

*The Supreme Court
Moves to End Abortion Rights:*

**“Taking to the Streets,”
And Refusing to Let
This Go Down**

*Bob Avakian Speaks to
This Critical Juncture in
the Fight for Abortion Rights,*

*The Road Forward, and
Avoiding Dead Ends*



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**SOMETHING TERRIBLE, *OR*
SOMETHING TRULY
EMANCIPATING:**

**Profound Crisis, Deepening Divisions,
The Looming Possibility Of Civil War—
And The Revolution That Is Urgently
Needed**

*A Necessary Foundation,
A Basic Roadmap For This Revolution*
**by Bob Avakian, Revolutionary Leader,
Author of the New Communism**

Among other things, it lowers people's horizons, restricting "realistic choices" to what is possible within the confines of this system and conditioning people to view and approach things on the terms of this system. Continuing to vote for Democrats, and attempting, through the electoral process, to prevent a successful Republican-fascist seizure and consolidation of power, will very likely fail, and more fundamentally will contribute to the continuation of things on the disastrous course they are now on, with terrible consequences for the billions of people on this planet—for humanity as a whole.

As I emphasized in my *New Year's Statement* [January 2021]:

The electoral defeat of the Trump/Pence regime only "buys some time"—both in relation to the imminent danger posed by the fascism this regime represents, and more fundamentally in terms of the potentially existential crisis humanity is increasingly facing as a consequence of being bound to the dynamics of this system of capitalism-imperialism. But, in essential terms, time is not on the side of the struggle for a better future for humanity.

Time, and with it the current momentum of things toward a disastrous outcome, is moving on. *The time that still does exist must not be squandered in what would, especially now, be meaningless maneuvering within the framework of this system and its elections. This time must be seized, with the necessary urgency, to build toward the only resolution that can avoid that disaster, and wrench something truly positive out of all this: an actual revolution.*

The Supreme Court Moves to End Abortion Rights:

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The Road Forward, and Avoiding Dead Ends

May 9, 2022

With the leaking of the draft Supreme Court decision, making clear the intent of the “conservative” majority on the Court to abolish the right to legal abortion, there is an outpouring of righteous outrage from masses of women, and people generally who hate injustice. But there is also a louder and louder drumbeat, from politicians of the Democratic Party (and those who are slavishly dependent on them), insisting that any meaningful opposition to this must be funneled (once again) into voting for Democrats. *This argument is dead wrong.* And, all too often, it is raised as a rationalization for accepting that the right to abortion will be ended—that a Supreme Court decision ripping away this right is a “done deal,” and the only hope lies in electing Democrats in future elections.

As part of this argument, we hear things like: “You see—if Hillary Clinton, instead of Donald Trump, were president this would not have happened. What more proof do you need that elections make all the difference?” (This is often accompanied by pointing out that the “conservative” majority on the Supreme Court was appointed

by Republican presidents, and in particular that three members of the Court were appointed by Donald Trump, who had made very clear that he intended to appoint “justices” to the Court who would move to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court ruling and long-standing legal precedent that established and has, until now, maintained the right to abortion nationwide.) But this views things way too narrowly, failing to see (or to take into account) the larger picture of what is going on in society (and the world) overall—including the reasons why someone like Trump got elected, and how the move to outlaw abortion achieved such powerful momentum and became such a powerful force. I will get into this more fully through the rest of this article, but first it is important to emphasize this basic principle: *Regardless of whether people vote or not, what is urgently needed now is massive, sustained mobilization and resistance to make clear that taking away the right to abortion will not be allowed to go down, that things will be shut down before people will accept the right to abortion being taken away.*

Now, in answer to the argument that everything depends on voting for the Democrats, we can begin with this basic truth: ***Even the right to vote was not won by voting.*** *That is not how Black people, women, and others won the right to vote. It was won by protesting and fighting against injustice.* And that is also true for other rights that have been won when powerful forces have been determined to deny people those rights—it is true in general for truly meaningful positive changes in society. Even where rights that were formerly denied are finally recognized (and “formalized”) by an act of government, this comes about fundamentally as a result of masses of people rising up to demand change.

