abort fascism!
Unity & Struggle

Forward

These articles were chosen by members of Unity and Struggle, not because we agree with every word of what each author has to say, but because we see the overturning of Roe v. Wade as a clear defeat for the liberal strategy of defending abortion via the courts, which worked for 50 years to protect access to abortion for some, but definitely not all who needed it. Now is a time for strategic debate and experimentation with new tactics in the struggle for reproductive justice.

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First Communiqué

This is not a declaration of war. War has been upon us for decades. A war which we did not want, and did not provoke. Too long have we been attacked for asking for basic medical care. Too long have we been shot, bombed, and forced into childbirth without consent.

This was only a warning. We demand the disbanding of all anti-choice establishments, fake clinics, and violent anti-choice groups within the next thirty days. This is not a mere "difference of opinion" as some have framed it. We are literally fighting for our lives. We will not sit still while we are killed and forced into servitude. We have run thin on patience and mercy for those who seek to strip us of what little autonomy we have left. As you continue to bomb clinics and assassinate doctors with impunity, so too shall we adopt increasingly extreme tactics to maintain freedom over our own bodies.

We are forced to adopt the minimum military requirement for a political struggle. Again, this was only a warning. Next time the infrastructure of the enslavers will not survive. Medical imperialism will not face a passive enemy. Wisconsin is the first flashpoint, but we are all over the US, and we will issue no further warnings.

And we will not stop, we will not back down, nor win we hesitate to strike until the inalienable right to manage our own health is returned to us.

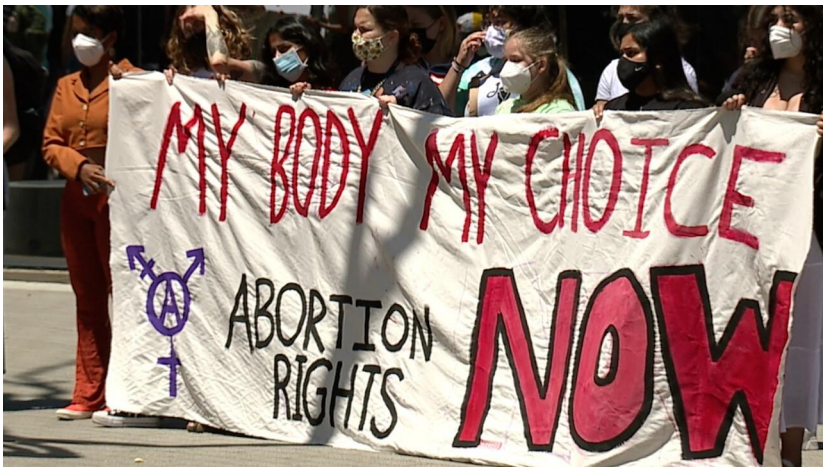
We are not one group, but many. We are in your city. We are in every city. Your repression only strengthens our accomplice-ship and resolve.

—Jane's Revenge

Some thoughts about how the struggle for abortion rights and bodily autonomy should be waged (and can be won)

By Elise Hendrick

These are just a few thoughts, in no particular order, about the current struggle in the wake of the overturning of *Roe* and *Casey* by the US Supreme Court. They are by no means comprehensive or definitive, but reflect a few substantive and strategical observations that I think are important at this stage.



1. This struggle is about bodily autonomy in general.

Abortion rights are central to this struggle, and we must defend them explicitly and unapologetically, but the decision in *Dobbs* is not only an attack on abortion rights. In overturning *Roe v. Wade* and adopting a notion of substantive due process that limits it to rights clearly established in the late 1860s, the US Supreme Court has declared open season on everything to do with bodily autonomy, and much more besides.

Serial sexual harasser and noted financial conflict of interest collector Clarence Thomas, who openly acknowledges this in his concurring opinion, wins the dubious distinction of being the most intellectually honest person in the majority. One can only speculate as to the other reactionaries' motives in saying that their decision

does not call into question other rights that also heavily rely on *Roe* and *Casey* for their judicial recognition, but it seems at least likely that they're aware what a shitstorm might await if they explicitly attack everything from abortion rights to the right to extramarital cohabitation at once.

However, far-right legislatures throughout the country are already relying on *Dobbs* to justify existing attacks on LGBT rights (like the literally genocidal laws against gender-affirming health care for trans children and adults in various states) and launch new ones.

In *Dobbs*, the US Supreme Court has declared war on the foundations of the lives of tens of millions of people. It is a war that reactionaries can only win if some of the people under attack don't even realise there's a fight going on.

2. Transphobes, even those pretending to be feminists, are not our allies

In a recent *New York Times* column (which will not be linked here because it does not deserve views), Pamela Paul argues that respecting trans people's identities is as bad as depriving people of bodily autonomy. This is the second piece of blatant transphobic propaganda the *NYT* has published in the past month, at a time when trans people in the US are facing greater state terror than they've faced at any time in the past few decades.

We should not be under any illusions. The *NYT* editors know exactly what they're doing by platforming this asinine crap now of all times. The purpose of propaganda like this is to divide the people who are at the greatest risk from attacks on the right to bodily autonomy.

This sort of divide-and-rule propaganda is an established far-right strategy at this point. During the successful struggle to repeal the 8th Amendment in Ireland, both Irish forced birth campaigners and British transphobes attempted to sow such divisions in the trans-inclusive abortion rights movement there. Irish abortion rights campaigners told them to fuck off, and went on to win by a landslide.

