

THE CRUCIAL FIGHT FOR ABORTION RIGHTS

AND ENDING ALL OPPRESSION

Broad Unity and Necessary Struggle

by Bob Avakian

The ongoing fight for the right to abortion has become especially crucial now, with the very clear indication that the “conservative” (really fascist) majority on the Supreme Court is poised to tear away this right (by overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the legal ruling and precedent which established—and for 50 years, until now, has maintained—the right to abortion nationwide). **At this crucial time, the fight to defend the fundamental right to abortion needs to become an even more massive, sustained, determined resistance aimed at preventing the Supreme Court from overturning *Roe v. Wade*.**

Uniting All Who Can Be United, Struggling Over Differences in a Principled Way

It is of profound importance to **unite all who can be united** in this crucial fight for the right to abortion. An important part of uniting people on the most solid basis, and waging this fight in the most powerful way, is struggling over critical questions such as: *why the right to abortion is under attack, and what is essentially involved in this move to outlaw abortion; what it will mean if the right to abortion is ripped away; and how best to wage the fight to defend and preserve the right to abortion*. This struggle needs to be waged in a principled way—not descending into personal attacks, or engaging in slanders of people with whom you disagree, but honestly examining the *substance* of different approaches, where they will actually lead, and whether they will strengthen, or weaken, the crucial fight for the right to abortion (and for a more just society overall).

It is in this spirit, and with this orientation, that I am going to speak to what is wrong with certain outlooks and programs which actually lead away from and will undermine the crucial and urgent fight to prevent the right to abortion from being ripped away by the fascists on the Supreme Court (and in society as a whole).

In a previous article, I examined in some depth why relying on the Democrats and funneling everything into voting for them is a strategy for *accepting defeat and capitulating to the fascist offensive* to eliminate the right to abortion.¹ Here I am going to get into how certain “woke” positions create a lot of confusion and point in wrong directions, and actually undermine the fight for the right to abortion (and the fight against oppression overall).

In relation to abortion, many “woke folk” talk about “bodily autonomy”—when *the essence of what is involved* is not some abstract question of “bodily autonomy” but *an attack on the fundamental right to **abortion**, a move to enslave **women** through forced motherhood*: denying women the right to control their own reproduction. (As I have noted before, “bodily autonomy” is “a concept which, by the way, would logically include people coming from a very bad place, such as those anti-scientific lunatics and selfish individualists who refuse to get vaccinated against COVID.” And these anti-scientific lunatics overwhelmingly *oppose* the right to abortion.)²

In this connection, it is important to emphasize again the point I stressed in the article “The Fight for Abortion Rights and the Emancipation of Women”:

The essential question at stake with the escalating attack on the right to abortion is *the fundamental status of the half of humanity that is female—whether they will be enslaved or emancipated*.³

And:

Anything which waters down or distracts from this essential truth is objectively aiding this fundamental attack on the half of humanity that is female—is undermining the fight for their emancipation, and the emancipation of humanity as a whole from any form of oppression and exploitation.⁴

But “watering down” and undermining is exactly what is done by many “woke” approaches.

Some people, influenced by “woke” thinking, argue that it is wrong to say that abortion is about controlling and degrading *women*, because this use of “women” as a general category does not bring out that taking away the right to abortion will especially hurt women of color. This, too, misses—and undermines—the understanding of what is essentially going on with the attack on the right to abortion. To repeat what I have emphasized in another previous article:

And the denial of this right especially affects low-income women, particularly impoverished Black and Brown women, who often are the ones in most desperate need of an abortion. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that even for women—and girls—who may be in relatively well off, or even quite well off, situations economically, and could theoretically afford to travel to an area, or a country, where abortion is legal, there can

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still be serious obstacles to getting an abortion: abusive husbands and boyfriends, tyrannical patriarchal fathers, dogmatic religious authority, and a number of other factors. *Once again, access to safe, legal abortion, as a fundamental right and a matter of personal choice, is of profound importance for women overall.*⁵

It is possible, and it is important, to make clear that the fight around abortion is essentially about upholding—or denying—the rights and the humanity of women, as women, while at the same time bringing out that taking away the right to abortion will do great harm especially to impoverished women of color.

