



FORTRESS ON A HILL

Ep 128

[00:00:00]

Henri: Welcome everyone to Fortress On A Hill, a podcast about us foreign policy, anti imperialism, skepticism, and the American way of war. I'm Henri, My pronouns are he him. Thank you for joining us today. With me is my co-host Jovanni.

Hey man. How are you doing?

Jovanni: Hey, Henri. How are you doing? Doing well. Jovanni Reyes, pronouns he/him.

Henri: And we are here with Shiloh Emelein and Rachel Tucker to discuss the state of reproductive justice and freedom in the US military. Shiloh. And Rachel, welcome to Fortress On A Hill

Rachell Tucker: thank you so much. [00:01:00] Happy to be here.

Yeah,

Shiloh Emelein: thank you for having.

Henri: Yeah very, happy to have you both. So I'm gonna give some background on you guys and then we'll we'll get started talking. Shiloh lin pronouns, they, them, Theirs is a queer, trans, non-binary creature living with their fluffy cat on land. It's a loney land, also known as the Bay Area, California. Their worldview and moral compass were turned upside down when they deployed with a marine helicopter support unit in Al, Ambar province, Iraq, and then Kuwait City. They

joined about face veterans against the war in 2018 with the hope in action to catalyze change and repair the harms caused by the military industrial complex. Shiloh believes that the reclamation and celebration of our bodies, our joy, and our pleasure is at the core of de-militarizing ourselves, our beliefs [00:02:00] and the structures we currently live within. They are thrilled to have the chance to care for the about faced community in light of collective liberation and collective healing.

And Rachel. Rachel is an anti-imperialist veteran of the US Army from 2002 to 2011. She's an educator and activist who lives in San Antonio, Texas, but was born and raised in Miami, Florida. She is a member of about face veterans against the war and the party for socialism and Liberation, and has been an active organizer with Muhas

Rachell Tucker: Mar Mujeres, Mar Women will March

Henri: Coalition, who has been leading in the women's struggle in the city of San Antonio.

Just to get us started I I've been trying to formulate how we were gonna do this discussion [00:03:00] around the idea of informing all, the listeners of our podcast, but specifically veterans and the anti-war folks that listen, which to be very clear is, a lot of men.

There are a lot of men that listen to our podcast and as to be clear and present about where US military policies sit to today regarding abortion access, and reproductive freedom. And so to start us off, I want to talk about some of the hardships that are created by these policies.

Even for birthing people who are not actively working to have kids. Rachel, could you start us off tell us what you think about that in terms of the hardships this creates for service members and the environment. Within, the military.

Rachell Tucker: Our federal government has basically turned its, [00:04:00] back and has used them abortion as a token for elections now for decades. Essentially it's turned something that is a healthcare practice into a something quote unquote moral right. Something political. That's basically why we are in this situation we are in, right? And. On top of that, like the, right wing grasped that our, the Supreme Court is under. And how essentially nine six unelected Supreme Court leaders, quote unquote leaders or justices just reversed the progress that was won with blood, sweat, and tears by all, like women and,

people 50 years ago. And so it's, the beginning. [00:05:00] It's the tip of the spear of an undemocratic attack on working class on people.

We're, seeing, yes it's, an abortion. It is sovereignty, it is autonomy of, women and, people. But it's it, is the beginning of, more things being wrote back. And such as voting rights, such as possibly affirmative action and in in Texas right.

now we, have three anti-abortion laws actually that are in place and all depend on each other to really criminalize abortion and criminalize providers and with up to a hundred thousand dollars if, You're caught helping somebody aiding [00:06:00] in a bedding and up to life in prison.

And vigilante culture with SBA that was, passed last year actually is rewards people with \$10,000 for snitching on, people that are having and needing abortions. And so essentially with, and then the, third the third law anti-abortion law in Texas is the 1925 statute. It dates back, it's original.

Passing dates back to 1857, I believe, pre-Civil War time and essentially knocking women back 175 years in the state of Texas and people that need services, right? And so that includes trans non-binary, like [00:07:00] you name it, right? And it is people that, and then for example, San Antonio, right?

I'm talking very local, but like San Antonio has five, five military bases. And the la the Air Force basic training is here. And as, as is a lot of medical training for, the Army efforts in Houston. And so we have a lot of military people in, our city and people that, that will come in knowing, not knowing that abortion is criminalized here.

And like you, you're gonna have to figure out how to get the, healthcare service that you need by going [00:08:00] outta state. Civilians will have to go all the way to New Mexico. That's the closest area. So hundreds of miles away. And many people, many women and, people. Don't have the money, they don't have the time.

Like if you're not in the military, you're working on wage job or you have to ask for time off from your work and you don't really have a lot of working past people don't have that luxury. We know that rich people do. They don't have to worry about where, they gotta go, where, how much time they're gonna be gone or anything like that.

Like they can just go, fly wherever they want and get the healthcare service they need. But working class people don't have that luxury, especially working class

people of color and, in black communities, that have been targeted for, decades and and, even centuries. And so [00:09:00] when, service members come to Texas. Essentially it's, gonna be, it's gonna be a nightmare with all of the, trauma, the mil, military sexual trauma that happens, all the rape all of the, harassment, all of the abuse that does happen.

