Introduction

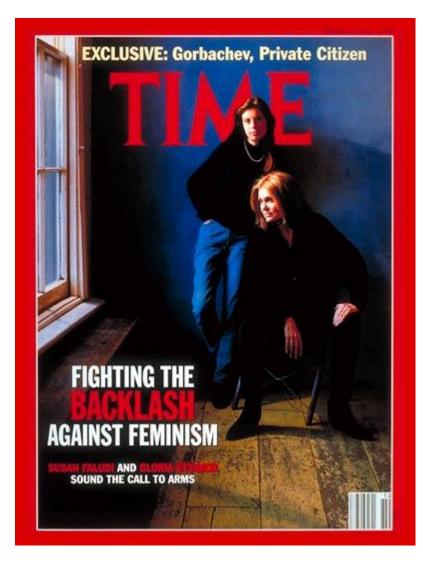
Day 1

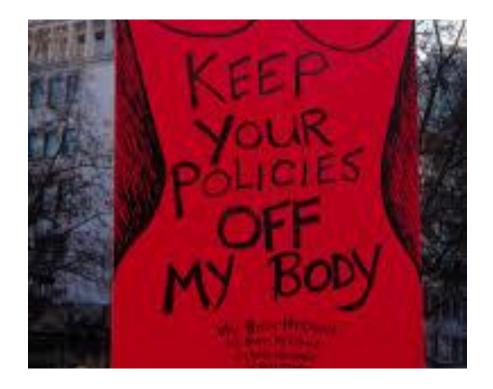
Module 2, *Feminism and Freedom* Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education

Backlash – undeclared war on women

"a counterassault on women's rights...an attempt to retract the handful of small and hard-won victories that the feminist movement did manage to achieve for women"

Susan Faludi, 1991





Attack on Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Georgia, US bans abortion after 6 weeks of pregnancy ("the heartbeat bill")



Bolsonaro moves to delete all references to feminism, homosexuality, and violence against women from the nation's school textbooks.

Signs of the backlash

- Erosion of sexual and reproductive rights
- Re-asserting 'family values', natural order with men as superior and women and inferior
- Appeal to traditional gender roles
- Policy pronouncements and legislation
- Dismissing concerns about gendered violence

- A gendered expression of authoritarianism / the "strong men era" (Time Magazine)
- Politics of fear, regressive nostalgia and exclusion ("us and them")
- Use of the internet as a tool to censor, silence and surveil
- Use of democratic instruments as ticket to power followed by an attack on these instruments
- Growing insecurity fueled by the years of economic policies that called for budget cuts for social services



Kenya bans Marie Stopes clinics

Kenya bans Marie Stopes clinic from offering post abortion servicesAbortion is illegal in Kenya7 women die everyday from 'botched' abortions



Uganda bans Pride marches

Homosexuality is illegal in Uganda under colonial-era laws, punishable by a jail sentence

Backlash or push for a breakthrough

- Caution against the reference to the 'backlash' in general terms
- Some of the freedoms that are being eroded in places like US are still to be won elsewhere
- Status of women & LGBTIQ reflect realities of living and struggling in 'partial democracies'

Areas of agreement

- There is a big challenge to freedom in the world today
- There is a need to resist erosions to freedom
- Fight against the deliberate shrinking of spaces for freedom
- Strengthen the efforts of those who are struggling for a breakthrough under authoritarian regimes



What emancipatory ideas are at our disposal as we fight for freedom?

Three questions

- 1. How does feminism help us to defend freedom?
- 2. How does feminism help us to expand notions and understandings of freedom?
- 3. In what ways does feminism give us insights that are neglected in other political traditions?