

## **Abortion is a right! Defend the clinics!**

Spearheaded by the women's liberation movement, the legal right to have an abortion was won through the protracted mass struggles of the 1960s and early '70s. But with the movement's decline this important victory for poor and working-class women and the entire working class has been eroded to the point it barely exists for millions, and Trump wants to go farther backward. On January 22 he banned federal money from going to international groups that perform or provide information on abortions (the "gag rule"). On October 6 he issued a rule that sharply limits contraception coverage under Obamacare. And he supports the recently passed House bill that would make it illegal to perform an abortion after 20 weeks (with exceptions concerning rape and the mother's life), and gives up to five-year prison sentences for those who violate the law. This law is unlikely to pass the Senate, but it underscores what the Republicans want.

Meanwhile, the anti-abortion fanatics are stepping up harassment of women and medical workers going to and from clinics. In several cities last month they entered clinic waiting rooms to do this, and now the Forty Days for Life group is continuing to harass women using the Planned Parenthood clinics in Seattle and Everett. These bullies like to sing about "the land of the free," but they would deny women freedom to choose whether or not to have a child, and they would have the state dictate that a pregnant woman *must* have a child.

Women's rights activists are saying no to all this. For example, on September 30 some 80 people turned out to defend women entering

Seattle's Planned Parenthood clinic, and the two Forty Days for Lifers who showed up eventually snuck away. But Forty Days for Life plans more harassment, and we call on all to defend the clinics and to build the pro-choice movement.

### **Join with Seattle Clinic Defense to Protect Planned Parenthood!**

**Saturday, October 14, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at 1509 32nd St. in Everett**

**Saturday, October 28, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at 2001 E Madison St. in Seattle**

It's in the interest of the working class—women and men—that all restrictions on abortion be stricken down, and that full equality of women be won. But the capitalists have opposite interests. Keeping women in an inferior status allows them to super-exploit female labor power and thereby increase their profits. They benefit by encouraging the more backward section of working men to treat women as their inferiors, in this way splitting the class against itself. What's more, since modern capitalism still makes working-class women bear most of the weight of familial responsibilities while they hold down jobs, it is extra difficult for them to participate in the progressive movements.

So these are the reasons why the capitalists so viciously fight the women's liberation movement, and this is why the gains of one generation's struggle can be lost so easily.

Moreover, it is up to working-class women and men themselves to revive and push ahead the women's liberation movement because the

Democrats constantly betray it, including on the question of abortion rights. For example, on election night Hillary Clinton said we owed Trump “an open mind and the chance to lead.” In May, Nancy Pelosi said “of course”(!) Democratic candidates could be anti-choice and receive the support of the party, and that abortion was “kind of fading as an issue”(!) for Democrats. In early July, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chair Ben Ray Luján said there would be no “litmus test” on abortion for candidates, and that the Democrats would finance anti-abortion candidates. In late July, Bernie Sanders gave support to an Omaha mayoral candidate with a long history of being anti-choice. These examples show how the Democrats help move mainstream (capitalist) politics ever to the right. Additionally, when it comes to defending women using abortion clinics, Democratic Party affiliated women's groups have historically preached reliance on the police and courts, insisted that the anti-abortion bullies not be confronted, and often split the movement by insisting rallies be held far from the clinics.

But this year's gigantic January 21 women's march showed the brewing opposition to the decades-long counteroffensive of the ruling class against women's rights, including reproductive rights. Along with this, the struggle for women's rights is inextricably linked with a host of other movements that are also bubbling up in society, e.g., the fights for universal health care and for full rights for all immigrants, the Black Lives Matter and anti-imperialist movements, and the fight to stem global warming. This means it's in the interest of working women that we all further build these movements, and it's likewise in the interests of these movements to support the women's movement and freedom of choice. Trump's strategy is to divide the working people and pick them off one by one, e.g., immigrants, national and religious minorities and women. Our strategy must be support each and every struggle of the oppressed, and to work to unify them into a mighty torrent of struggle against the common enemy, the capitalist class.

Seattle Communist Study Group  
October 10, 2017

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