And so the hardships that we're about to see are going to be like outrageous. Completely outrageous. The amount of death that we are probably going to see is gonna be like, outrageous and act actually like criminal on the hands of the state and, even the federal government.

Henri: I was thinking about you mentioning about, the the, military in the enlisted community specifically is that it's, all almost entirely of working class people and that [00:10:00] depending on what kind of job in the military you might be.

Okay. When you go out. But a lot of people simply return to the same hometown, to the same economic conditions that they were in previously. And yet, you know that for, all the militaries pomp and bluster about, it's the medical benefits that you get during the time that you're in that none of that extends to reproductive rights, none of that.

It's, essentially as if you were never in the military and had any care in that direction. The entire way and again the, military does as far as the people within it and out separate from reproductive access portion seems to do well. And even the VA seems to learn lessons and, improve itself bit by bit as time goes on.

But this is one aspect that is completely [00:11:00] excluded, put in that taboo box. We were talking before about the that it's been, that you mentioned about that the right wing has turned it into a, to a moral question, a moral issue that the choices that birthing persons have to make is now a moral question for people that have nothing to fucking do with it and have no right to be able to say these people are not able to have that access.

Jovanni: Yeah. You were talking about the, how Rachel broke down, how the the women's reproductive rights abortion, how it's been politicized has become a political chip for all these years. Roe versus Wade was passed, was 1973. Yep. And just been a back and forth They used as a political chip and then most people didn't know [00:12:00] Until what Texas passed that to bypass Roe West's way. What Texas did was pretty much jeopardize the individuals make, made deputies outta individual, just like Rachel talked here and made them like vigilante groups the old West Posse groups. Just take it on to your own hands

and then and, put people, particularly people in the healthcare community, putting 'em in their bind because now these people could be sued just by by giving advice getting advice.

One of the things I remember when, the whole Texas thing came out, right? Which was signed what was assigned, it was signed in on September, 2021. Am I correct? The law that the, Governor Abbott signed about the abortion. It says right [00:13:00] here, Texas, a period of laws together ban abortion of all stages of pregnancy without exceptions, rape or incest, and with narrow exceptions for pregnancy, for pregnant people at risk of death.

Senate Bill eight s b signed by Governor Greg Abbott, which took effect on September 1st, 2021. I remember seeing also, And I think it was either Uber or Lyft, they pull out a statement saying there, because the law is just so broad. Even a Lyft driver, Uber driver, could be substitute to being sued just by transporting someone to an to, to a clinic I remember Uber, it was either Uber or Lyft that came out with a, statement saying that they're looking into this law and they're looking for any, and they're looking at any possible repercussions that any of their drivers might have because of this law. And they're talking about how they're gonna fight it they're gonna help people with legal fee if it comes down to it. [00:14:00] Yeah so, I just wanna transition why if role versus Wade has been was pretty much was settled in 1973. Why are we still talking about this? Didn't it become constitutional? What happened?

Henri: No it was something from that point, it continued to be a political football each side move to the others things. If, I think the H Amendment came out in was, I think it was 79, and so that was only six years with even if the, federal government could be involved, that they would've been able to do that.

But with the Hyde Amendment, that means that no money whatsoever, no federal, dollars goes to abortion access or reproductive access except for rape, incest, and life of the mother. And you find that if you really bear down in some of the regulations that life of the mother is not very specific [00:15:00] onto what it is, that it can easily be one of those things that they say, No, sorry, we don't we are not thoroughly convinced enough that this woman is going to die specifically as a result of her pregnancy, and therefore we won't.

Terminated. I'm not saying that's that's, the decision that they would have to make, but there, there's a lot of room in there for them to be able to say no to look like they're still providing some kind of access. But no, it was never enshrined in federal law, the right to the right to an abortion.

It was only the Supreme Court decision. But

Jovanni: apparently it could have been trying to federal a law. It could have been court. Our our leadership or MIS leadership fail us on that and just kept it as a political football for

Henri: political. They didn't wanna pay the they didn't want pay the toll of having to deal with the backlash that would come from something.

It just, [00:16:00] it was, it's not, it was way too big of a risk Obama administration, they just wouldn't they just wouldn't take risks like that. And I can't imagine what, And then we're and then of course now we have Joe Biden. Joe Biden is the anti abortionist in chief. And he was part of the original coalition that helped push the height amendment through. Let me get my list here. I've got a whole bunch of little things about him, but but no, exactly what you're saying, now we, it's it's my understanding that if the president wanted to write an executive order and wanted to take space on military basis to conduct abortions, that he could, and it would be entirely within the law that they could take a portion of Randolph Air Force base or Fort Sam Houston and allow civilians to be able to come and get reproductive care if he wanted to take that [00:17:00] on.

But again, no one has the political waves, so to speak, to be able to. It just it's just not worth it. And the rest the, everyone looking at this most mostly liberals and leftists were looking at this and it's just another thing that you won't fight for. We won't fight for a higher minimum wage.