3. The people and institutions that got us into this shit

wouldn't know how to get us out of it even if they wanted to

The far right in the US has made overturning *Roe v. Wade* a rallying cry since the early 1980s, whilst the Democratic Party and the NGOs that follow their lead have increasingly reduced the struggle to expand and defend abortion rights to a mere question of electing Democrats. No change in strategy on the part of the major pro-choice NGOs was in evidence even as the Democrats themselves began to take pains to avoid being identified as the party of abortion rights starting in the late 1980s.

Four decades later, on the eve of the decision in *Dobbs*, the situation of abortion rights in the US was characterised not by free, safe, and legal abortion on demand, but by abortion deserts requiring those seeking abortion-related health care to travel for the better part of a day each way. Over those forty years, we've seen numerous laws enacted for the sole purpose of making abortion less accessible: bogus zoning rules, waiting periods, notification requirements, and numerous other onerous restrictions.

These forty years of letting the Democrats and the likes of NARAL and Planned Parenthood lead this struggle have been forty years of retreat. The Democrats have long refused to make support for abortion rights a prerequisite for allowing a politician to run on their ballot line. Indeed, when the *Dodd* opinion leaked, no less than Nancy Pelosi was in Texas backing right-wing pro-forced birth Democrat Henry Cuellar in a primary against a pro-choice opponent. When Hillary 'safe, legal, and rare' Clinton picked a running mate with a horrible record on abortion rights, the pro-choice NGOs could think of nothing better to do than to whitewash Tim Kaine's record on the issue.

Whilst the Democrats at the federal level divide their time between making excuses for their refusal to use the full extent of their power as controllers of Congress and the White House to restore abortion rights and using this crisis as a fundraising device, the NGOs that have promoted the 'vote Blue no matter what they do' non-strategy show no signs of learning any lessons from forty years of abject failure.

We cannot afford to subordinate this movement to the interests and

priorities of the Democrats and the non-profits that suck up to them. They had forty years to show us what they could do, and that's more than enough time to know that we can do better. Only by maintaining our independence from these institutions can we exert the sort of pressure that is necessary in order to force them to do the right thing.

4. Governability and profitability are the pressure points we need to be targeting

In a society with democratic institutions, protests wouldn't require an *or else*. In such a society, the mere fact that millions are willing to take to the streets to demand or oppose something would be enough. Indeed, in such a society, protests wouldn't be necessary in the first place, because the governing institutions could simply look at the serious studies of public opinion to know what the majority of the population want and need.

That's not where we live. In the US, *de facto* single-party police state built around a group of nine infallible, all-powerful god kings, to use Peter Temple's phrase, the will of the majority matters about as much as 'a swag full of arseholes'. In the US, our ruling institutions don't even acknowledge anything other than the short-term interests of a handful of rich ghouls unless it looks like the shit will seriously hit the fan otherwise. In this society, majority support has not been enough to get federal statutory protection for abortion rights, no matter how many chances the Democrats have been given. Hell, majority opinion in this country hasn't even been enough to get universal free public health care even in the midst of a historic public health disaster.

If we want the ruling class to even consider restoring our right to bodily autonomy, we need to put the hurt on them. We need an *or else*.

Historically, the movements that have extracted meaningful concessions from unwilling ruling classes have been those that attack the two major pressure points of capitalist society: *profitability*, which is the point of the entire system, and *governability*, which calls the system's very existence into question.

When a major legislative attack on abortion rights in Poland led to mass militant protests and a general strike, that was a direct attack on profitability that forced the government to reconsider their position. Profitability is so vulnerable precisely because it depends on our active cooperation. As we saw in those halcyon days when the US regime actually acknowledged that COVID was a problem, if workers aren't going to work and doing the things, bosses don't profit. In this era of just-in-time supply chain management, even minor and temporary disruptions to shipping can cause serious damage.

Although the idea of abolishing, or even just defunding the police has been discussed in anti-capitalist and anti-racist circles for years, it wasn't even acknowledged in official discourse as a position to refute until the murder of George Floyd kicked off weeks of militant protests and direct actions across the country, many of which directly targeted the infrastructure of repression by destroying and damaging police stations and forcing cops into retreat, whilst others emptied out the inventory of big box retail chains and distributed them for free to local communities. That was an attack on both profitability and governability, though the movement's stated objectives target something so fundamental to the functioning of capitalist society (policing) that the ruling class cannot simply concede the issue.

On the other hand, US capitalists were doing just fine with legal abortion; indeed, they regularly posted record profits over the entire period in which Roe was settled law. Banning abortion is the niche issue of a minority of bigots who are useful to capital, but far from essential to it. Restoration of the right to bodily autonomy is a concession the ruling class can afford to grant, and will grant *if we make it clear that they can't afford not to*.

5. The cops are not our friends; those fighting against state terror are

We need to be clear that these grotesque laws banning abortions, trans health care, and whatever else the fascist imagination might yet throw at us will be enforced by cops. The same cops that let the white supremacists enter the Capitol building. The same cops who defend fascist paramilitaries and attack those defending their

communities from them across the country. The same cops who stand aside to let fascists attack Drag Queen Story Hours, and who are currently terrorising the people of Uvalde, TX as payback for embarrassing news coverage. The same cops that the Democrats have been drowning in money.

Defending the right to bodily autonomy means standing between cops and fascists and people seeking abortions. It means physically defending trans children from being ripped from supportive families to be tortured by bigots. It means holding the line when riot cops try to force us off the streets, or to kettle and mass arrest us. It will mean doing things that are illegal, or that could become illegal any minute, and trying to get away with it.