The right to abortion itself was won in the first place as a result of massive protests and rebellions in the 1960s and the first part of the 1970s, including the movement for women’s liberation at that time.

of Senators as California, the state with the largest population in the country.)

Control of the House of Representatives (as well as many state legislatures) also is heavily influenced by “gerrymandering” and related manipulations—so that, for example, the popular vote for president (or governor) in a state may go to the Democrats, but the state legislature is controlled by the Republicans. Control of the House of Representatives is determined by the voting in just a relatively small percentage of Congressional districts in the country as a whole (so that in many elections it could be the case that, if you added up all the votes, across the country, for candidates to the House of Representatives, the total count would favor the Democrats, but the Republicans would nonetheless end up with a majority in the House of Representatives).

It is true that, in relation to the presidential election of 2020, I argued that there was a kind of “one-time exception,” where it was correct and necessary to vote for Biden in order to prevent a qualitative leap in the consolidation of fascist rule through the re-election of the Trump/Pence regime. As I further explained in “Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating”:

In the situation of the 2020 presidential election, defeating and ousting Trump through that election was possible, and was important to do, as a *tactical move* to prevent the further consolidation of fascist rule right then. Even with that electoral defeat, however, Trump and his supporters nearly succeeded in pulling off a coup that would have resulted in his remaining in power, in defiance of the outcome of the election and the “peaceful transfer of power” from one section of the ruling class to another. And things have moved, and are continuing to rapidly move, beyond the situation that existed with that 2020 election and in its immediate aftermath.

Further, this system’s electoral process itself *works against* the kind of fundamental change that is now urgently needed.

Additional Note by Bob Avakian

With the electoral system in the U.S., candidates who lose the popular vote in the country overall can still be chosen as president, as happened in 2016, when Hillary Clinton got three million more votes than Donald Trump, yet Trump became president. This is because presidential elections in this country are not decided by popular vote, but by an electoral college, whose electors are chosen by the 50 different states, on the basis of who won the most votes in those states. This can lead to situations where a candidate—and in particular now a Republican candidate—will prevail in the electoral college count if that candidate wins a relatively small majority in a number of states, even while losing by a big margin in some states with very large populations (such as California and New York). With this setup, elections now generally come down to a small number of “swing states”—which has everything to do with why Donald Trump was chosen as president in 2016 even though he lost the overall popular vote. (The same was true of the previous Republican president, George W. Bush: In the 2000 presidential election, he lost the popular vote but was chosen as president through a highly contested process which was finally decided by a Supreme Court ruling, with a “conservative” majority on the Court halting a decisive vote count in Florida, giving the overall “win” to Bush—a Supreme Court decision that would have been irrelevant if the presidential election were decided by popular vote.)

As a further illustration of the peculiarities, and distortions, in the electoral system in this country, there is the fact that people in the states with 70 percent of the total population of the country are “represented” by only 30 percent of the Senators, while 30 percent of the population are “represented” by 70 percent of the Senators. (This is the result of the fact that each state, regardless of its population, elects two Senators—so, for example, a state with a very small population, such as Wyoming, elects the same number

Denying the Right to Abortion Is About Controlling, and Degrading, Women

In order to understand fully why relying on the Democrats, and funneling everything into voting for them, is a completely wrong approach, it is very important to be clear on what is at the heart of this fight around the right to abortion, and what role the Democrats have played in regard to this.