We won't fight for the ability to keep jobs here rather than setting them overseas. The ability to, unionize without having to worry about an a-hole like the CEO of Starbucks bearing down on you and threatening your job and promising benefits to people as long as they don't join the union.

This fits all into, that cloud of bullshit. So

Jovanni: let me ask you something. You said a political risk, right? So according to a Pew research poll taken in June 13th, [00:18:00] 2022, 61% of Americans says abortion should be legal. So that means that's a popular, that should be a popular issue so, where is the political risk? I fail to see that.

Shiloh Emelein: I, could say a little bit about that around to me with the Biden administration. As of was September 9th, they passed that the VA will cover start allowing abortions and for abortions. But with a lot of the things that we

see with the Biden administration, it's like this big they want the, kudos and the cookies and the big parade for this thing that they're doing, but then the fine print that it actually doesn't do anything. It doesn't like to change the material conditions for people. Even [00:19:00] though the VA now on paper allows access for abortions and abortion counseling, which they hadn't done before because of the H Amendment, it's only under those two circumstances now, which are rape, or incest or life threatening to the, person who's pregnant. And and then even within that The, they're allowing they have opened up access to abortions, but they, haven't, there's no personnel that are trained at the va to do this. And just the I was just doing some, Yeah, some research around that. And just seeing, because I know as a trans person that there's often a lack of, healthcare services and at the va and specific to trans health, [00:20:00] specific to reproductive health, for a trans person, there's zero access to healthcare.

And and looking into that, I was just seeing that the VA lacks They also lack, like pregnancy delivery and postpartum services. That's not something that was offered at the VA until I think the late nineties. And so all of that care was always outsourced. North Texas, the North Texas VA healthcare system went all of 2020 without a gynecologist on staff that was also outsourced.

So there's there's this big broad oh, we're actually doing something progressive from the Biden administration, but then when you look into it just just below the surface but it shows its ass that they're actually not [00:21:00] doing, they're not changing any circumstances for people.

Rachell Tucker: Yeah. And I wanna help in there cuz Absolutely. Even, being in the military, like actual like reproductive health was a joke. Like they, they really just didn't, treat like women or, the services that, that, that were needed appropriately in my opinion.

And there's, a quote that the, VA uses, which we, we, use in a different way in our local fight. Which says like pregnant veterans and VA beneficiaries deserve to have access to world class reproductive care when they need it the most. That's what our nation owes them.

And that's what [00:22:00] we That the VA will deliver. And that's by the secretary of the va, I think Dennis McDonald. And it's just we, use it to basically say like, why not everybody? Like, why not all people have this access on, federal lands, right? Which can happen with the stroke of a pen through an accepted border order by the, president of the United States.

It's legal it's legal to have abortions on federal land. And so like we use that quote because it's, like perfectly convenient, like this right wing or in industry of death. Is, basically saying that the, that veterans are the ones that deserve this, right?

[00:23:00] After everything that, that we put them through. And I just think it's, just a crock of shit to continue. One, like the recruitment the continuance of making veterans and, two to show that the, federal government has can, actually do something if it really wants to.

Like they have the political will. Why doesn't the, why doesn't congress, why doesn't the president, like he can definitely end the filibuster and they can definitely And, the H amendment, which before the hine amendment was passed in the, in, I think you said 79, right? They were basically servicing.

Like 300, they had service 300,000 people. And now they've [00:24:00] taken away like the safety nets for our, most vulnerable, those that do need Medicare, Medicaid, Medicare and that have families, that need support. And, then now that they've, criminalized it.

And essentially like they, they can, he can, the president and Congress can, especially like the president, can pass an executive waiver and legalized abortion like once and for all. And and just stop, playing games with so many people, like half of this population.

It is a popular issue. It's actually a mandate like when, over 60% of your population is needing, demanding [00:25:00] this as a human right? It is a mandate. And so that's why it's just like, why aren't they listening? Why are they doing the complete opposite? And, so it, that's why I say it's like the tip of the spear for more undemocratic reversals of, things that we've struggled for.

Henri: But yeah.

Jovanni: I think you hit the, from nail on the head when you said political will. It's, a lack of political will. It's I mean we talking about a Aly here, a political system, two party system, but pretty much is the same party, just two faces of it, where politics is made into a sport made into a sport.

Not, to bring anything tangible for the people, but you always is always there. [00:26:00] The, recycle. The recycle rhetorics every. Every political, every two years, every four years, we see the same recycled rhetoric. Just to keep people there on the edge, to keep people there.

Just watching, keep people there. Just right there this time we, if we elect the correct person, this person, this is gonna happen. And so the next cycle and the cycle the same rhetoric comes around, get recycled again. And this is what this abortion deal has been for the last what, 50 years almost.

Since Roe versus Wade you had this political football going back and forth and one party, I guess one party. Seemed to have the political will to continue moving forward, which is a Republican party. But at the same time, it was questionable. A lot of people were just saying cause they, they kept pro promising the same thing [00:27:00] every, election cycle.

