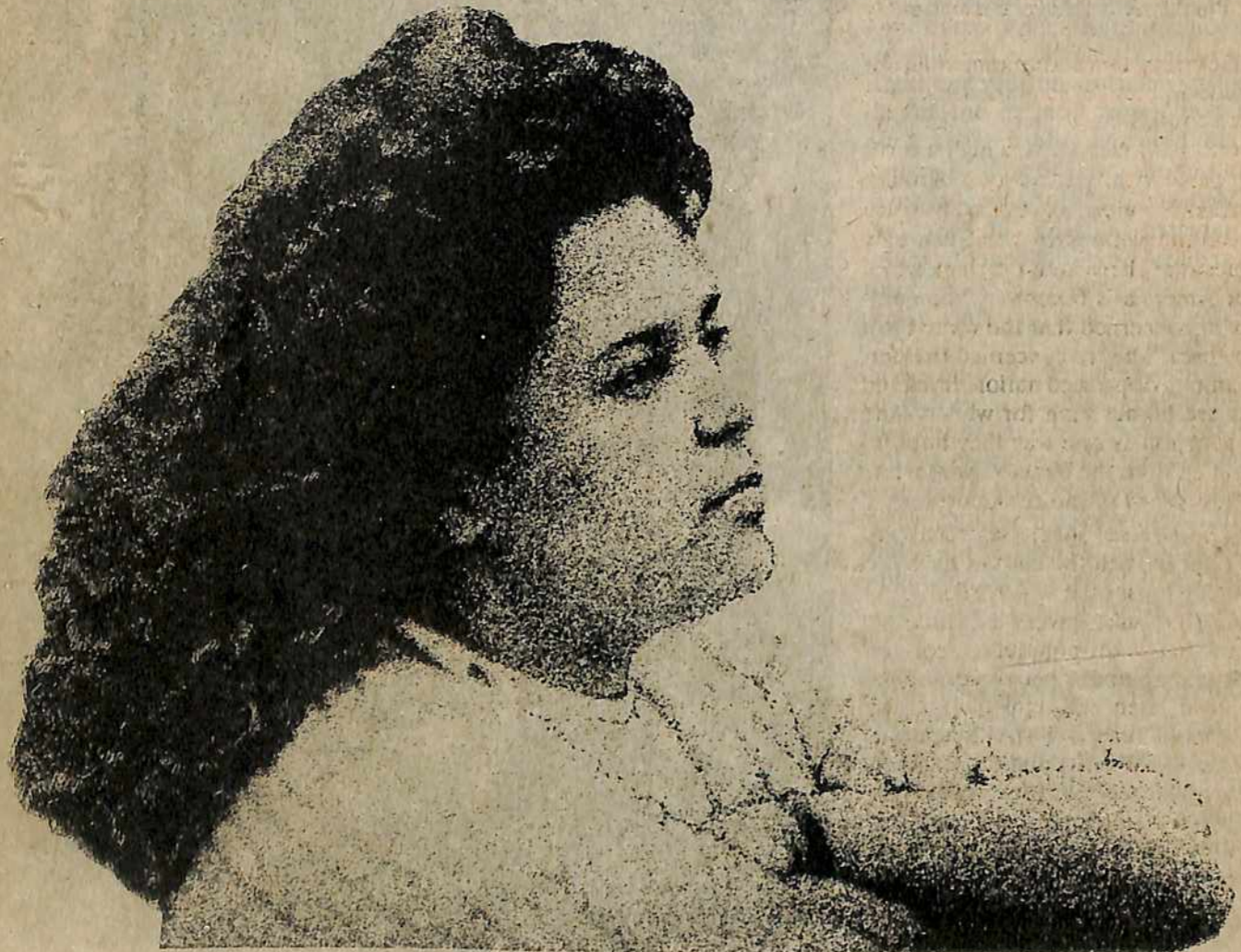
Between 1951 and 1962 the overall maternal mortality rate from illegal abortions was NINE TIMES higher for Black women than for white women.

In 1972 women of color represented 64 percent of the deaths associated with illegal abortion.

