

A Fetus Is Not A Baby!

A wave of extremely dangerous, heartless anti-woman legislation has swept through state legislatures this year. By late May, 64 anti-abortion laws had been passed, 30 in April alone. One of the most far reaching, and ominous, of these new laws is in Ohio. The Ohio House of Representatives voted in late June to ban abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detectable, which can be as early as six weeks. If enacted, the law would challenge the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling which upheld a woman's right to an abortion until the fetus is viable outside the womb, usually at 22-24 weeks.

The following is based on "What Is an Abortion and Why Women Must Have the Right to Choose," by A.S.K., in *Revolutionary Worker [now Revolution]* #1265, January 23, 2005.

Is it true that a fetus is a form of life? Of course it is. It is made up of live cells, it is growing and processing energy, it has the capacity to mature and reproduce, it has a genetic system and so on.

Will an abortion destroy this form of life? Yes, absolutely.

Well then, isn't an abortion killing another human being? No, absolutely not.



Several-day-embryo clump of cells

1 A fetus is not yet a human being. It is nothing but a clump of cells with the potential to become a human being. It is "alive," but that is also true of all the other cells in a woman's body. It has no life of its own yet. It is not yet a separate life from the life of the woman in whose uterus it is.



Five-week embryo

2 The anti-abortionists carry big signs showing fetuses floating around in a woman's uterus, as if they are totally separate from women. But contrary to how they portray things, an embryo or fetus can't survive on its own. It gets oxygen from a woman's blood, excretes waste through the woman ... *And this is true until the fetus is born and becomes a baby.* It is no more an independent human being than any other organ or part of a woman's body.



Above: Ten-week fetus

3 90% of abortions take place in the first trimester (first three months). Three weeks into the pregnancy, the whole embryo is still only about 2 mm (2 millimeters) long, or about the size of the letter "o."

4 By the third month of pregnancy the embryo, now called a fetus, starts to look a little more "human" as it grows arms, legs, sex organs, fingers, and toes. It is undergoing a lot of changes, but inside, its internal organs, muscles, skeleton, and nervous system are still very undeveloped. The whole thing is still only about 25 mm long, or about this long: ooooooooooooo



Above: Placenta

5 Even at the end of the second trimester a fetus cannot survive outside the woman's uterus without special medical measures. Its brain is still very unformed. Its lungs are not ready to take in air. It is still very much a part of the woman's body and completely dependent on her bodily processes. It is *not* a human being until it is born, and takes its first breath.

6 Pregnancy is not some mysterious event guided by outside forces either. It is part of the normal processes of the woman's body. And, the choice of whether or not to carry an embryo or fetus to term, or to have an abortion, belongs to the woman. A woman has no moral obligation to carry a fetus to term simply because she gets pregnant. A woman who chooses at whatever point and for whatever reason to terminate a pregnancy, should feel fine about doing so and should be able to.

When it comes to abortion, there really is only one moral question: Will women be free to determine their own lives, including whether and when they will bear children, or will women be subjugated to patriarchal male authority, whether it comes down at the hand of another person or the church or the government, and forced to breed against their will?

From the challenge issued in "A Declaration: For Women's Liberation and the Emancipation of All Humanity," *Revolution* #158, March 8, 2009.

Taking up the fight for women's liberation as an essential part of the emancipation of humanity as a whole...

Building powerful and uncompromising resistance to every assault on women today...

Modeling a whole different and emancipatory morality, rooted in the goal, and struggle, to uproot all forms of exploitation and oppression...

Digging into and taking up the radical and truly liberating science of communism, which has been advanced by this Party and its leader, Bob Avakian...

All this is the responsibility—and the opportunity—of everyone who craves a different world.



Abortion On Demand And Without Apology!