We need to understand that the full weight of the surveillance state is coming down on millions of people who had previously been largely exempt from it, many of whom have never previously had occasion to consider the police a threat. That means making clear the importance of not talking to the police, not coordinating protests with police, protecting our identities, and, for the sake of fuck and all that is sacred, not posting unedited video of people doing illegal things on social media.

There are people – indeed, entire movements – who've understood for decades that the police are not on our side and need to be treated like the adversaries they are, whether it's the movements against anti-Black police terror, against immigration raids, or anarchists and the more militant revolutionaries more generally. The struggle for bodily autonomy must stand with those who've been fighting against police terror not only because it's the right thing to do, but because they know the territory. A struggle that's against police terror when it's aimed at reproductive decisions and queer identities, but has nothing to say about the racist police terror that tens of millions of BIPOC face every day, is at best woefully incomplete.

Liberal non-profits will try to narrow the focus of this movement, to divide bodily autonomy into specific niches (here the queers, there those whose primary focus is abortion rights), and channel our energy and our anger into avenues that don't make the ruling class nervous. They will resist any attempt to defy these laws and the cops

who enforce them outright (because that's not 'peaceful', and what about the optics?), and they will try to prevent any kind of solidarity and cross-pollination between the movement against policing our genders, sexualities, and reproductive decisions and the movement against police terror more generally. If we want to win, we must resist these impulses.

6. Respectability politics will get us nowhere

For decades now, it's been fashionable in the world of pro-choice non-profits to be apologetic about even wanting to have an abortion. So much of their PR material features women talking about what a tough decision it was, how sad it was, as if this struggle will be won by convincing people who want to strip us of our bodily autonomy that we think really hard about how to exercise rights they don't want us to have in the first place. Indeed, it's quite popular to avoid the word abortion altogether, or to concede crucial ground by agreeing that it's a bad thing.

This shit needs to stop. If we were going to end the attacks on our bodily autonomy by impressing those who want to take it away from us, it would have happened already. They don't need to be convinced that we take the decision seriously; they need to be convinced that we will fight them to defend the bodily autonomy that allows us to make the decision at all by any means necessary.

We need to understand that we aren't going to win this by earning the respect or sympathy of our enemies, but their fear. They need to understand that, in winning this victory in their war on basic human decency, they've kicked a hornet's nest, and that their lives are about to become very exciting indeed.

Jane's Revenge: Another Communiqué

You have seen that we are real, and that we are not merely pushing empty words. As we said: we are not one group but many. You have seen us in Madison WI, Ft. Collins CO, Reisertown MA, Olympia WA, Des Moines IA, Lynwood WA, Washington DC, Ashville NC, Buffalo NY, Hollywood FL, Vancouver WA, Frederick MA, Denton TX, Gresham OR, Eugene OR, Portland OR, among others, and we work in countless locations invisibly. You've read the communiqués from the various cells, you've seen the proliferating messages in graffiti and elsewhere, and you know that we are serious.

We were unsurprised to see thirty days come and thirty days pass with no sign of consilience or even bare-minimum self-reflection from you who impersonate healthcare providers in order to harm the vulnerable. History may not repeat itself, but it certainly rhymes, and we've already seen such stanzas where medical autonomy is stripped away, humanity is increasingly criminalized, and merely surviving becomes largely untenable.

Your thirty days expired yesterday. We offered an honourable way out. You could have walked away. Now the leash is off. And we will make it as hard as possible for your campaign of oppression to continue. We have demonstrated in the past month how easy and fun it is to attack. We are versatile, we are mercurial, and we answer to no one but ourselves. We promised to take increasingly drastic measures against oppressive infrastructures. Rest assured that we will, and those measures may not come in the form of something so easily cleaned up as fire and graffiti. Sometimes you will see what we do, and you will know that it is us. Sometimes you will think you merely are unlucky, because you cannot see the ways which we

interfere in your affairs. But your pointless attempts to control others, and make life more difficult, will not be met passively. Eventually your insurance companies, and your financial backers will realize you are a bad investment.

From here forward, any anti-choice group who closes their doors, and stops operating will no longer be a target. But until you do, it's open season, and we know where your operations are. The infrastructure of the enslavers will not survive. We will never stop, back down, slow down, or retreat. We did not want this; but it is upon us, and so we must deal with it proportionally. We exist in confluence and solidarity with all others in the struggle for complete liberation. Our recourse now is to defend ourselves and to build robust, caring communities of mutual aid, so that we may heal ourselves without the need of the medical industry or any other intermediary. Through attacking, we find joy, courage, and strip the veneer of impenetrability held by these violent institutions.

And for the allies of ours who doubt the authenticity of the communiqués and actions: there is a way you can get irrefutable proof that these actions are real. Go do one of your own. You are already one of us. Everyone with the urge to paint, to burn, to cut, to jam: now is the time. Go forth and manifest the things you wish to see. Stay safe, and practice your cursive.

—Jane's Revenge

To Defend Abortion Access, Take the Offensive

By CrimethInc

Strategizing for Direct Action

It is becoming widely understood that the shot callers in the Democratic Party have no intention to stick their necks out to preserve abortion access. For the most cynical of the Democratic politicians, the overturning of Roe v. Wade represents an opportunity to improve their job security by the changing the subject back to electoral politics once again. Yet a coherent grassroots strategy for resisting the criminalization of abortion has yet to emerge. Let's talk about what such a strategy might entail.

This is especially pressing as today's Supreme Court is not finished reshaping the legal landscape. They may continue to hand down decisions like the overturning of Roe v. Wade for years or even decades to come.

