



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

From Palestine to Pride: Louisiana Northshore shows solidarity with all oppressed

written by Gregory E. Williams
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SLL photos: Gregory E. Williams

June 1, Mandeville, Louisiana - Despite increasing attacks on the community from well-funded, far-right organizations, the Northshore region of Louisiana held its first-ever Pride Parade this June. Around 500 people marched, and an impressive 2,000 people lined the parade route in the small parish outside New Orleans.

Although Governor Landry and his capitalist backers want to silence and divide LGBTQ+ people and other workers, the people of St. Tammany Parish stood together. They did not back down.

This area has been a major focus of struggle in the state. The Landry-aligned, book-banning, Moms for Liberty clones – the St. Tammany Parish Library Accountability Project – caused havoc with repeated attempts to censor libraries in the parish.

They wrongly believed that targeting smaller suburban communities would lead to easy victories, but the people of St. Tammany rallied repeatedly, coming out in large numbers to council meetings. They showed up at libraries to defend these important public institutions, uniting progressive groups and LGBTQ+ people. From their organizing came Northshore Pride.

A Mandeville parent speaks

A Mandeville home-health worker and parent, Mike Spalt, spoke about this historic Pride event.

“With last year being my first time marching in a pride parade [in NOLA], I had no idea the feeling it brought within me and everyone I saw out there. It was also my first experience with Queer Northshore.

“So, when I heard they were bringing the Northshore its first pride parade, I offered to help. My family and friends marched this year, and words can’t describe seeing our community come together over a common cause.

“Of course, not everyone was on board with the LGBTQ community holding a parade. It’s something the queer community has faced since the beginning. The attacks on books, libraries, librarians, and members of the queer community are rooted in ignorant fear. ... It doesn’t stop us. It moves us.

“I’m really taken aback at how amazing [Pride organizers] Jeremey and Mel organize here on the Northshore. Since the LGBTQ community lives throughout the Northshore, it’s time it felt like their home too.”

When asked how it feels to be a parent of a queer or trans child when your child is under attack by grown-up bullies trying to score political points, he said:

“All of that is what inspires my opening line to a parent who has just found out their child is LGBTQ: As a parent, don’t be their first bully. They are going to encounter many. Unfortunately, these adult bullies spewing hate for the queer community could be the very cause of their own child taking their own life.”

The Trevor Project, a suicide-prevention organization focused on LGBTQ+ youth, reports that “1.8 million LGBTQ+ young people (ages 13-24) seriously consider suicide each year in the U.S. — and at least one attempts suicide every 45 seconds.” But, “LGBTQ+ young people with *at least one* accepting adult in their life report [*significantly lower*](#) rates of attempting suicide.”

When the right-wing whips up hatred with rhetoric and repressive laws, children die. The purpose of these attacks is to create an atmosphere of desperation for queer and trans people and to scapegoat LGBTQ+ people while the rich strip away every right – from abortion to minimum wage, from lunch breaks for teenage workers to bathroom access – that workers have won in this state, and beyond.

From Louisiana to Palestine, all the attacks are connected

A contingent of around 15 people with Louisiana Allies for Palestine marched in the parade, bringing attention to how the struggle for Palestine is connected to the fight for LGBTQ+ rights. All our communities are under attack, and the spirit of Pride means standing up for everybody. This contingent raised the Palestinian flag, chanting “Free, free Palestine!” with support from the crowd.

Many watching the march also had Palestinian flags or wore keffiyehs, the patterned scarves that are a symbol of the Palestinian people. One young man with a Palestinian flag painted on his face said, “We can’t forget Palestine while we’re out

here.”

A New Orleans-area Palestinian public health worker recently spoke to this writer about how she has experienced the past eight months of the U.S.-Israeli genocide:

“Think back to the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when people were trapped on rooftops, bodies were floating down the street; people were crowded into the Superdome, babies didn’t have formula.

“My life for the past eight months has been like watching that, getting worse and worse and with a far higher death toll. It’s a terrible feeling of powerlessness. In the first few days of this horror, I didn’t know if my son would make it back to New Orleans. He happened to be back home in Palestine at that time. Thankfully, he was able to leave after a few days, but he was very much affected by that experience.”

The same government in Washington that let working-class (especially Black) New Orleanians die during Katrina is the one bank-rolling the Zionist killing machine responsible for around 40,000 deaths in Gaza. They do not care about human life so long as their rich backers are making money, as they certainly are doing in the current war. Many of those same politicians are leading the assault on queer and trans people. But we can take them on if we stand together, just like they did in St. Tammany.

Stonewall was a riot! Free, free Palestine!