As I have emphasized many times, *this fascist offensive to outlaw abortion is not about “saving babies”—it is about controlling women, and reducing them to “handmaid” breeders of children, under the domination of men.*

For one thing, the overwhelming majority of abortions are performed relatively early in pregnancy, when the *fetus* (*not a baby but a fetus*) is tiny and has not yet developed the organs and other features that constitute an independent human being capable of living on its own outside the woman’s body and without her bodily functions. (And in terms of the very small percentage of abortions that are carried out significantly later during the woman’s pregnancy, overwhelmingly these are done because of risk to the basic health, or even the life, of the woman, and/or because the fetus has such severe abnormalities that it could not survive on its own, or would suffer terribly for however long it did survive.)

The truth that abolishing the right to abortion is not about “saving babies” is also sharply revealed in the fact that the forces that are driving this move to outlaw abortion *also want to do away with birth control as well*—which, as a number of people have pointed out, could soon follow in the wake of a Supreme Court decision taking away the right to abortion. Once again: *The drive to outlaw abortion is about controlling women, enforcing their subordination to men and a male supremacist society.*

If you observe the fascist maniacs who rally against the right to abortion and harass women at abortion clinics, you will see these Christian *fundamentalist fanatics* waving their Bibles while they

shout at women to stop striving for independence and obey the Biblical command to be submissive and subservient to men. *That* is what has been driving the move to outlaw the right to abortion, from the time that *Roe v. Wade* established this right 50 years ago.

*In most basic terms, what is involved in the right to abortion is the lives, the rights, and the basic status of **women**—as full human beings, and not something less. Denying women the fundamental right to control their own reproduction degrades all women, even those who may never get pregnant—it once again enshrines and enforces the subordination of women to the patriarchy.*

The Democrats Have Actually Aided This Fascist Offensive

In the face of this fascist offensive to outlaw abortion—and the escalation and intensification of this offensive in recent decades—what have the Democratic “saviors” of the right to abortion been doing? Consistently and repeatedly *compromising with and actually facilitating this fascist offensive*—that is what, in reality, they have been doing.

And since last year, as it has become clear that the fascist majority in the Supreme Court was almost certainly going to gut *Roe v. Wade*, or overturn it altogether, the Democrats—and many who are dependent on them in the reproductive rights movement, as well as the “mainstream media” that generally express their views—have basically acted as if there is no way to stop the Supreme Court from ripping away this fundamental right from women. They have argued that all that could be done was to accept this outrage coming from the Supreme Court and “prepare for a post-*Roe* world.” *While RiseUp4AbortionRights.org* has been sounding the alarm and working to bring about the sustained mass mobilization and determined resistance that is urgently needed to defend the right to abortion, overwhelmingly these other organizations and media encouraged everybody who cares about

defend this fundamental right to abortion, but also believe that it is still necessary to vote.

Right now, the fight for the right to abortion is a crucially important focus and faultline of the fight for a more just society—a decisive battle to determine whether women are going to be reduced to “handmaid” breeders of children, effectively enslaved by a male supremacist society, or whether they, and masses of people overall, are going to be strengthened in their ability and determination to be full, and fully emancipated, human beings.

way" it has for generations—and how to move to build up the revolutionary forces with the strategy and organization capable of seizing on this rare opportunity, not in order to achieve a "peaceful transfer of power" from one section of the capitalist-imperialist ruling class to another, but to bring about a *seizure of power by a revolutionary people*, numbering in the millions and millions and determined to bring about a truly emancipating change—bringing down this monstrous system and building up a radically different and far better system.³

There is an urgent need for the determined, scientifically grounded work of those who are already with this revolution to shake awake growing numbers of people—to *transform the thinking of masses of people*, away from blindly "playing by the rules" of this system and confining themselves to futile attempts to effect fundamental change by "working within the system"—winning them instead to a scientific understanding of the possibility and the need for revolution, the means for making that revolution, and what that revolution is aiming for.