This time we're going to to LA law abortion. And and, so they've been going with the same thing for the last 40 something years. I guess this time around they they hit the jackpot. But like I say, it's been a political will. Anytime, This could have been codified and made into made law into law.

But there was no political will because there was, it was a topic, it was a, political talking point that both party used against each other for competition to compete for. For for that seat at whatever whether it's city council or Congress or Senate, whatever, this and that. And neither party actually had the political will to move forward with it until now it gets until Texas did.

But now had other ramification, but it was just a talking point it was just talking point police, political for these two, political this duopoly, this [00:28:00] I don't know what you, I didn't wanna, what you call it there's this two wings of the same bird. I don't know

Henri: I'm curious what you all think about the status of this topic within anti-war and anti-imperialist spaces. In, my book. It's something that you don't see nearly enough. It's not a discussion that's, had that this, you just don't see people discussing it, which is, which to me is, messed up given the huge impact that it has on, troops, on veterans, and of course the, rampant space for misinformation among non birthing folks.

We I, want like I mentioned when I, we started the episode I, want [00:29:00] to be able to educate and empower cisgender guys to be able to understand this and understand how it affects people, even though that it's not something that they're going to directly experience.

What do you guys think about the any war community and it's is it making space for this topic and this discourse? Do you think?

Shiloh Emelein: Not nearly enough in my opinion. I think that we can't talk about access to abortion specifically within the military without also talking about MST military sexual trauma and, its pervasiveness. And that is also a topic [00:30:00] that kind of gets pushed aside within the anti-war movement because it's seen, I think, a falsely obviously, but I think it's seen as only specific to, to certain people or that it's not impacting the whole culture of the military.

And yeah, I,

Henri: there's

Rachell Tucker: a

Shiloh Emelein: dog fight going on out there. Yeah, I don't think it's, talked about enough and I, think that it's to me it's a shift of seeing that that pregnancy that, creating families is not on one, one person. It's, a community event. It's a community coming together and I think it's [00:31:00] individualized instead of seen as a community. And I have some more to say on it, but I'll keep it at that for now.

Henri: Cool.

Rachell Tucker: Yeah I think Shiloh's is more in, in the actual like community than I am. I, dabble. But I, see it like, and like antiwar, anti-imperialist and then the abortion issue generally I see it as an issue like of sovereignty, self-determination and autonomy, like at the most intimate level.

And so the you can draw and the links [00:32:00] to imperialism, because imperialism is denying somebody of self-determination. It's denying a whole people's of sovereignty. It's denying whole peoples of their autonomy. And so it is not the same, but it is it, can be linked, right?

The, personal like, community, like Shiloh was saying, like that, community to one community, to another community on those on, on, those uniting fronts, right? Really important on uniting fronts. I think like as far as like the, military I don't know if the anti-war community, but I think just the military in general it's very anti-woman.

Anti like everything that is represented by, [00:33:00] something that's not masculine, right? And It, tries really to, to just eliminate that and, pretend it's not there. Put your hair in a bun. Make sure like you have your, chest doesn't

bounce make sure you hide like things, I don't know, like they, do things in a very specific way in order to It's, contradictory.

It's highlight your, femininity and then hide it. Either way. I think like mst, like Shiloh was talking about is, something like within the military community that is part of it, right? Just like racism is. And it's a supremely gross and unfortunate And it is basically a mirror [00:34:00] of our ruling class, of our society of power control.

And, the way that is dealt with right, is also a mirror, I think, of our society when we don't want to admit the root causes of it, right? And I don't, like I said I don't hang that much in that, in the anti-war community. But when I do it's always interesting.

It's always good. But yeah, tho those are my comments on, that.

Jovanni: So just for for audience that I know, MST is a military sexual trauma, right? These These assault on, on women's reproductive rights does it constitute in your mind as a [00:35:00] form of violence against women?

Rachell Tucker: 100% ? It's, seriously like the, culmination I think of, the war that they've, drum up for decades, right? Because from this, we're gonna see we already had an issue with domestic violence. We already had an issue with with constant issue with poverty. Constant, issue with access to, like contraception, access to healthcare.

That's why we should all like, be fighting for universal healthcare. But but yeah it's, a complete, it's violence. Just once once you remove somebody's say over their own body, it's violence. [00:36:00] And, on top of that it's it's not just control over yourself.

It's control over, say you're, you have a family, right? Like you say you have two, three kids and then it's, and then you're, scraping by. Like you don't have enough money. To really even give those two kids the life that you want and to give them, right? And so now you're you're basically, you have no choice.

And to bring a new a new baby in and It is violence, right? Like when, you don't have a choice, anyways, take a step at it. Shiloh, you won't .

Shiloh Emelein: The only thing I would add is that it, shouldn't be a surprise that [00:37:00] the, that MST military sexual trauma is so pervasive anywhere the, that military exist and, are sexual violence is rampant, right?

And that's across time. And so it, it shouldn't be a surprise because the military let's be real. The, purpose of the, military is violence and. It shouldn't be a surprise that MST is so pervasive in this, within this violent culture. And just, yeah, just to to, add some context for the pervasiveness.