Intentionally or unintentionally, the leak of the Supreme Court ruling may have functioned to defuse resistance rather than to catalyze it. It gave the general public a chance to get used to the bad news before it was confirmed, ensuring that people who might otherwise have been shocked into action behaved in more predictable ways. Liberal organizations took advantage of the advance warning to organize rallies channeling people's rage and heartbreak into largely symbolic actions, but there was no comparable effort to coordinate an offensive participatory strategy based in direct action.

What follows is a tentative effort to talk strategy as we embark on the next chapter of a centuries-long struggle. **What can direct action offer the fight for reproductive freedom?**

First, there are some things that you can accomplish by acting on your own without waiting for anyone else. If you want the wall down the street to express support for people who need abortion access, grab some spray-paint and go out tonight. Likewise, you can stockpile abortion pills and get them to those who need them along with information about how to use them.

Second, there are many ways to extend support to those who will be most impacted by the criminalization of abortion. One of the most fundamental effects of the banning of abortion in half of the United States will be that millions of people who did not previously consider themselves radicals will experience the courts, the laws, and the police as their enemies in an immediate, visceral way. While this may legitimize illegal activity for some who previously had a superstitious faith in the rule of law, it will also have consequences similar to the impact of the laws criminalizing marijuana: in anti-choice states, the wealthy and privileged will be able to access abortion easily enough, while poor people from targeted demographics will suffer egregiously. Drawing on the examples of No More Deaths and similar solidarity projects, we should not underestimate the tremendous amount of effort this kind of organizing will require, nor how difficult it will be to get support to those who need it most. This work is crucial, but is essentially defensive in character.

Finally, movements can use direct action to exert leverage within society, including on those who aim to criminalize abortion. This is what we mean by an offensive strategy: in addition to responding to the negative consequences of the Supreme Court verdict, taking steps to push back against it.

In order to use direct action to exert leverage in this way, you have to:

- Identify a person or group that is going to make a decision that is going to lead to a negative outcome.
- Carry out an action that gives them a reason to make a different decision.

The person or group you focus on could be the ones responsible for the injustice you seek to address, or they might have no direct connection to the injustice but be positioned in such a way that they could do something to stop it. The action you take need not be adversarial—it could be as simple as serving delicious food at a demonstration to ensure that people show up who might not otherwise attend.

To offer another example: if opponents of abortion access sincerely

wished to diminish the total number of abortions in the United States, they would focus on providing resources and community support to everyone who might become pregnant, so that no one would feel that they are too poor or too isolated to be able to raise a child. That would be the only surefire way to diminish the number of both legal *and illegal* abortions. The fact that, instead, the anti-choice movement has focused almost exclusively on legislation shows that in fact, their actual goal is to impose patriarchal control over people's bodies by means of state violence.

It's important to spell this out: if your goal is to exert leverage, you have to identify a group you can actually exert leverage on—a group that is likely to change course as a consequence of your intervention. If there are no circumstances under which those you are seeking to influence would make a different decision, or if they have already made their decision, it might make sense to focus your efforts elsewhere. You have to make sure that the target of your efforts has a choice—then make them an offer they can't refuse.

Right now, the basic strategic problem is that no one has fleshed out a proposal to make suppressing abortion access the *least desirable* choice for the Republicans or their centrist accomplices. The Republicans are getting what they want: the more that their efforts to criminalize abortion outrage and harm people, the better, as wielding power over others' lives is precisely what energizes their base. But Democratic politicians also have no great incentive to take risks to defend abortion access. Though Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and others have proposed a strategy to codify abortion rights into law, most Democrats are determined to sit on their hands, hoping that this issue will help them in the midterm elections—regardless of the risks that those who are being criminalized face today.

This is consistent with Democrats' efforts to re-legitimize the police and other institutions of the state in the wake of the 2020 uprising—and to do so even as Republicans are poised to gain control of those institutions and keep control of them by coup if necessary. These are the workings of the political ratchet, in which Republicans continuously push state institutions towards more oppressive agendas while Democrats continuously give ground, keeping those who are suffering invested in the state itself in hopes that it might

one day be reformed. If the same pattern plays out in regards to abortion access, there really is no hope other than direct action.

The good news is that if someone can demonstrate a strategy to effectively exert leverage on those who are responsible for suppressing abortion access, countless people will want to participate in it. People may come out to march in circles and listen to speakers a couple times a year, but if they see that there is something meaningful that they can do to effect change directly, they will show up with vigor and enthusiasm. We saw this most recently in summer 2020.

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What strategies have demonstrators experimented with thus far that might offer meaningful leverage on those who are complicit in suppressing abortion access?

It is a classic historical pattern that, after the cooptation and repression of a movement like the George Floyd uprising of 2020, some participants revert to staid, legalistic marches while others attempt to continue escalating on their own, shifting to invite-only night actions for the sake of security. This perfectly describes the dichotomy between this past weekend's sign-holding rallies and the

vandalism that various anonymous groups have carried out under the umbrella of the Jane's Revenge model. The public rallies are eminently accessible, but offer little meaningful engagement; the invite-only night actions may inspire people to take action on their own, but do not offer a participatory space in which to build collective momentum. Something is needed to fill in the space between these two poles.