Most of the poor people in the United



- Only 13 states allow Medicaid to pay for an abortion.
- The cost of an in-hospital first-trimester abortion is almost four times the average monthly AFDC payment for a family of three.
- Female sterilization in the U.S. increased 350 PERCENT between 1970 and 1975. Between 1976 and 1982 it nearly doubled. This coincided with the virtual elimination of federal funding for abortion and other restrictions on access to abortion.
- The federal government assumes 90 percent of the cost of most sterilizations under Medicaid. At the same time it pays for only a small number of abortions.
- Black and Latin women, particularly those on welfare, are more likely to be sterilized than white women using private medical services.
- As of 1968, 35.3% of all women of child bearing age in Puerto Rico were sterilized.
- One study showed that in the late 1960s, 25% of Indian women in the U.S. were sterilized.
- Between 1975 and 1982, the percentage of all currently married women relying on sterilization increased markedly, but the increase was larger for Black women than for white women.



States are white in terms of numbers. But compared to the white population, a *greater proportion* of Black people and other people from oppressed nationalities are poor. This is why the attacks on abortion rights have a greater and more immediate effect on Black women and other women of color.

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"You go to the clinic with some sort of stomach pain and you leave sometime later after hospitalization missing something. This is called a 'Mississippi appendectomy.' What is missing generally are the total reproductive organs of that woman. . . . Forced reproduction is the flipside of forced sterilization.

"The oppression of women in this society and around the world requires an '—ectomy of a different sort.'"

Spokesperson from the National Black Women's Health Project, International Women's Day, Atlanta 1989

A 1972 survey by *Family Planning Digest* found that 94 percent of physicians said there should be compulsory sterilization of welfare mothers with three or more "illegitimate" children, or benefits should be withdrawn.

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Many women of color have been confronted with a situation where they would be given an abortion only if they consented to being sterilized at the same time. And in fact, there has been a great increase in the number of sterilizations of poor women and women of color since the passage of the Hyde Amendment in 1980—which bans the use of federal funds for abortions except where the life of the woman is in danger.

There are also numerous well-documented cases of women in Third World countries under U.S. domination who have been forcibly sterilized without their knowledge or consent. Tremendous numbers of Black, Chicana, and Native American women, and something like one-third of the reproductive-aged women in Puerto Rico, have been forcibly sterilized.

In Nazi Germany there were campaigns to sterilize "undesirables." And at the same time abortion was outlawed as part of the government's efforts to encourage a higher birth rate among those with "pure" Aryan blood.

In Amerikkka today, reactionaries voice concern about the white birth rate. Their ugly racism argues that there aren't enough white babies, that America is becoming "mongrelized." They're concerned that the white birth rate has declined. They're concerned that fertility rates among oppressed nationalities and immigrants are higher than for whites. And outlawing abortion is one way they hope to promote and enforce the birth of more white children. This is part of the anti-abortionists' agenda that is not so openly talked about. And it fits right in with the current racist atmosphere being promoted in Amerikkka.

Because of this link between abortion and genocidal methods of population control, many Black people and other oppressed nationalities have been reluctant to fight for abortion rights. There is a strong sense of national pride and identity and an awareness of the history of forced sterilization for genocidal purposes. And there is a feeling that abortion only contributes to this assault on people of color.

In fact, Black people *do* suffer from genocidal policies in the United States: Black



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women have been disproportionately sterilized. Black people continue to die disproportionately from disease, poverty and police brutality. Black children suffer higher infant mortality rates and they are more likely to be killed before they reach adulthood. Today the average number of years a Black person can expect to live has, for the first time since 1962, GONE DOWN while at the same time, white life-expectancy rates are going up.

But the right to abortion does not contribute to genocide. In fact, it often happens that the government denies Black women access to abortions and instead encourages them to get sterilized. After the Hyde Amendment Medicaid funds could not be used for abortions, but they could still be used for sterilization. What this meant concretely was that many Black and other poor women were "encouraged"—that is coerced—to choose permanent sterilization as a means of birth control. In 1980, when Medicaid abortions were no longer

easily available, the number of sterilizations rose to 6,219 compared to 3,625 in 1979.

Crimes like forced sterilization and other genocidal practices have to be continually exposed. But we also have to cut through a lot of confusion on how this is related to other ways that women are denied the right to choose. Forcing women to have children goes hand in hand with forcing them to be sterilized. Both are used to control and subjugate women by exercising an iron dictatorship over their reproduction. And both forms of forced reproduction intensify national oppression.