One out of three non CIT men in the military report sexual trauma, sexual assault within the military, and that's self-report. We know that's extremely low. [00:38:00] And yeah as, Rachel was saying, like any time that you take someone's choice away, someone's autonomy away, someone's sovereignty away that's, violence and that's, halting their their freedom and restricting them.

Henri: We get asked often what people can do to help support the podcast. One really powerful way to help us grow and reach more people is to leave us a review. You can do that on iTunes, which is the best place to leave a review. iTunes does reach the most people these days. The next best place is Facebook. Go to our Fortress On A Hill Facebook page, and look for the reviews tab.

Money is type these days for everyone, especially in the lingering shadow of COVID, penny pinching to make it through the month often doesn't give people the funds to contribute to a creator they support. So we consider it the highest honor [00:39:00] that folks help us fund the podcast in any dollar amount they're able. Patreon is the main place to do that. And for supporters who can donate \$10 a month or more, they will be listed right here as an honorary producer. Like these fine folks. Fahim Shirazee, James O'Barr, James Higgins, Eric Phillips, Paul Appell, Julie Dupree, Thomas Benson, Janet Hanson, Daniel Fleming, Michael Karon, Ren Jacob, Howard Reynolds, Rick Coffee, scott spaulding, Spooky Tooth, and the Statist Quo podcast. Your contributions are wonderfully helpful to us. Thank you so very much. However, if Patreon isn't your style, you can contribute directly to us through PayPal at PayPal dot me forward slash Fortress on hill, or please check out our store on Spreadshirt for some great Fortress [00:40:00] merch. And now let's get back to the podcast.

I I got a chance to talk to Lyle Jeremy Rubin recently about his new book and he talks about in it about the nature of military indoctrination and how the military wants its members to be able to slowly indulge rather than restrain or check, want an acts of violence is that we want people to be violent when we want them to be violent and not be violent at other times.

And then we expect that it won't spill over onto people, onto their families. We don't have control over that. We don't get to decide what's gonna happen inside and with a person as they go through their experiences. And Shiloh, like you

said this is stuff that is, is historical that wherever militaries [00:41:00] go there is sexual violence and trauma.

Okinawa, for example, has a huge problem with that. And I know that the U C M J and the military justice apparatus that are involved with that do their best to deflect. They try to stonewall local authorities. They try to make it so it's hard to, actually do anything meaningful. And that's not even considering cultural aspects to it, depending on where it happened.

But no, I, just to circle back around, is that, that it if you're a soldier and you understand that denying somebody reproductive access and justice is violence. What does that say about how you are going to be cared for? What does that say? Cause eventually the the rules are going to lean in a way that's not politically advantageous to somebody else, [00:42:00] but we're okay with it.

We're okay with it. We accept it that the, we accept that this is the military's culture. The royal we, not us talking, but Jovanni, what are you what are you thinking, man? What what, comes to mind for you about all this?

Jovanni: Going back on that violence. So I just heard what you said about switching on and off violence and particularly speaking about our military, which is spread out throughout the world in about 130 countries what came up to mind is what is called a SOFA agreement. I'm sure you guys are familiar with the SOFA agreement, which is the status of arm status of forces agreement that a that the US government makes with the host country and the host country that is hosting a military base has to agree to this agreement before a military base is to be stationed there other [00:43:00] than, what you're seeing in Syria right now, where the Syrian government has not agreed to host them military at US military base there.

But they're hosting one whether they like it or not. But it's a different story. But, in the sofa agreement, it's an agreement where the local government. Of, a country pretty much cannot prosecute a US soldier pretty much it has to go through, through the u c MJ channels, et cetera, et cetera.

So what happens is that a lot of MST or or sexual assault made by US soldiers or on a local national of a third country, of another country where the US base is stationed at, right? That person, that victim usually does not see any justice because that the soldiers are not, cannot be prosecuted by the local government [00:44:00] and they're usually are given to, the to the military to deal with that particular soldiers or soldiers and whatnot.

And we know that American women. Serving in the military, I often do not see justice when they're assaulted by their fellow soldier. You can imagine if a local national from another country will see justice, if they're assaulted by a US soldier damn sure will. Most likely they won't.

And that's part of the soul for agreement. Any yeah, that's what came up to mind when when you were talking about that Henri.

Shiloh Emelein: I wanted to, just follow that with After a sexual assault happens to someone in the military, what happens next? And, talk about that a bit because it, it goes into this lack of access [00:45:00] to abortion and and counseling and, lack of access to reproductive care. So after, after a a sexual assault happens and, say the person becomes pregnant from that It's slowly changing.

Now after the Vanessa Guillen law is passed but not quite enacted yet in, in taking place yet, where there's the, survivor has to go to the chain of command, like to their chain of command, who often is part of the problem, right? Is part of the violence as part of the assault. And so that, that will stop a lot of people from seeking justice or whatever you wanna call it, seeking care.

