

DEFEND & EXTEND ABORTION RIGHTS

For a woman's right to choose when & whether to have children

What's going on?

THE HUMAN Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, which refers to the regulation of assisted reproduction and embryo research, is being used to attack abortion rights. An amendment to reduce the time limit from the current 24 weeks will be voted on on Tuesday 20 May. This must be opposed!

Tory MP Nadine Dorries plans to put forward an amendment to the bill to reduce the abortion time limit to 20 weeks. Dorries has launched her 'twenty reasons for twenty weeks' campaign and hopes that her lies will not be answered.

Anti-abortion MPs argue for reductions on the basis of so-called scientific developments, but the government's own Science

and Technology Committee rejects any case for lowering the time limit.

Dorries and others wish to prevent any further improvements, and fundamentally they want to deny women any abortion rights. We must defend our rights to control our lives and our bodies - which were initially won through the struggle of working-class women and men.

It is urgent that the student and women's movements, and particularly the labour movement with its strength, challenge all attacks, answer the reactionary propaganda and demand extensions to existing rights.

Pressure must be applied to all pro-choice MPs to table amendments to increase abortion rights and to defend the existing laws. And MPs must feel the pressure of our mass sup-

port for abortion rights. The most effective way to guarantee our voices are heard is through the trade unions calling a national demonstration which would get enormous support.

What are our rights?

FREE LEGAL abortion is a life and death issue. Prior to the 1967 Abortion Act terminations had to be paid for at private clinics. Thousands of mainly working-class women, who could not afford to pay, were condemned to dangerous back-street terminations. In the three years prior to the 1967 Act there were 80 deaths from unsafe illegal abortions and none in the three years after.

The 1967 Act was an enormous victory for the working-class women and men who fought

NO REDUCTION OF THE TIME LIMIT PROTEST

20 MAY 2008

5.30PM

OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT,
NEAR WESTMINSTER TUBE
LOUD & CLEAR

MAKING A STAND FOR THE
MAJORITY WHO SUPPORT
A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE
WHEN & WHETHER TO
HAVE A CHILD



● www.socialistparty.org.uk ● 020 8988 8777 ●

for it but it is not enough. The Socialist Party stands for a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children. This means fighting for an extension of the current laws.

While it is estimated that one in five British doctors does not believe abortion should be legal, a woman must get two doctors' signatures and then begin negotiating the cut and privatised NHS, not to mention totally insufficient spending on contraception and sex education. The Act did not legislate for sufficient funding and so in England 26% of abortions are not done on the NHS. The Act does not apply to Northern Ireland, where women have to travel to Britain.

For a real right to choose

THE SOCIALIST Party opposes all attempts to restrict women's access to abortion. We believe the decisions about whether or not to have children, how many to have, whether or not to have an abortion or to use any of the technologies available to overcome or by-pass infertility, or to avoid having a child with disabilities, are all personal decisions to be taken by the individuals concerned and not by the church, the state or the medical profession.

Since it is women who give birth to children and at present bear the main responsibility for childrearing, these decisions must primarily be theirs. In most cases, where possible, women share these decisions with their partners.

We do not only campaign for legal rights but for the practical means to achieve them. Low wages, inadequate housing and expensive childcare are all factors that are taken into account. For the vast majority of women 'choices' are extremely limited. We must also campaign to improve reproductive rights for women along with the necessary funding into research.

The Socialist Party

WE HAVE a proud record of campaigning against domestic violence but also against low pay, privatisation of housing and other services and for free education. We have campaigned against sexist advertising and increasing sexism on many university campuses.

We are part of a socialist international (the Committee for a Workers' International) in which our members struggle, in often difficult

conditions, for basic rights for women.

We campaign for a new workers' party

NADINE DORRIES is not alone in her reactionary stance. While many MPs defend existing abortion law there does not appear to be any serious campaign to extend it. And all three main political parties have policies which make life much harder for women and impact enormously on the choices available to them.

Labour, Tories and Lib Dems all stand for privatisation, which has dire effects on our health. They all support war and occupations around the world. Fundamentally they all stand for the rich getting richer and for workers paying the price.

We need a party that will stand up to the reactionary ideas and defend women's rights and all workers' rights. Currently such a party does not exist.

The Socialist Party is campaigning for the trade unions to break the link with New Labour and come together to form a new workers' party - for the millions not the millionaires.

See www.cnwp.org.uk for more information.

You can't control what you don't own

THE RESOURCES exist to give everybody a decent standard of living and provide the services we need. But capitalism is about making profits for the few, not meeting the needs of ordinary people. We stand for a completely different way of organising society.

Socialism is about planning production to meet need rather than profit. It is about ordinary women and men democratically controlling the decisions which affect our lives.

Socially owning and controlling resources would mean everyone could have access to decent jobs, housing, education, health and other services. Based on co-operation and equality, socialism would lay the basis for an end to poverty and all forms of discrimination and oppression.

Please get in touch for a model motion or leaflets to distribute in your trade union branch or student union, or for speakers for meetings.

WE DEMAND:

- Free abortion on request.
- For a fully funded, democratically controlled National Health Service.
- Access to free, safe contraception including emergency contraception. A reversal of the cuts in family planning and the establishment of sympathetic youth advisory centres.
- Improved sex education in schools.
- Access to fertility treatment on the NHS for all those who need it.
- Public ownership of the pharmaceutical industry.
- A minimum wage of £8 an hour. A minimum income linked to the minimum wage and a shorter working week with no loss of pay.
- A network of publicly funded, good quality, flexible childcare.
- Maternity and child benefit to reflect the real cost of pregnancy, childbirth and bringing up a child.
- Maternity, paternity and carers' leave on full pay for all who need it.
- A massive increase in spending on housing, education and other public services.
- Better facilities and services for women who are experiencing domestic violence.
- An end to discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, sexuality, disability and all forms of prejudice.
- A democratically run socialist society, planned to meet social needs rather than the profits of a few.

JOIN US!

- I would like to join the Socialist Party
- I would like to find out more about the Socialist Party

Name.....

Address.....

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.....Post Code.....

Telephone No.....

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Return to: Socialist Party, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD



**Our bodies
our lives
our choice**