Likewise, whatever their other virtues, both of these models fall short when we evaluate them as means of exerting leverage. The target of the public rallies is vague: in addressing society at large by means of a largely symbolic event, they might even reassure those who are criminalizing abortion that there will be no real consequences for doing so. Their chief value is probably in bolstering the morale of the participants. By contrast, the targets of the Jane's Revenge actions are very specific—but in targeting anti-abortion centers, they are taking on the most intransigent opponents of abortion, people who have dedicated their lives to fighting against abortion access, many of whom consider themselves to be carrying out the will of God. In attempting to exert leverage on such people, one could end up locked in a private grudge match, missing the opportunity to open up expansive spaces of struggle that can draw in more participants while escalating.

Somewhere between the public rallies and the invite-only night actions, we find the most promising events of this past weekend—breakaway marches that blocked highways in Los Angeles and other cities, on the one hand, and demonstrations outside the homes of the Supreme Court justices, on the other. These have the virtue of being both participatory and confrontational. Again, however, when it comes to exerting leverage, the target of the street marches and freeway blockades is a little bit abstract, whereas the Supreme Court justices are unlikely to change their minds, even if they have to get a bigger security detail.

If it is possible to exert leverage on anyone who is complicit in criminalizing abortion, it is probably not far-right religious cult members, but their centrist accomplices. Presented with the choice between risking their careers and sacrificing the abortion access of millions of the desperately poor, centrist politicians will usually choose the latter—but it might be possible to revise those options in

such a way that they would be compelled to think twice.

At the high point of the George Floyd uprising, when millions of people had ceased to accept the legitimacy of the police and were acting accordingly, we saw terrified liberals like the mayor of Minneapolis suddenly take the demands of the movement very seriously, promising to take steps towards police abolition (which the movement had already made a reality to some extent). Later, when the politicians had reestablished control, they betrayed those promises—showing that our effectiveness hinges on keeping our social movements lively and strong, not on winning concessions. If demonstrators could find an effective and infectious way to express a total rejection of the court system, that might bring about a similar situation.

In the past, pressure campaigns have targeted the American Legislative Exchange Council and similar organizations to some effect. In liberal urban centers in the states that are criminalizing abortion, there is another potential point of intervention: some district attorneys are already declaring that they won't prosecute abortion cases. This could represent a precedent that other prosecutors could be pressed to adopt, widening fault lines within the legal system in those states.

The movement against racist police murders that eventually led to the George Floyd uprising got off the ground in the first place because, starting with the protests against the murder of Oscar Grant in 2009, the participants were able to connect the following crucial elements:

- An abolitionist analysis that explained why the murders were occurring more persuasively than any liberal or conservative narrative.
- A set of reproducible tactics that were immediately associated with the analysis, so people could easily take action if they agreed with the analysis.
- Concrete points of intervention—including specific times, places, participants, and targets.

Other movements—the environmental movement, for example—have not been establish this connection between analysis, action,

and context, and have subsequently remained stunted (with exceptions, thankfully). If we want to mobilize an effective resistance to the criminalization of abortion, we have to learn from the George Floyd uprising.

Yes, there are fundamental differences between the movement for reproductive freedom and the movement for Black lives—but those who will be most impacted by the criminalization of abortion overlap considerably with those who are most impacted by racist policing. Although the politics of the movement for reproductive freedom are currently more liberal and reformist, correlating with the higher profile that middle-class organizers have in its ranks, that could change as the situation intensifies. We should remember that in the years between the 2001 uprising in Cincinnati and the rebellion mourning Oscar Grant, movements against police violence often seemed easily co-opted, as well.

Coda: How We Got Here, Where We're Going

As anarchists, we don't look to the Supreme Court to defend our freedoms from other courts and state institutions. We don't believe that any court or state institution possesses inherent legitimacy. That being said, in a struggle for our freedom and well-being that pits us against courts, cops, and other state institutions, compelling one such institution to limit the power of another can be strategic, provided it does not contribute to legitimizing any of the institutions involved. It must be clear to everyone that the power that drives social change derives from grassroots organizing, not from state institutions—that it is the needs and desires and autonomy of the human beings involved that are legitimate, not the structures that purport to represent them.

The fact that some US courts recognize abortion rights at all is itself the result of decades of grassroots struggle. Today, a majority of residents of the United States support some kind of abortion access, but this was not always the case.

Support for abortion access has slowly risen since the 1970s, even as the number of abortions people seek has declined since 1980. In 1978, only a third of those polled in the United States supported

abortion access unconditionally; by 2018, that had risen to slightly over half. As Moxie Marlinspike argues in "We Should All Have Something to Hide," it is difficult for most people to grasp the value of something that is illegal and therefore unfamiliar; the first step towards social change is for a powerful movement to persistently demonstrate its value in defiance of the law.

The Roe v. Wade decision did not take place because a majority of the US population supported abortion access in 1973. Rather, in view of organizing efforts such as the Jane collective, which provided an estimated 11,000 illegal abortions, we can conclude that the ruling was a response to the **intensity** with which a particular segment of the population was fighting for abortion access, and to their **success** in calling the state's monopoly on power into question by continuing to make abortion available despite the efforts of police and judges.

Small groups that win concessions as a consequence of their intensity and successful defiance can enable the rest of society to discover the advantages of something that is currently illegal. Such groups are responsible for the better part of social progress; they initiated the process that ultimately led to the legalization of marijuana in parts of the United States, for example. Of all of the struggles that reached a high point in 2020, some of the most unambiguous victories were the statue topplings: governments that never would have taken action to remove racist statues were also not prepared to reinstall them once autonomous crowds illegally toppled them.