And, also if they go through the chain of command it's also up to their chain of command to allow that person, or not allow that [00:46:00] person to have leave, to go access an abortion or reproductive care. It's up to their chain of command and the military doctors to, to say whether this was caused by rape or incest.

And so at, every stage of the process, the power is taken out of the survivor's hands. It's, and given to the military chain of command. And so I just, yeah, I just wanted to talk about that and, just as a harm reduction step, the least we can do is keep pushing for civilian oversight into how the criminal process is handled within the military and, Get out of the chain of command's hands. I think that's something that going back to your previous question, Henri, something within the anti-war movement [00:47:00] we can really start pushing for a measure of harm reduction is to have civilian oversight.

Jovanni: What's the current, what's the current policy in the US military when it comes to to reproductive right, and abortion? Let's see what we have here.

Shiloh Emelein: You mean as far as accessing thing? Yes. From what I understand, it's, Yeah you, must go through your chain of command and request medical leave. And your chain of command can ask questions around why or

whatnot, how long you need, what recovery process you need, or time you need, and then can deny or not from that point, I might I'm, pretty sure that's the process that's used right now.

Jovanni: So this [00:48:00] is what the the n the NDAA for fiscal year 2023 says about abortion in the military. It says under Title 10, Section 10 93 of the United States Code usc DOD is prohibited from using funds or facilities to perform an abortion unless the pregnancy resulted from rape or. Or the life of the mother will be in danger, and the fetus were carried to term abortions that do not meet this criteria are considered non-covered abortions.

This provision was first enacted in 1984. Prior to adding the statutory restriction, Congress had included provisions in annual defense appropriation bills, restricting funding the military to perform abortions, starting with appropriations for FY [00:49:00] 1979, PL 95 dash 4 57 6 83. Such abortion funding restrictions in and in appropriation bills are often referred to as high type amendments After the original sponsor, representative Henri J High Federal.

Federal regulations and TRICARE policy also prohibit abortions constantly in referral preparations and follow up care for non cover abortions. And these services are not available in the military treatment facilities. Service members and their family members who seek a non cover abortion with the civilian provider typically pay out of pocket for all expenses associated with the procedures, including any travel required trial.

Now under chapter four of Title 10, United States authorizes United States Code. It authorizes leave or sick leave. It does authorize vale leave in [00:50:00] connection with the birth of a child. Some observers have questioned whether they're absent specific statutory authority. A commanding officer could deny a service member's request to, to leave for leave and seek abortion.

So, what I'm understanding here for is that. That the military does not perform unless those criteria are hit. Which is the rape, incest or the life of the mother and the service member has to do, has to, the service member has to if they want to have an abortion, they have to do on their own, pay out of pocket.

They can't take leave, they can't take sick leave and they can take condos leave. But it's up to the commander. I believe. That's what, if I understand that correctly.[00:51:00]

Yes. So that's the so that's the NDA or fiscal year 23 tax bond military abortion policies.

Henri: I think I think we've hit most of the most of the topics. I wanted to touch on in discussing reproductive justice. We had made time to talk about Rachel's article. I wanted to make sure, Is there anything else you guys want to include with this? Any closing, closing statements about the status of reproductive freedom in the military?

Or mst anything like that?

Rachell Tucker: Yeah, no I, wanted to mention like one of the, one of the, campaigns that we have going on [00:52:00] in San Antonio right now that if, it's passed and I mean it won't supersede the law, but it would, it's. It'll be something. So essentially we're, demanding that Bear County become an abortion, sanctuary. And we have nine demands. And, of those nine demands there's there's a couple that, that I wanna highlight. One of them is something we've already mentioned, and it's the use of, federal lands for providing like abortion free and on demand. And safe and free and on-demand on, on, on federal basis.

Especially like since San Antonio, we have Sams C, which is like world class hospital. And we could, [00:53:00] there's no reason why it can't be used for, veterans and for civilians, for everybody. And so if with this res, if this resolution is passed, like basically it's, it'll be more symbolic, right?

But at the same time, it is something to be done to actually put stand up to the very drag hone in on democratic anti-abortion laws that the state has passed against more than half of its population. And yeah I think service members would probably also would, it would also help them when it, when they come and we're in com.

We're basically meeting with commissioners and, different [00:54:00] entities in the county to see. What they're willing to do to protect their people. And so, yeah, just wanted to mention, just wanted to mention that campaign that we've got going on here.

Henri: Sounds great. Thank you for thank you for sharing that with us.

Jovanni: Yeah. So, just on note back on abortion one of the things that hit me about, about this, pro-lifers people that, you know, that gauge in pro-life and

they're very militant about it is that they don't a lot of, they don't seem to care much once the baby is born.

They don't really seem to care much about the conditions the baby's gonna be in. They don't seem to care much about the mother. They don't background pretty much what happens to the, to that family once the baby is born. They're all there's a, Planned [00:55:00] Parenthood clinic near the, VA hospital where, you know, where I go to, And I see people there, there's they're doing a campaign that what they do is, I dunno if you've seen it, Rachel, They'll sit in front of, they'll sit in front of it, in front of the, Planned Parenthood office, and they'll record it.