Unite All Who Can Be United to Stop the Move to Outlaw Abortion

Right at this critical juncture, there is a profound and pressing need for a *broad, powerful, and sustained mobilization of people determined to prevent the right to abortion from being taken away—uniting all who can be united*, including people who have become convinced that revolution is necessary, and those who believe that it is crucially important now to "take to the streets" to

3. "Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating: Profound Crisis, Deepening Divisions, The Looming Possibility Of Civil War—And The Revolution That Is Urgently Needed, A Necessary Foundation, A Basic Roadmap For This Revolution" is also available at revcom.us. And the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*, authored by Bob Avakian, which contains a sweeping vision and concrete blueprint for a radically different and far better system, is available as well at revcom.us.

the right to abortion to "calm down"—insisting that the right to abortion would still exist in some states, and there are things like the abortion pill, so women will still be able to get safe abortions—ignoring the fact that *the fascists are determined to eliminate the right to safe, legal abortion, in any form, in the country as a whole*.

It is true that, very recently, when the continuing attacks on the right to abortion became more and more blatant and egregious, and it was made public that the Supreme Court majority was in fact moving to overturn *Roe v. Wade*—and this was giving rise to widespread outrage—the Democrats, and those allied with them, called for protests. But they *still* continued to act as if *Roe v. Wade* is going to be overturned anyway, and the only thing that can be done is to vote for Democrats in the next elections. Of course, it is good that these organizations have come around now to joining in the calls for mass protests—and it is very important that these protests be as large and powerful as possible—but seeking to use these protests as a means for, once again, directing and funneling things into voting for the Democrats would not be a good thing, but a very bad thing: It would have the effect of misdirecting, suffocating and ultimately killing off the mass outpouring of righteous rage that has now burst forth with the revelation that the Supreme Court is poised to take away the right to abortion, when *that righteous rage needs to be given much fuller, massive expression in determined, sustained struggle aimed at preventing the Supreme Court from doing that, and delivering a powerful blow against the fascist move to effectively enslave women*.

The basic capitulation by the Democrats, in the face of the fascist offensive to outlaw abortion, has gone on over years and decades. During this time, the Democrats themselves have actually run some so-called "right to life" (that is, anti-abortion) candidates, and in the name of "seeking common ground" *the Democrats have constantly ceded the political and moral high ground to the fascists aiming to eliminate the right to abortion (and roll back other crucial rights as well)*. What else is the meaning of the

slogan that Democrats raised for years—that abortion should be “safe, legal, and rare”? Why *rare*?

What is very strongly implied in saying abortion should be “rare” is the notion that there is something *wrong* with abortion—otherwise, why should it be *rare*? This actually lends support to and reinforces the arguments of the fascists seeking to get rid of the right to abortion. In fact, the right to abortion, and access to abortion in healthy and supportive circumstances, has enriched the lives of women as a whole. It has made it more possible for many to pursue paths in their lives that would have been foreclosed to them if they had been forced to continue a pregnancy against their will, and it has made it possible for women who want to have a child to determine when is the best time, and what are the best circumstances, for doing so. The right to abortion has also *saved the lives of countless women* (who would otherwise have still tried to get an abortion but would have been forced to do so in unsafe and often deadly situations, which is exactly what happened before *Roe v. Wade* made abortion a right nationwide). And the denial of this right especially affects low-income women, particularly impoverished Black and Brown women, who often are the ones in most desperate need of an abortion. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that even for women—and girls—who may be in relatively well off, or even quite well off, situations economically, and could theoretically afford to travel to an area, or a country, where abortion is legal, there can still be serious obstacles to getting an abortion: abusive husbands and boyfriends, tyrannical patriarchal fathers, dogmatic religious authority, and a number of other factors. *Once again, access to safe, legal abortion, as a fundamental right and a matter of personal choice, is of profound importance for women overall.*

For decades, the Democrats—and those “pro-choice and reproductive rights” organizations that are dependent on them and slavishly follow them—failed, or refused, to call people into the streets in *consistent and determined mass mobilization in defense of the right to abortion*. This is completely bound up with the way