True fighters for national liberation, just like those who fight for the emancipation of all humanity, should want to see Black women—and all women—as free as possible, as strong as possible. A woman who cannot choose has no more freedom than a slave. A people can never free itself if the women remain slaves. And neither can humanity as a whole. □

- In 1972, 64% of women who died from illegal abortions were women of color. In Georgia 80% of women who died from illegal abortions between 1965 and 1969 were Black.
- One study estimated that in the U.S. in the 1960s, 5,000 women a year died from illegal abortions. In 1965 in New York, for every 100,000 white women who gave birth, four women died from illegal abortions. For women of color there were 56 abortion deaths for every 100,000 live births.
- Between 1951 and 1962 the overall death rate from illegal abortions was NINE TIMES higher for Black women than for white women.
- In 1972 the risk for women of color was 27.7 deaths per 100,000 and 9.6 deaths for white women. The death rate per 100,000 legal abortions was also more than TWICE AS HIGH for women of color: 5.7 for women of color and 2.4 for white women.
- Almost half a million Native Americans live on reservations and in historic trust areas. Yet no Indian Health Service clinic or hospital was permitted to perform abortions even with private payment until 1982.
- The cost of an in-hospital first-trimester abortion would be almost four times the average monthly AFDC pay-

ment for a family of three. Medicaid-eligible women who receive an average of \$375 per month for themselves and their children cannot afford \$200 to \$300 for a first-trimester clinic abortion.

- Between 1975 and 1979, 33% of those women who sought illegal abortions and died as a result did so because legal abortions were too expensive or not readily available in their area.
- In 1977, the first year of reduced Medicaid benefits, there was an increase in the number of illegal abortion deaths for the first time since 1972.
- One study of 90% of poor women who got abortions at Bellevue Hospital in New York between 1969 and 1970 found that, prior to getting a legal abortion, 37.7% attempted either an illegal or self-induced abortion and 11% tried to commit suicide because they couldn't get an abortion.

The above statistics are from a legal brief submitted to the Supreme Court in relation to the *Webster* case. This brief was prepared and submitted by lawyers from the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Center for Law and Social Justice, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the National Lawyers Guild, and joined by over one hundred other organizations.



**When I hear folks using the genocide argument, essentially what they're saying is gynocide is fine, genocide's another matter. Because women die from illegal abortions, period. And I think that's the message that needs to be gotten out by pro-choice people—women have abortions, and they die when they're illegal. And poor women and women of color are the folks who are gonna die most often.**

Mistinguette Smith-Malone  
Black health care worker,  
Cleveland

# U.S. Export: Deadly Antiwomen Policies

Today some 200,000 women a year die in Third World countries from illegal abortions—one woman every three minutes. And the anti-abortion policy of the U.S. is making this situation even worse.

In 1984 the U.S. delivered a policy statement at the U.N. International Population Conference in Mexico City. This new policy stated new terms for all grants and agreements between the U.S. AID (Agency for International Development, which oversees U.S. government foreign aid programs in the Third World) and organizations that support family planning services in other countries. These groups are now forbidden by AID to fund any programs and projects which perform, advocate, refer or counsel women about abortion. International Planned Parenthood lost 25 percent of its budget, approximately \$12 million, when it refused to go along with this new policy.

Drastic measures are being taken in order to comply with AID's demands.

Some advocates of birth control say that the problem is that lack of birth control contributes to world overpopulation—which they claim is “the greatest threat to this planet.” But overpopulation is not the problem. The ills of this world are many and they are caused by the economics and politics of worldwide imperialism—NOT because too many children are born to people in the Third World. The view that abortion is necessary because “there are too many children being born” can lead to supporting forced sterilization of oppressed women. And such a position has no place in the pro-choice movement or in any other sphere of the movement for the liberation of women.

- The names of abortion providers in oppressed countries are being wiped clean from family planning mailing lists. Agencies that include abortion services are being black-listed. And patients are not being referred to them—for any services.

- One AID cooperating agency was offered a large supply of medical textbooks to distribute overseas. Because of AID's restrictions, the agency decided it couldn't distribute the textbooks because they contained information on abortion. Thousands of these textbooks, valued at \$75 each, were destroyed by the publisher.

- AID held up the publication of the text *Contraceptive Technology in Africa* for two years because it contained a chapter on abortion. That chapter was finally modified to contain only a discussion of the treatment of septic abortions, and the book was then released.