Arguably, two of the most common justifications for the power of the Supreme Court and other state institutions are, first, that they represent the will of the majority, and, second, that they maintain historical legal precedents. As anarchists, we don't believe that either of these justifications is as important as people's own judgments about what contributes to their personal well-being. But it is noteworthy that, in striking down Roe v. Wade, the majority of the Supreme Court is neither enforcing the will of the majority nor maintaining historical legal precedents—certainly not precedents that have prevailed for the vast majority of our lives. Rather, the Supreme Court is implementing a decades-old program propelled by the *intensity* and *defiance* of far-right anti-choice activists—who

used assassinations and bombings, among other tactics, to build a pressure campaign comprised of many interlocking fronts.

The far right are also advocates of social change—but towards a more repressive, authoritarian, sexist, racist, and homophobic society. Where anarchist direct action generally targets the most powerful and privileged, the far right pursue policies that generally target the desperate and downtrodden. Where anarchists seek to decentralize power and access to resources, the far right seeks to use the state to preserve disparities. It remains to be seen how well doubling down on state violence as the chief means of enacting their program will work out for them in an era when faith in the state itself is eroding across the entire political spectrum.

This struggle is not really about the Constitution or the number of judges on Supreme Court. No cabal of nine people deserves to wield sovereignty over the most intimate aspects of our lives, and adding two Democrats to the court wouldn't change that. Likewise, we shouldn't tie the hands of future rebels by focusing too much on the fact that the Supreme Court is not implementing the will of the majority in this case—the issue, rather, is that *they are not entitled to rule us* in the first place.

The Supreme Court decision is not a matter of interpreting law; it is an act of war. Most of the players on all sides understand this as a power struggle over the bodily autonomy of those who can give birth, and are using whatever tools and reasoning are available to advance their respective agendas. Politicians are generally more cynical in the ways they relate to the state than those who explicitly reject the state itself.

All the more reason for us to come up with strategies that we can enact together, without depending on any politician or party.

Abortion, the Christian right, and antifascism

By Matthew N Lyons

It's time for antifascists to stop treating the Christian right as a secondary threat.

When the U.S. Supreme Court scraps legal protection for abortion rights—using arguments that also directly threaten legal protections for homosexuality, contraception, interracial marriage, and much more—it will mark a historic victory for the Christian right. More than anyone else, Christian rightists have worked steadily and carefully for almost half a century to reach this goal. They have done this not only because they want to stop pregnant people from making decisions about their own bodies. More broadly, Christian rightists have used abortion as a tool to rally mass support behind their larger agenda to impose patriarchal families, compulsory heterosexuality, and "God-given gender identity" on society as a whole.

The Christian right has played a long game, setting aside centuries-old theological disputes, bringing millions of people into political activism for the first time, mobilizing both wealthy patrons and independent funding streams, and gradually building a rich organizational network, from think tanks and lobbying groups to local prayer cells. The Christian right has forged and used alliances with diverse actors, including neoconservatives and laissez faire libertarians, Likudniks and conservative Islamic governments. The Christian right's embrace of Donald Trump as a modern day "Cyrus"—an ungodly man of power who serves God's purpose—is a model of realpolitik, and it has paid off in spades.

The Christian right has functioned as a political big tent, encompassing multiple ideological doctrines, strategies, and tactical approaches, and making room for different factions to riff off of each other without tearing each other down. Most importantly, it has encompassed both reformist and revolutionary poles of thought—a creative tension between those working to make changes within the existing political system and those who want to scrap all secular and pluralist institutions and replace the existing state with a full-on theocracy. In this dynamic, the incrementalists have had the

numbers but the theocrats have been the trend setters, again and again staking out forward positions that have helped to guide and animate their more cautious comrades.

A pioneering current of theocratic politics known as Christian Reconstructionism—whose "Godly" vision includes disenfranchising women and punishing homosexuality with death by stoning—has played a pivotal role within the anti-abortion rights movement, pushing it toward more violent actions and more militant opposition to the state. Michael Bray, a Lutheran pastor who spent four years in prison for firebombing a series of reproductive health clinics in the 1980s, is a Reconstructionist. So was Paul Hill, a former Presbyterian minister who murdered a physician and his bodyguard outside a clinic in Pensacola, Florida, in 1994. So is Matt Trewhella, a Pentecostal minister and founder of Missionaries to the Preborn, who in the 1990s defended the killing of abortion providers as "justifiable homicide" and urged Christian rightists to form church-based militias.

The movement's other leading theocratic current, New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), has combined Reconstructionism's call for right-thinking Christians to "take dominion" over all spheres of society with authoritarian mass organizing and the Pentecostal/Charismatic belief in divine prophecy and working miracles. NAR leaders have aggressively promoted homophobic legislation, including a notorious bill in Uganda that would have made gay sex punishable by death. New Apostolics have been a dominant force in the Christian Zionist movement and have proselytized Jews aggressively in Israel and elsewhere. NAR leaders staunchly supported Donald Trump throughout his presidency and have played key roles in the fraudulent Stop The Steal campaign to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

The Christian right's theocratic wing falls squarely within my proposed definition of fascism: *a revolutionary form of right-wing populism, inspired by a totalitarian vision of collective rebirth, that challenges capitalist political and cultural power while promoting economic and social hierarchy*. Whether you accept that definition or not, it's clear that Christian theocrats (a) advocate intensified forms of oppression and repression, (b) want to impose their beliefs through a comprehensive transformation of society, and (c) use

scapegoating, rituals, and people's longing for community to mobilize supporters behind their goals. Theocratic organizations are a significant force in their own right, and their role within the larger Christian right give them leverage far beyond their numbers. (One 2013 estimate puts the NAR's U.S. membership alone at 3 million. Even if that's off by an order of magnitude, it still dwarfs the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys combined.)

