

The fight for trans lives and building an anti-fascist front

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National March to Protect Trans Youth in Orlando, Florida, on Oct. 7. SLL photo: Sharon Black

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It's no exaggeration to say that the Oct. 7 [National March to Protect Trans Youth](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2023/12/20/the-fight-for-trans-lives-and-building-an-anti-fascist-front/) was a milestone event for our party. It was the first national initiative by the Socialist Unity Party since our founding almost five years ago and was a modest but

significant success. Many of the comrades at this meeting were able to be in Orlando and played an invaluable role in the event. The whole party contributed to its success throughout several months of organizing.

In the tradition of Sam Marcy and the other founders of our tendency, we raised an idea that met an urgent, unmet political need – to challenge the unbridled attacks on trans youth on the front lines in Ron DeSantis’s Florida. Working on a shoestring, we were able to build a genuine coalition that placed revolutionary activists and ideas at the center.

We were able to overcome not only numerous logistical, security, and financial obstacles but the political resistance of mainstream LGBTQ+ groups and other left tendencies. Our action influenced the discussion within the mainstream of the movement aligned with Democrats, who had to react to what we were doing and saying. Most importantly, perhaps, we made important new allies and brought others closer to us.

The Oct. 7 mobilization broke new ground for us as an intervention in the modern trans liberation movement, of whom our late comrade Leslie Feinberg was one of the founding inspirations. We are now a factor in the fight for trans lives as we move into 2024, and it’s a responsibility we must take seriously.

The far-right war on trans people and the broader LGBTQ+ community will continue in the new year, with the acquiescence of liberal and centrist politicians. Missouri, Kentucky, and numerous other states are preparing rafts of new anti-trans and anti-queer state legislation modeled on Florida that will be unleashed right after New Year’s Day.

Not only Trump and DeSantis but all of the Republican presidential candidates have placed trans genocide at the center of their campaigns. There has not been, nor do we expect there to be, any meaningful resistance to these attacks from Genocide Joe

Biden or the national Democratic Party machine.

Uniting many struggles

As our Oct. 7 mobilization made explicit, the attacks on trans lives are tied directly to the attacks on reproductive rights, on Black and Brown and Indigenous communities, on immigrants and refugees, on access to health care, education, and housing, and so much more.

Trans people are among the last hired and first fired, often lack any family support, and tend to be relegated to service and freelance jobs – so every economic attack on the working class hits us hard. Like many other oppressed groups in the U.S. today, trans people are often pushed into sex work as the only option to survive and access the care they need. This is true even of many who are otherwise employed full-time.

We should take note of the importance of the powerful national union organizing campaign at Starbucks, where young queer and especially trans workers are in the forefront, including taking a groundbreaking position in support of Palestine. Their work puts the lie to those so-called leftists who claim that queers are not part of the working class.

Comrades, it's no secret to most of us that one of the hardest parts of any mobilization is the follow-up. The escalation in Gaza exploded on the same day as the march and has understandably dominated our attention and that of many of our allies ever since.

Without underselling the significance of Oct. 7, we should also recognize that it was just a small first step toward reviving a militant, independent queer movement at the national level and toward building an anti-fascist front. The need for such a front is likely to only become more urgent in the coming year.

Trans people, in particular, are facing the very real possibility that our health care

and access to public life will be banned or otherwise restricted in the coming years, with all the consequences that entails for us and for the communities that will be targeted after us.