The Actual Answer to the Fascist Offensive... And the Fundamental Solution

Right now, as opposed to relying on and being restricted by the Democrats, **everyone who refuses to see women reduced to breeders of children, dominated by men and a male supremacist society, everyone who cares about living in a just society, needs to be taking to the streets—and staying in the streets—in massive, sustained, growing protest and rebellion aimed at *preventing* the Supreme Court (and fascists more broadly) from denying women the right to abortion, with everything that would represent (and the terrible future it foreshadows). Forced motherhood IS female enslavement.**

By mobilizing massively—with passionate, powerfully demonstrated determination not to allow the right to abortion to be taken away—there is a real chance that the Supreme Court will be forced to back off the move to take away this fundamental right. And if, even in the face of this determined mass mobilization, the fascists on the Court (and in society overall) still go ahead with their move to outlaw abortion, then this mass mobilization in support of the right to abortion will have put people in a stronger position to continue the fight for this right, and for a more just society overall.

Fundamentally, to bring about a more just society and world, what is needed, and all the more urgently now, is a revolution to overthrow this whole system, which both Democrats and Republicans represent and work to enforce, even as they have sharp differences between them over *how* to do this. In “Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating,” I have analyzed in depth why this is a *rare time when revolution becomes more possible, even in this powerful country*. It is crucially important to understand why this is so—which has to do with the already very deep, and continually deepening, divisions, not only in the country overall but particularly within the ruling class, and why that ruling class cannot continue to rule in the “normal

boundaries of voting districts to favor Republican candidates)—and, in a number of states, establishing the basis for Republican-dominated state legislatures to overturn the results of elections, if they do not go in favor of the Republicans. Already, as I have pointed to before, the way the electoral system has been set up in this country greatly distorts things so that, elections often do not reflect the “will of the people”—even as that is supposedly expressed through the electoral processes of this system—and that will be all the more true with the moves the Republicans have been making to manipulate and control elections.²

(For further, and more specific, analysis of the peculiarities, and distortions, of the electoral system in this country, see the Additional Note at the end of this article.)

Beyond that, there is the more fundamental reality that the actual interests of the masses of people can never be realized under this system, which is based on exploitation and oppression and the rule (in fact the *dictatorship*) of the capitalist class, whose wealth and power rests on this exploitation and oppression, in this country and in vast areas of the world as a whole. On this basis, the capitalist class dominates control of the economy and all the major institutions of society, and maintains a monopoly of political power and of “legitimate” armed force and violence, as exercised by the police and military, and enforced by the courts.

All this makes clear how totally ridiculous is the insistence, by the Democrats (and those who echo them), that everything depends on elections, and voting for Democrats is ultimately the only way to bring about positive change.

In reality, relying on elections, under this system, is a demobilizing dead end and deadly trap in terms of any real effort to bring about a more just society.

² “This Republic—Ridiculous, Outmoded, Criminal.” This article by Bob Avakian is available at revcom.us.

that they have continually allowed the fascists to seize the moral and political “high ground” around abortion—instead of fiercely opposing this fascist offensive by forcefully insisting that there must be the right to abortion, *on demand and without apology*, and that the ability of women to freely decide when, or whether, to have children is not some kind of “negative” right that should only be exercised “rarely”—but, on the contrary, *is a very great thing and something that all people who want to live in a just society should boldly and vigorously uphold and actively support and defend.*

An essential reason for the Democrats’ increasing capitulation to the fascists is this: While the fascists are determined to rally their “base” behind their lunatic views and their aggressively oppressive and repressive “agenda,” and they eagerly welcome the ways this challenges and tears up the “established norms,” the Democrats are dedicated to an increasingly failing attempt to maintain those “norms” and to continue trying, even as they fail, to “overcome the divisions and polarization in society.” This is an orientation and an approach that is bound to *perpetuate very real horrors*, including male supremacist as well as white supremacist oppression, brutality and terror, and to *continually give rise to even greater horrors.*

The capitulation by the Democrats in the face of the fascist offensive is also sharply revealed by the fact that the Democrats refuse to challenge—directly, consistently, and with any real conviction—the Christian *fundamentalist lunacy* that is the “moral basis” for the fascists’ fanatical opposition to abortion. (This Christian fundamentalism has a great deal in common with the Islamic fundamentalism of forces like the Taliban in Afghanistan—and one of the main things they share is the fanatical conviction that women must be subordinated to and dominated by men, forcefully if necessary.)

