

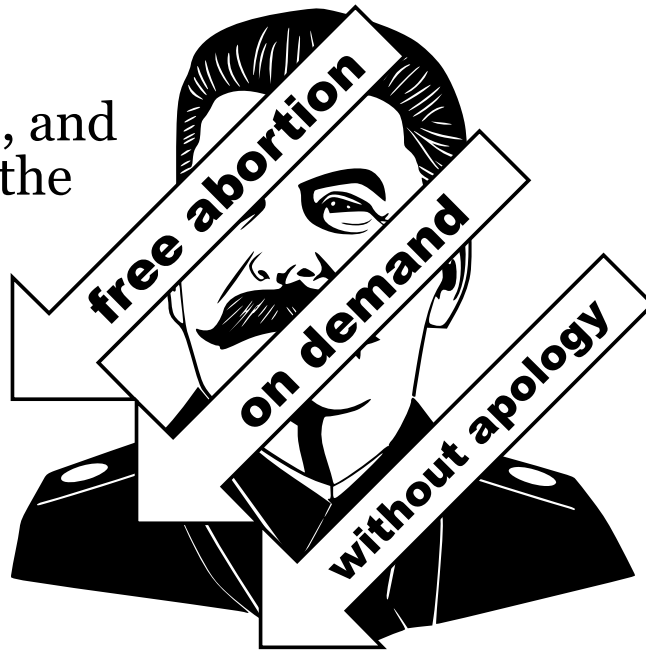
Why Fascists, Authoritarians, and Theocrats Are the Enemies of Reproductive Freedom

Within hours of the publication of a US Supreme Court decision overturning constitutional protections for

abortion, protests were announced in cities across the so-called United States. Many of these calls to action were issued by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), a neo-Stalinist political organization infamous for both its abhorrent positions and its attempts to hijack grassroots social movements.* So what is the relationship between authoritarianism and reproductive freedom?

Although much of the "abortion debate" in the United States is framed around religiosity, legislative attempts to compel childbirth have always been driven by economics. Governments view pregnancy not as an individual choice but as the mechanism by which society produces future workers and taxpayers. When declining birth rates led Soviet leader Joseph Stalin to ban abortion in 1936, he was clear: compulsory motherhood was "a great and honorable duty" that was "not a private affair but one of great social importance."

Such overt talk of individual sacrifice might not play well to a US audience, but anxiety over declining birth rates (and particularly *white* birth rates) is the quiet part that politicians occasionally say out loud.



In the mid-1970s, as the birth rate began to drop, a new coalition emerged at the crossroads of white supremacy, patriarchy, and Christianity. Just as Soviet planners understood that the nation's economic capacity was tied to population, capitalists saw a reduced and aging citizenry as a threat to their profits—and ability to pursue imperialist wars abroad. "Family values," then, is not so much about morality as it is about the central role of the heterosexual family in reproducing a workforce and imprinting the values of the patriarchal state, be it capitalist or socialist.

The fight for reproductive freedom is a fight between our desire for bodily autonomy and the State's desire for control.

Domestic abortion bans aim to promote the economic well-being of elites at the expense of survival for working-class people, particularly BIPOC women and trans people who have less access to wealth and greater vulnerability to legal consequences (consequences that are all but absent for elites themselves). Whether for private enrichment or national ambition, we must reject attacks on our most foundational freedom—the freedom to make choices about our own bodies.

Governments can't grant us bodily autonomy, they can only take it away. No politician or party is qualified for leadership in this struggle, least of all an organization like PSL that has proven itself ready to ally with the most reactionary and patriarchal political elements. Like their fascist and theocratic counterparts, authoritarians on the Left are no friend to our freedom.

Despite Justice Alito's claim that "abortion is not deeply rooted in the nation's history and traditions," abortion care predates the settler-colonial state he serves and will persist long after it has crumbled. Effective action requires us to know this history, and differentiate between those embodying its legacy and those who seek to exploit it. Across the country, grassroots abortion funds and mutual aid organizations are already fighting back and creating infrastructure for a post-Roe reality. We hope you'll join them!

Abortion Resource Kit - tinyurl.com/AbortionResourceKit
National Network of Abortion Funds - abortionfunds.org
Abortion Pills Online - plancpills.org
Shout Your Abortion - shoutyourabortion.com

* The PSL consistently sides with "anti-imperialist" authoritarians against movements for workers' power or democratic rights. In recent years, this has included support for Bashar al-Assad, Kim Jong-un, and Vladimir Putin. It is well documented that party leaders have engaged in genocide denial, collaborated with fascists, and conspired to cover up sexual abuse within their party.