Discussions of right-wing politics are often compartmentalized by ideology. This approach treats Christian rightists separately from white nationalists and the far right, and excludes Christian right politics from many definitions of fascism. That's better than lumping all rightists into one nebulous category, because we need to understand our opponents' differences so we can combat them effectively. Unfortunately, in practice many antifascists treat Christian right politics as not just separate from white nationalism, but also less important. Maybe they think Christian rightists are more moderate than white nationalists, or maybe they see issues of gender and sexuality as secondary to issues of race. In this framework, the Christian right gets attention only to the extent that it has a relationship with white nationalism or the extent to which its politics are seen to be "really" about race.

Interconnections with white nationalism are important, as is segregationism's role in fueling the Christian right's rise in the 1970s, and the movement's more complex racial politics today. But those aren't the main reasons the Christian right is dangerous. For half a century, Christian rightists have consistently placed gender and sexuality—not race—at the center of their program, and those wars need to be fought on their own terms.

Let's remember: In the 1990s, the Anti-Racist Action Network made support for abortion rights and reproductive freedom one of its four Points of Unity, and ARA activists helped defend reproductive health clinics while also confronting neonazis and racist cops. This is history we can learn from. The fight against Christian theocracy is a fight against fascism. The fight for abortion rights is a fight against fascism.

For further details and references about the Christian right, see Insurgent Supremacists, chapters 2 and 6, and Right-Wing Populism in America, chapters 11 and 12.

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Defend Abortion Access: Milwaukee GDC

Content Note: Abortion, domestic violence, reproductive coercion, and religious trauma

Two weeks ago, members of the Milwaukee General Defense Committee saw a Facebook post from Affiliated Medical Services, the last independent abortion clinic in Wisconsin, calling for supporters to come counter-protest a group of right-wing Christians affiliated with the “40 Days For Life” campaign. We mobilized a small group nearly immediately, but the religious right was chased away by the rain before we could pull together our full group.

We saw that they had events planned every weekend in October and into November, and decided to plan for a bigger action. Typically, abortion clinics discourage significant counter-protests as the potential for escalation and confrontation is intimidating to many patients, but this group scheduled their events on Sundays, when the clinic is closed. We planned an action for Sunday, October 29th. The goals of our action were to take the space in front of the clinic, and to show support for the clinic staff and patients. Throughout sign-making, chant-planning, and story-gathering, we were intentional about avoiding trans-exclusionary or biological essentialist language. We also worked closely with clinic staff to

learn about the protesters and their practices, and to figure out how to best accomplish our common goals.

The day of the action, we arrived before their scheduled event. A few of them were there even earlier, but we quickly amassed a group of about 50 people to confront them. Some of us chose to cover our faces to protect ourselves from harassment. Protesters at this particular clinic have tracked people's license plates and shown up at their homes to harass them. Other folks fear negative consequences from employers or family members as a result of media attention, both from corporate media and local YouTubers.

We shared stories about the importance of abortion access, and chanted for about an hour and a half. We carried signs with slogans like "Working Class for Abortion Access" and "Autonomy Without Apology." They parked their car in front of the clinic, and put anti-abortion placards over a parking sign. At the peak, they had around ten people. They were mostly white men, with several clergy members present. When one of their placards fell off the parking sign and into a gutter, we danced on it and continued chanting. They shoved crucifixes in our faces and screamed about "weapons against satan" while fanning incense smoke at our group. A priest backed his car into a GDC member while retreating, but he is thankfully uninjured. Everyone was heated. They shouted at us and laid hands on us without our consent to "pray for us", but we drowned them out, confronted their oppressive beliefs and actions, and made them uncomfortable enough to leave the clinic.

While our action successfully took back the space in front of the clinic, they returned later with about 30 people and held a procession on the same block as the clinic. They are organized. We need to out-organize them, and make abortion access a central site of struggle in our movements.

The forced-birth advocates made their racism apparent when they interacted with people of color. They tried to tell black GDC members that the clinic was committing "black genocide" and accused several people of being complicit with the "demise" of their own communities. They hissed "Don't black lives matter?" when they noticed BLM buttons, attempting to agitate black folks without catching the attention of others. When asked why they've never

attended a Black Lives Matter event nor held vigils for victims of police and white supremacist vigilante violence, they didn't have an answer. Additionally, a local troll with an alt-right following repeatedly attempted to provoke and intimidate GDC members and supporters, singling out people of color and femmes for his comments.

Despite claiming to be protecting life, as usual, these folks only cared about fetuses. When questioned about their support for universal healthcare and war, they made it clear that they did not support actual children or families beyond pregnancy and birth, and that they had no moral issues with supporting pro-war politicians.

Attacks on abortion access come from the church and the state. The state curtails the rights that we have to access abortion care and impedes our ability to access it by cutting funding and passing Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers (TRAP laws) while the church attempts to shame us out of making our own decisions. They stand outside clinics on a daily basis to harass people attempting to get an abortion or counseling. They use medically false information to scare people away, and set up fake clinics (Crisis Pregnancy Centers) across the street from actual clinics. The CPCs lure patients in either with promises of free ultrasounds and pregnancy tests, or by blatantly lying to them and stalling until the actual clinic closes or they've missed their appointment. They use religion to shame patients, and count everyone they talk out of receiving counseling as a "saved life."

When shame isn't enough, some resort to violence. A forced-birth fanatic bombed an abortion clinic in Appleton, Wisconsin in 2012. The clinic has since closed for security reasons, leaving northern Wisconsin without an abortion provider. They've bombed other clinics, and have murdered abortion providers.

