

Queens Pride marchers demand freedom for migrants, Chelsea Manning

written by Greg Butterfield
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SLL photo: Greg Butterfield

Queens, N.Y. — Chanting “Stonewall still means fight back! Free Chelsea Manning!” activists from Struggle-La Lucha and the Socialist Unity Party kicked off LGBTQ2S Pride month by marching in the Queens Pride Parade on June 2.

They carried signs demanding freedom for Manning, the trans whistleblower who is back in jail for her role in exposing U.S. war crimes. Other signs honored slain Brazilian queer activist Mariella Franco and transgender communist Leslie Feinberg.

Tens of thousands of people, young and old, turned out to watch the parade in Jackson Heights, Queens, a multinational neighborhood of New York City. The city’s second-largest annual Pride event honors Julio Rivera, a gay Puerto Rican man who was murdered by white supremacists in a nearby schoolyard in 1990.

Student groups, unions, community organizations and churches were among those who marched, many of them flying rainbow, trans and pansexual flags. Queens is a borough of immigrants, and marchers also flew the flags of the many of the countries they hail from.

A memorable contingent of Latinx marchers wore orange prison jumpsuits and held up bars symbolizing the cages asylum-seekers are held in by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol. One held a sign that read: “Say it loud! Say it clear! Roxana was killed by ICE!” in memory of trans asylum seeker Roxana Hernández, who died in custody in May 2018.

Also marching were representatives of the Reclaim Pride coalition, which is sponsoring a [Queer Liberation March](#) in Manhattan on June 30 to mark 50 years since the Stonewall Rebellion of trans, gay and lesbian youth against police repression.

Reclaim Pride is challenging the “official” Heritage of Pride Parade, held annually on

the last Sunday of June. Over the years, that event has become increasingly dominated by corporations, police and capitalist politicians. For more info, visit reclaimpridenyc.org.