Why won’t the Democrats really challenge this? An important part of the answer is that the Democrats, whether or not they are

personally religious (and specifically Christian), base themselves on the conviction that religion, and in particular Christianity, is necessary in order to *hold together their system of capitalism-imperialism*, which is full of cruelly exploitative and oppressive relations and divisions that could tear the country apart, if religion did not play a major role in "holding it together," in the face of this terrible exploitation and oppression, and the brutality and murder that enforce it. The Democrats are very aware that, even if they raise mild criticisms of Christian *fundamentalism*, or strongly insist on the constitutional "separation of church and state," the Christian fascists will relentlessly attack them for being "anti-Christian" (even though Christian *fundamentalism* is an extreme, and extremely oppressive, version of Christianity and is not the same as Christianity in general).

The Democrats' basic capitulation around "the separation of church and state," was sharply revealed when, in the early 2000s, an atheist parent (Michael Newdow), who is also a lawyer, challenged the phrase "*under god*" ("one nation, under god") in the "pledge of allegiance" that school children in particular are often compelled to recite. His case went to the Supreme Court, and even though the Court ruled against him (on the narrow basis that he did not have legal standing to make this challenge), Newdow had a very strong Constitutional basis for his arguments that this phrase ("under god"), as promoted by government institutions, is a clear violation of "the separation of church and state" and discriminates against people who are not religious. Did the Democrats support this challenge by Newdow? No. In fact, large numbers of Democratic politicians, including prominent members of Congress, made a point of gathering *not* to rally in support of Newdow and the principle of "the separation of church and state," but instead to publicly and loudly recite the "pledge of allegiance" and particularly *emphasize* the words "under god."

With their orientation and approach, the Democrats can never, and will never, resolutely challenge the Christian fundamentalists' "moral" basis for opposing and seeking to outlaw abortion, nor

will the Democrats mobilize the kind of determined, sustained massive opposition to this fascist offensive that is necessary to preserve and extend rights that are vital for the masses of women, and the masses of people as a whole.

"Don't Tell Me Elections Don't Make a Difference!" They DO—But NOT in the Way You Mean

Here is a most fundamental truth: The reason the Democrats act in the way they do is because *they are representatives, functionaries, and enforcers of this capitalist-imperialist system*—one of the two bourgeois ruling class parties of this system. A key role and objective of the Democrats is to maintain the "orderly functioning" of this system. A key part of doing that, while maintaining people's "allegiance" to this system, is keeping people's vision and activity restricted *within* the structures and processes that serve to *perpetuate and reinforce* this system's rule—and a crucial part of that is getting people to believe that elections are the only (or by far the most meaningful) way to bring about positive change. In opposition to that continually propagated notion, the actual reality is that, under this system:

Elections: are controlled by the bourgeoisie; are not the means through which basic decisions are made in any case; and are really for the primary purpose of legitimizing the system and the policies and actions of the ruling class, giving them the mantle of a "popular mandate," and of channeling, confining, and controlling the political activity of the masses of people.¹

And now, on top of this fundamental reality, the fascist Republican Party is even more aggressively rigging elections—moving to suppress votes, further "gerrymandering" districts (redrawing the

1. Bob Avakian, *Democracy: Can't We Do Better Than That?*, Banner Press, 1986. Information about ordering this book can be found at BAs Collected Works at revcom.us.