These shaming tactics emerge from broader issues of misogyny within many of these religious institutions that insinuate or openly state that women, or people they think are women, can't be trusted to control our own bodies. We reject both state control and the shame tactics of the religious right.

GDC members and supporters rejected the simplistic idea of

“choice” in regards to abortion. While we support every person’s right to choose to end or continue a pregnancy, the choice narrative ignores the context in which choices are made. The rich have always been able to access reasonably safe abortion, even before it was legal. They had (and have) the money to pay the best doctors, to travel to other countries, and to avoid serious legal issues. They can take off work, find childcare, and recover in peace. It’s the working class that suffers when abortion access is restricted. The rich have always had a choice, but do we?

Wisconsin only has three abortion clinics, located in Milwaukee and Madison. If a person seeking abortion lives hours away from the nearest clinic or can’t access transportation, do they really have a choice? Wisconsin also has a 24-hour waiting period between counseling and the abortion procedure. If someone has to take off work for multiple days and they lose wages or risk being fired, do they really have a choice? If someone is being forced or coerced to get pregnant and they fear violence for terminating the pregnancy, do they really have a choice? What about the minors who need parental consent or permission from a judge? Can working class folks without $500-1000 or more to pay for the procedure actually make a genuine choice?

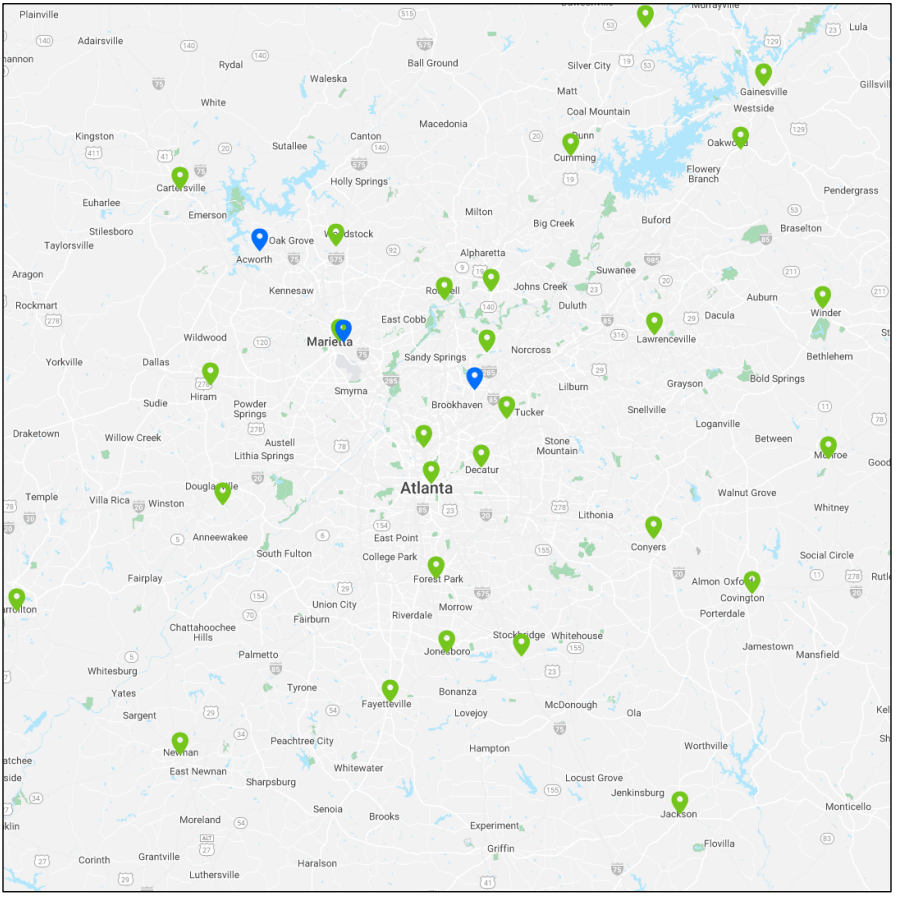
The people stuck without the ability to choose are disproportionately from communities that have been decimated by both capitalism and racism, misogyny, transphobia, and other axes of oppression. We don’t want empty platitudes about personal choice, we want free abortion, on demand, and without apology. We’ll defend the resources and rights we have, and we’ll fight to build a world where people have true bodily autonomy, free from the constraints of capitalism and other oppressions.

Clinic defense is community defense. Abortion is a working class issue.

– Milwaukee Industrial Workers of the World, General Defense Committee Local 19

Resources

- https://www.plancpills.org/
- https://crisispregnancycentermap.com/



Map from CrisisPregnancyCenterMap.com. CPC Map identifies crisis pregnancy centers (also known as "fake women's health centers") in your area. CPCs primarily aim to prevent people from having abortions.

Unity and Struggle is a national anti-state communist collective. We envision a liberatory society in which people enjoy direct control and decision making power over the forces that shape our lives, and in which our collective wealth is shared freely to advance humanity. Such a revolutionary transformation requires the growth, and eventual coalescing, of existing independent movements to abolish racism, sexism, capitalism, and the state. We take part in this process by participating in local struggles to build working-class power, autonomy, and internationalism.

Revolutionary organizations play an important role in preparing the working class to overthrow capitalism and transform the world. We connect militants across distant locations and differing issues. We build bridges between waves of struggle and preserve the rich historical lessons of movements past. We learn from struggles as we participate in them, and clarify the challenges and questions our class must confront on the path to a free society.

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