And they have megaphones. And the, and people that are going in, they'll start talking to them, to the megaphone, start talking to 'em. That's, that, that constitutes harassment. Hundred percent. And they're, and they'll sit there and they have they're in a sidewalk and they're facing the, clinic and they're taking pictures and they're taking videos.

And like I said, people that are walk, going in and out they're, actually trying to engage 'em in conversation and talking to them with megaphones and so forth. Yeah. So my thing is right cuz right now we're in election campaign right now and I'm getting all these flyers for both for me and both for that.

[00:56:00] And this is a red state. And one of the, things, one of the talking point is that about handouts we don't give handouts, et cetera, etcetera. What do they mean by that? They'll give handouts cut taxes and increase, budget for police, etcetera.

But the thing is that, when you talk about poverty, right? Poverty, the face of poverty is, in anywhere is, a woman the face of poverty, the women's, the woman has to deal with the burden of everyday life. Particularly we know not only taking care of herself but her children, etcetera.

Yeah. So this is, it's very criminal. What is, what has been done here with this like, Rachel said, district law, this, these this violence against the autonomy of, women in this country. Just because it, [00:57:00] they they're taking away the restricting representative life and taking away from women, their autonomy, their ability to have safe abortion, right?

Does not mean that it's not going to end. Abortion's, not gonna stop it just, it's just gonna be done by other means. That's something that people need to think

about. And what are the consequences of that yeah. I don't know if anybody wanna jump in? Any, thoughts on

Shiloh Emelein: I just have, Yeah. My concluding thoughts are just around I if at any point you're thinking that this is a topic that doesn't impact you maybe think, a little deeper. Think, a little more yeah, a little more under the surface. That this [00:58:00] to me is possibly slash probably just the start of an avalanche against bodily autonomy, against sovereignty.

We already see it right in this the repercussions of, having these anti-abortion laws and, criminalizing people who provide care. We already see that the ripple effect of that. Happening extending to other, people's rights and access to healthcare like trans youth who are trying to access healthcare are now being criminalized.

The people providing healthcare now being criminalized. So this, we're already seeing they're starting to they start this process, they see the impacts of it and they're like, Okay how can we put that on [00:59:00] another, sub subcategory of, people? And, so to me this is just the, start of, an avalanche of, that process.

So it, it baffles me it disheartens me to see people take a step back thinking it doesn't impact them. And, only step up when, something firsthand impacts them. It will eventually, ripple out, so you might as well stand up and do something about it now.

Henri: Hell yeah. Hell yeah.

Jovanni: Wait, look at this. Every year worldwide, about 42 million women with unintended pregnancies choose abortion. Nearly half of these procedures, these from the publication Medical Central 20 million are unsafe. Some 68,000 women die of unsafe abortion annually, making [01:00:00] it one of the leading causes of maternal mortality.

13% of the women who survive unsafe abortions 5 million will suffer long-term health complications. Unsafe abortions. It does a pressing issue, both of the primary methods for preventing unsafe abortion, less restrictive abortion laws, and. Contraceptive use face, social, religious, and political obstacles.

And this is what it comes down to. It comes down to a, religious religious position, religious position in this country that's been converted into a political position particularly in developing nations where most unsafe abortions, 97% occur, right in developing occur even where these obstacles are overcome.

Women in healthcare providers need to be educated about contraceptives, contraception, and ability [01:01:00] of legal and safe abortion. And women needs better access to safe abortion and post-abortion services. Otherwise, desperate women facing the financial burden and social stigma of unintended pregnancy and believing, they have no other options, will continue to risk their lives by undergoing unsafe abortions.

And, I wanna transition with this, with something, right? Like role versus way 1973 made abortion legal in the United States, right? But before that, women were still having abortions in the United States before ro versus weight, right? And one thing particular that caught my eye cuz, Henri mentioned Rachel's article article that she just did would talk about that.

And the second is the Cuba, for example, Cuba has been practicing is the first country in the Americas to practice safe abortion, right? It, goes [01:02:00] all the way to 1936. 1936 had been practicing safe abortion, right? At the time Cuba was that was before the revolution. Cuba was a. A neo colony of the United States.

And it was a Havana that was Las Vegas of, a playground for the wealthy and, mobsters, et cetera, etcetera. Right? But one of the things that's interesting about Cuba is that, women, American women will do this. At the time it was Cuba was, had a abortion tourism where American women would go to Cuba to have abortion because it was illegal in the United States.

So they have safe abortions in Cuba. It wasn't enshrine, it was it was, abortion was legal for those who can pay Right now. It wasn't accessible for everyone. And, granted, and given the fact that QA is a is extremely is a highly Catholic country. So it's, shown [01:03:00] upon most people they use it, right?

But it was mostly for, it was mostly a luxury of the wealth and more a luxury of those who can pay. It wasn't until revolution in 1959 afterwards that it was made accessible to everyone, free of charge by the state. That's an interesting note. But Cuba just did something other, something else revolutionary recently.

When it came down to to family structures and and autonomy, family autonomy. And Rachel, do you wanna talk to us about that a little bit?

