



**Our bodies
Our lives
Our choice**



DEFEND ABORTION RIGHTS

**FOR A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE WHEN & WHETHER TO HAVE CHILDREN
NO TO ANY REDUCTIONS IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

FOR A NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

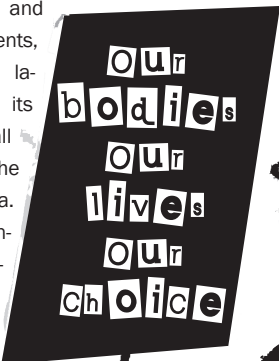
**Abortion rights in Britain
What's going on?**

THE HUMAN Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, which is currently passing through parliament, is being used by reactionaries to attack abortion rights. The Bill refers to the regulation of assisted reproduction and embryo research.

An amendment to the Bill calling for limits on abortion rights on grounds of foetal deformity fell, but we expect there will be further attempts to reduce time limits and to install a 'cooling off' period. These must all be opposed.

Fundamentally Widdecombe and others wish to reverse women's rights, won through struggle, and to prevent any further improvements. It is urgent that the student and women's movements, and particularly the labour movement with its strength, challenge all attacks and answer the reactionary propaganda. To do this the trade unions should call a national demonstration.

Please get in touch for a model manifesto or leaflets to distribute in your trade union branch or student union, or for speakers for meetings and details on plans for International Women's Day.



What are our rights?

PRIOR TO the 1967 Act abortions had to be paid for at private clinics. This meant that thousands of mainly working-class women, who could not afford to pay, were condemned to dangerous back-street terminations.

A doctor working in Lewisham in 1956 described what this meant: *every night three or four women would be admitted with botched abortions. They would be haemorrhaging, suffering from immense loss of blood; if they left it too long they could have become infected or gone septic and sometimes there was kidney failure.*

The 1967 Act was an enormous improvement on the previous situation but is certainly 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 to the current laws.

The Act does not apply to Northern Ireland, where women have to travel to Britain. 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. Millions of women around the world have no access to legal free and safe abortion.

Local details



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. For most rich women options are open, but for the vast majority of women choices are very limited.

Low wages, inadequate accommodation and expensive childcare are all factors that are taken into account. We must also campaign to improve reproductive rights for women along with the necessary funding into research.

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.**



Ann Widdecombe – reactionary

As a Tory MP Widdecombe said she would refuse to be health secretary as long as this involved overseeing abortions.

Out of the 14 Parliamentary votes considered by the *Public Whip* website to concern equal rights for homosexuals, Widdecombe has taken the opposing position in 12 cases, not being present at the other two votes.

Widdecombe is known to oppose financial help from the state for older carers who have passed retirement age. These are only a few of her crimes!

We campaign for a new workers' party

Ann Widdecombe is not alone in her reactionary stance. 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. They all support war and occupations around the world. Fundamentally they all stand for the rich getting richer and for workers paying the price.

While anger is growing among ordinary women and men on issues such as war, wage cuts, job cuts, privatisation, cuts in public services, the politicians seek to distract us using emotive campaigns on so-called 'moral issues' in the hope of whipping up a right-wing backlash. This is currently the case in Spain, where the housing market bubble has burst and the politicians attempt to distract attention by attacking women's rights. In Britain we need a party that will stand up to the reactionary ideas and defend women's 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.

The Socialist Party has a proud record of fighting for women's rights.

We have campaigned against sexist advertising as well as against increasing sexism on many university campuses. We have a proud record of campaigning against domestic violence. We are part of a socialist international (the CWI) in which our members struggle, in often difficult conditions, for basic rights for women.

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 on a day-to-day basis. 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.

Join us or find out more...

I would like to join the Socialist Party

I would like to find out more

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel no

Email