The most outrageous form of this “wokeness” is to *erase women altogether*—to talk about abortion *without even mentioning women* (instead using terms like “people who get pregnant”), when it is overwhelmingly women (and girls) who get pregnant and who need the right to safe and legal abortion—and the fascist drive to outlaw abortion has always been about *controlling and degrading women*.

It is not more “inclusive” to use terms like “people who get pregnant”—it is more *diffusive*: it dilutes and weakens the point that, *in its essence*, denying the right to abortion is about the patriarchal enslavement of women: *Forced motherhood is enslavement of the half of humanity that is female. This is the main and essential thing going on with the attack on the right to abortion.*

To again quote from “The Fight for Abortion Rights and the Emancipation of Women”:

Of course, in the case of the extremely small number of females who have transitioned (or are transitioning) to males but who retain female reproductive organs and might get pregnant, they should have the right to abortion, and to decent health care overall, without any stigma or discrimination—and in general attacks directed against trans people must be actively, vigorously opposed. But, in terms of its essential purpose and objective, the attack on the right to abortion is not aimed at trans people.... **The attack on the right to abortion is a move to further intensify the already horrific oppression of women, denying them control of their lives and their very bodies, reducing them to breeders of children, cruelly subordinated to men and a patriarchal male-supremacist society. Forced motherhood is in fact female enslavement.**⁶

Correctly focusing on the fact that the attack on the right to abortion is essentially aimed at enslaving women definitely can be and should be done while also strongly opposing discrimination, degradation, brutality and murder directed against trans people.

Everything Is Not Everything—There Are Different Forms of Oppression Affecting Different Sections of People—But These Things Are Connected, and Understanding How Is Critical

In the world today, there are many different forms of oppression and atrocity—many ways in which people, and the environment, are exploited and plundered, within different countries and parts of the world, and in the world as a whole. White supremacy; male supremacy and oppression based on gender; environmental destruction; the ruthless exploitation of billions of people, including more than 150 million children, in the poorer countries of the world; the persecution of immigrants, wars waged by the U.S. and other imperialist powers—these different things have their own *separate, discrete essence and particular features*, while at the same time they are inter-connected in various ways, and they are most fundamentally connected because they are *all rooted in and flow out of the basic nature of the system* which rules and dominates, in this country and in the world as a whole, and which subjects billions of people throughout the world to horrendous exploitation, degradation, destruction, torture and torment: the system of capitalism-imperialism.

In order to finally put an end to all this completely unnecessary suffering, it is necessary to fight against all these different forms of oppression, plunder and destruction—and fight to put an end to this system, which is the fundamental source and cause of all this—linking together, in this way, the different streams of struggle and directing them toward the solution: overthrowing this system and bringing into being a radically different, truly emancipating system—a socialist system, aiming for the ultimate goal of a communist world, where all exploitation and oppression will be finally ended, everywhere.

Right now, there is an urgent need, and basis, to unite people very broadly, from many different political perspectives, to rise up in massive, non-violent but determined, sustained resistance to stop the Supreme Court from ripping away the right to abortion. This is a crucial battle in its own right—it is a concentration of the fight against the oppression of women—and it is an important part of the overall fight for a more just society and world, and a future worth living for humanity.

FOOTNOTES

1. *The Supreme Court Moves to End Abortion Rights: “Taking to the Streets,” And Refusing to Let This Go Down*, Bob Avakian Speaks to This Critical Juncture in the Fight for Abortion Rights, The Road Forward, and Avoiding Dead Ends. This article is available at revcom.us.
2. The Fight For Abortion Rights and the Emancipation of Women. This article is also available at revcom.us.
3. The Fight For Abortion Rights and the Emancipation of Women
4. The Fight For Abortion Rights and the Emancipation of Women
5. *The Supreme Court Moves to End Abortion Rights: “Taking to the Streets,” And Refusing to Let This Go Down*, Bob Avakian Speaks to This Critical Juncture in the Fight for Abortion Rights, The Road Forward, and Avoiding Dead Ends
6. The Fight For Abortion Rights and the Emancipation of Women