- At least one organization stopped doing hospital-based studies on the health consequences of illegal abortions because of AID's policy.

- Biomedical research into new contraceptive methods has been obstructed by the AID policy. One organization decided not to work on any new contraceptives that might prevent implantation of a fertilized ovum. Many organizations now will not touch new research that might eventually make abortion safer, such as menses inducers.

AID restrictions have imposed a giant gag rule. A 1987 article in the *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* reported that AID banned activities which include “providing advice and information about medical indications for abortion as an available option and where it can be obtained, and engaging in lawful lobbying to preserve, expand, or create the right to a safe, legal abortion.” □



Scene from ballet *Red Detachment of Women*, performed during Cultural Revolution, China, 1970s



## **From the New Programme of the Revolutionary Communist Party**

# **Women After the Revolution**

The dominant social relations in this society perfectly mirror the economic relations—exploitative. Not only is there the general oppression of women, but even the working class man, infected with the dominant bourgeois ideology and frustrated with his role in capitalist society, often plays the role of the bourgeois in relation to his wife and children.

The proletarian revolution will change all that, through a prolonged process of struggle involving both men and women and including the children.

Politically the proletariat will seek to unleash the fury of women as a mighty force for revolution. The seizure of power by the proletariat will require this and, as Lenin put it, a measure of the thoroughness (and thus success) of any revolution is the degree to which it mobilizes and emancipates women. Showing his awestruck terror at the powerful role of women in the historic Paris Commune of 1871, the first proletarian revolution, a bourgeois commentator of the time exclaimed, "If the French nation were a nation of women, what a terrible nation it would be." This, the proletariat certainly cannot fail to

grasp much more deeply than any bourgeois—and to act upon in a way the bourgeoisie never can or would.

Upon coming to power, the proletariat will carry forward the struggle to break the chains which hold back women from a full role in society, and thereby hold back the proletariat itself from completely transforming society. There will be an immediate ban on discrimination of any kind, including against women, in work and pay as well as every other sphere in society, and at the same time special measures will be taken that take into account the particular problems—such as pregnancy—that affect working women. Birth control will be encouraged, thus combatting the tendency for unwanted pregnancy to force women who are struggling to break out of the confines of the home back into it. Attention will be paid to developing other methods of birth control in place of present ones which endanger women. The right to abortion will be guaranteed, and the capitalist policy of forced sterilization, directed against poor women and particularly women of the oppressed nationalities, will be stopped.

In order to further free the women from the narrow confines of household work, men must not only be struggled with to equally share the burden, but the proletariat will work step by step to establish and involve men and women alike in various institutions like collective laundries, kitchens and child care centers which will promote the gradual socialization of the task of raising children.

As far as the policy toward the family, it will be recognized for what it is: not some holy or sacred institution to be preserved for all time, but on the other hand an institution, that even under socialism, generally corresponds to the level of society, because of the fact that for some time there will still be remnants of capi-

talism including the need for commodity exchange, wages, etc., and for obtaining the bulk of necessities and many social services through this means. For this reason, the family will still play an important role in raising children. But not only will the family be a secondary form—even more so than under capitalism—for determining their upbringing, but its influence in promoting conservatism among its members, especially the women and children, will be actively combated. Their attention and energy will be focused on the broader questions and movements in society.

The right of divorce will be upheld—not to promote divorce, for in fact divorce will become less common than under capitalism—but to strengthen the free and voluntary character of marriage relations and relations between men and women in general. While the parents will still have significant responsibility for their children, this does not mean they are "theirs" and there will be struggle to prevent parents from imposing old values, and conservative, non-revolutionary thinking generally on the children.

The struggle around the woman question will not be confined to any one sphere, but will go on throughout all of society. Revolution is impossible without the constant breaking with old ideas and old institutions, and the practices and values which promote the oppression of women are a key prop of the old; they must be a key target of the proletariat in destroying the old and creating the new. In any sphere, from employment to literature and art, this question will be raised and will be the source of ongoing struggle in order to ensure the full participation of women in the socialist society and the ongoing proletarian revolution and thereby immensely strengthen that revolution.

## **Our ideology is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism**

## **Our vanguard is the Revolutionary Communist Party**

## **Our leader is Chairman Avakian**



New York—Demonstration following Supreme Court decision restricting abortion, July, 1989



