



Resist capitalist ‘trans panic’ strategy

The Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper salute the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirit community as we mark the 53rd anniversary of the heroic Stonewall Rebellion. The spirit of fightback exhibited at Stonewall is needed today as much as ever.

First of all, we offer our solidarity to the Black community of Buffalo, New York, where a white supremacist massacred 10 African American people on May 14. And we extend our hand to the Latinx community of Uvalde, Texas, where the grief from the tragic May 24 school shooting is compounded by Gov. Greg Abbott’s attempt to exploit it for his anti-immigrant crusade.

As we enter Pride Month 2022, the United States is in the grip of a “trans panic.” Like the “gay panics” that have come before, this is an attempt to divide workers and oppressed people at a time when the capitalist system is in crisis.

The anti-trans campaign is fueled by the rich and powerful, who are desperate to keep us divided by scapegoating the most vulnerable, by convincing those lacking in class consciousness that transgender, non-binary and gender-nonconforming people are the root of their problems – not the profit system that exploits us all.

Among them are “enlightened” oligarchs and companies like Elon Musk and Netflix, Jeff Bezos and Starbucks. They fear the movement of workers to unionize and communities to hold their empires accountable. Queer people play an important role in these struggles.

Trans panic = more violence

State legislatures across the country have taken up more than 300 anti-LGBTQ2S bills so far this year, most of them targeting trans people and especially trans children and youth.

Bodily autonomy, at the heart of trans people’s ability to live under this system, is at stake, as courts and legislatures seek to turn back the clock to reinforce patriarchal capitalist norms that treat the bodies of women, children, people of color and LGBTQ2S people as the property of rich white cis men.

When Texas Gov. Abbott failed to get a law passed to criminalize gender-affirming care for trans kids, he issued an executive order to open criminal investigations against parents, healthcare providers, teachers and anyone else who supports trans youth. Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey signed a law to forcibly out and detransition trans children.

In Florida, the “Don’t Say Gay” law championed by Gov. Rick DeSantis bans discussion of LGBTQ2S existence in state classrooms. Other states have banned trans youth from participating in sports or us-



Brooklyn, N.Y., march for Black Trans Lives, June 2020.

ing school restrooms. Teachers may be forced to report trans students to their parents or are allowed to misgender and deadname them.

This has led to increased threats and violence against trans people across the U.S., from public transit to social media. In 2021, at least 57 transgender or gender non-conforming people were fatally shot or killed by other violent means, and 2022 is already on track to top that horrific number. The great majority of victims of deadly violence are trans women of color.

Measures attacking gender-affirming care directly contradict the recommendations of medical experts. A recent University of Washington study found that trans youth who got gender-affirming treatment experienced a 60% drop in depression risk and a 73% drop in suicidal thoughts, on average. Access to gender-affirming care saves trans youth’s lives.

Amidst this crisis, the Supreme

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Court lobbed another bombshell: the majority's plan to overturn the historic Roe V. Wade decision protecting the right to abortion, and to do it in a way that opens the door to similar attacks on contraception, same-sex marriage, protection from so-called sodomy laws and other rights won through decades of hard struggle.

Why now? The ultra-right politicians and behind them, many of the biggest banks and corporations, are using the attack on trans rights and reproductive rights to fuel the growth of a neo-fascist movement. It aims to protect private property and profits by crushing the rights of all workers. They are willing to sacrifice the lives of trans children, migrants and refugees, pregnant people, or anyone who makes a convenient target.

The only way fascist movements have ever been defeated is by people uniting and fighting back. It is not enough to rely on elections or hope that friendly politicians will save us. They won't. The Democratic Party is tied by a million threads to the same capitalist class that demands these anti-people measures. Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi will continue to say inoffensive things beside the railroad tracks while doing nothing to stop the onrushing train.

Fight like Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson

How can we fight back? There are many recent examples of unity and struggle – especially by students and youth.

Across North America, from Salt Lake City, Utah, to Des Moines, Iowa, to Newfoundland and Labrador, students have walked out in large numbers to protest laws and repressive measures targeting trans people.

We urgently need a mass national protest like the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, held amidst the AIDS crisis when the Reagan administration was targeting gay men, or the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation of more than one million people.

But simply coming out in large numbers is not enough. We must learn from the example of the 2011 Wisconsin State Capitol takeover by the labor movement and community allies. The occupation to resist anti-union legislation energized workers coast-to-coast, many of whom traveled to Madison or raised money to support the protesters.

While the occupation didn't win in the short term, it laid the groundwork for the wave of teacher strikes that swept the country in 2018-2019 and today's upsurge in organizing at Amazon, Starbucks and other anti-union behemoths.

Imagine the power of LGBTQ2S people and allies from the reproductive rights struggle, Black Lives Matter movement, immigrants and labor, occupying the capitol in Texas, Florida or another state targeting trans lives!

We must also recognize that reactionary U.S. wars and sanctions around the world fuel anti-LGBTQ2S attacks at home.

Every bomb Congress sends to Ukraine, Israel and Saudi Arabia for U.S. proxy wars explodes here, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said during the Vietnam War. The more desperately needed resources are siphoned off for the expansion of the U.S. empire abroad, the more the system scapegoats us to ensure workers remain divided and powerless.

Our community cannot effectively fight the anti-trans, anti-people offensive at home while supporting U.S. aggression abroad. When people struggling against U.S. domination around the world win, our movements for rights are strengthened. When we extend our solidarity to those resisting U.S. imperialism, we open up the opportunity for greater understanding and participation by LGBTQ2S people everywhere.

Let's embrace the legacy of ACT UP, Queer Nation and those who fought militantly against the "gay panic" of the 1980s. Let's imbue our movement with the spirit of unity that fueled the Stonewall Rebellion – an uprising led by the most oppressed Black and Brown, working-class, revolutionary trans and queer youth.

Resist capitalism's trans panic strategy! Fight for socialism – a system that puts people's needs first! 📌



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