Rachell Tucker: Sure. So yeah, on September 25th Cuba. Basically approved through referendum on the newest family's code. And basically the first family's code was, a revolutionary document in and of itself in 1965.

And so essentially [01:04:00] starting from that one, they had talked about what we call the second shift and how like housework is not just to be shared by it, it's not just for, the woman, it's to be shared by those that live in the house. And and then it, also did many other things as far as like regulating, like what what, society.

Should strive for what, how to push, right? Like society to be and, match the revolutionary move project that, that she was going for. And like with this family's code that's what it did. It pushed the people socially to to get to a, to get to the social consciousness that they needed [01:05:00] to be at to reflect the revolutionary project, right?

And this year the Cuban government and the Communist Party of Cuba has BA basically said that it is this is something that has, been that has been needing to happen for a very long time. To reflect the families that exist, the diversity of families, right? And so with this new code of families, like it has legalized same sex marriage, same sex adoption it has legalized what they call solidarity gestation.

And so that's what we call surrogacy here, but it's not for profit, right? This is, it's a family's document, just like made and centered [01:06:00] on love, on affection. It has given rights to grandparents to see their grandchildren. It has given. More equality when it comes to divorced families as given more rights and responsibilities for children that they should be treated like little people with have valid opinions.

It's it's, a really, revolutionary document. And compared to the United States where we are regressing the, society has is our government has forcefully made us regress. The people aren't there, right? The people are pushing and need, the government to reflect them.

But right now the government is, stepping on us. Not for too long cause we're gonna, we're fighting back. But [01:07:00] in Cuba they're, pushing even, they're pushing their society forward even more, and. They're, accepting the development that society has.

Has, done, has created for itself the diversity of family and has taken it as a strength and is a, way to, to push forward to the society that they want to continue building and to the revolution that they have sworn to, to basically uphold and, devote and commit themselves to. And so it's, I encourage y'all to read the article.

It's on Liberation News. And, definitely read, All you Can about it because it's something that a block hated country. 60 year block hated country was able to do, [01:08:00] and it demonstrates it as always is the beacon, like for liberty, for freedom, for sovereignty, and it is a model for us to strive for here in the us, especially now with these repressions and those to come and it demonstrates.

The importance of internationalism, of being there for each other here, the working class here and the broad together, learning from each other, communicating, fighting together. And it demonstrates the power of solidarity with our l g LGBTQ and sisters and non binary folks with our black community, Latino community, immigrant community.

And all of our rights are on the chopping block, right? And, we all have to stand together and, demonstrate the [01:09:00] power that we do have, which Cuba has shown us how to do it,

Henri: Jovanni, did you wanna jump in before we close up?

Jovanni: Yeah it was it was great having about. Charlotte and Rachel, both of you and get your perspective on these topics. And I think we we close in a good note with with this, hope there's people pushing back.

And yeah we, and we have examples to draw from going back to to Rachel's article. What's the name of the article, Rachel? What's the title?

Rachell Tucker: It's called Super Majority of Cubans Vote for Revolutionary Families Code. Liberation

Henri: News.

Jovanni: Liberation. Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

[01:10:00] When can, where do you, where can we people wanna continue this topic offline and everything, Where can we find you guys now? You got some Twitter, Facebook, and where, are you guys at?

Henri: I'm

Rachell Tucker: on Facebook. And I have Instagram. I think my handle on Instagram is Raja Tuck, but you can just type my name Rachel with two L's Tucker and, you can find me.

Henri: Yeah.

Shiloh Emelein: I, don't, my cat has an Instagram. I don't. But you can, Yeah I, do some of the social media for about face veterans against war.

Can definitely follow them on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and see what the anti-war veterans are up to. And yeah [01:11:00] just, really grateful for this opportunity to share my perspective and to be in community with, y'all.

Jovanni: Where can we find Fortress on the hill?

Henri: We can find Fortress On A Hill at our website, [www dot Fortress On A Hill dot com](http://www.dotFortressOnAHill.com).

You can find us on Apple Podcasts, pretty much any of your ordinary podcast carriers. We're also on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. I believe those are all Fortina Hill as well. Yeah. And and YouTube. You can watch the video version of our podcast on YouTube. Definitely definitely check us out.

Let's try,

Jovanni: We're trying to build our telegram.

Henri: Yeah we're, working on Henri. Henri sucks a telegram. I really do. I'm not good at telegram. Rachel, did you wanna jump in?

Rachell Tucker: Yeah, I forgot. Don't really follow me. Follow like Mo Marchon [01:12:00] at M S A TX and follow San Antonio psl. Psl s a TX to keep up with what we're doing.

I'm not that exciting.

Henri: Thank you both for your for your time coming to talk to us about these important issues. Rachel, thank you for this article and, actual example of people trying to be humane, trying to change the society for the better and actually doing it. And it's, amazing to see. So I'm, really grateful that we could end on that on that hopeful note.

Giovanni, as always, man, it's been a pleasure. And we will we'll see you all next time. Thank you for thank you for listening to us. Thank you guys for coming. Yep. Take care.