

# International Women's Day 2025: Attempted trans genocide is a warning to the whole working class

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March 11, 2025



Young women and oppressed genders lead march to Baltimore women's jail on International Women's Day, March 8, 2025. SLL photo: Melinda Butterfield

*Talk given by Melinda Butterfield of the Struggle for Socialism Party at the International Women's Day March and Teach-In in Baltimore on March 8, 2025.*

Video on [Instagram](#)

Hello friends, comrades and siblings. Happy International Women's Day.

Thank you to the organizers for inviting me to speak today. I admit that I really struggled with what I would say. On an important occasion like this, I'd like to give an inspiring, hopeful message about historic victories women have won and the battles ahead.

But as a trans woman living in Donald Trump's United States, it's hard to find anything positive to say. All of our communities are being attacked. The whole working class is under siege.

My immigrant sisters are subject to ICE terror and deportation, with their families being ripped apart. My Palestinian sisters are engulfed in ongoing genocide in Gaza, despite the ceasefire agreement, with Israel not only making military attacks, but cutting off food, medicine and electricity. My Black sisters here in Baltimore are mourning spouses and children murdered by police or jailed.

And right now, transgender people hold the distinction of being targets for eradication.

Let me say it again: The fascists running the government plan to eradicate us.

It's taking a toll.

About 10 days ago, an Indigenous trans woman from out west, someone I respect and admire, posted a suicide note on social media. She'd been targeted for months by white supremacist groups. They hung "wanted" posters with her photo in her

neighborhood calling her a “groomer.” She was exhausted from fighting so hard for so long, she wrote. She was simply done.

My heart ached for her, for our community’s loss if she went through with it. But I understood. I’ve felt the same way more times than I care to admit recently.

A few days ago, a local friend posted an update to let us know she’s still alive and getting help.

One of the lawsuits challenging Trump’s executive order banning gender-affirming care for trans youth was brought by the parents of a young person who committed suicide out of fear of losing access to health care. It’s only been in the last several years that significant numbers of trans kids have been able to get the support and treatment they need, and to see it ripped away is horrifying for those of us who were forced to go through the wrong puberty.

Every trans suicide is a murder.

I’m not here to plead for sympathy and understanding. Pleading has never won queers anything. But I do want you to understand what it means if trans genocide is allowed to continue without resistance from the rest of the working class.

It will not stop with us – the fascist death machine will come for you and yours, sooner or later.

### **Attack on trans lives**

Trump and his Project 2025 handlers launched an all-out attack on trans lives his first day back in office. A steady stream of executive orders declared that the U.S. government does not recognize the existence of trans people; that we will be deprived of life-saving health care; that we may not use public restrooms; that trans

women in federal prisons will be forcibly detransitioned and thrown into men's prisons to face rape and torture.

Our ability to travel safely between states was already extremely limited, just like our pregnant cisgender sisters. Now our passports are being invalidated, too. The State Department is systematically making it impossible for trans people to leave or enter the country.

Government websites and facilities have been scrubbed of all references to trans people – even the Stonewall National Monument, where trans people of color like Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera led one of the first great battles of the modern queer rights movement.

Trans students are not to be allowed to use school restrooms, play sports, or have their true names and identities acknowledged by school staff. Teachers who do so are threatened with arrest as sex offenders.

The brunt of these attacks will fall first and hardest on Black, Brown and Indigenous trans people, who are already the biggest targets of anti-trans violence.

Trump's executive orders are being challenged in court, and often have no legal basis. But what matters is that institutions and companies are rushing to comply anyway.

Hospital systems in New York, California and other states immediately fell in line, cancelling appointments and prescriptions for trans youth. Threatened with funding cuts, domestic violence and rape support groups dropped all reference to trans people.

DoorDash, the food delivery company, has ordered its workers to use their "legal name" when making deliveries instead of chosen names. Many trans people rely on

this kind of work, and this decision puts their lives in danger.

A friend in the South who works for DoorDash told me, "I'm so scared."

### **First they came**

What does it mean when official policy restricts one small group in society from existing in public, unable to access health care, find a job or hold onto one? What does it mean when this group is cut off from the ability to travel, while politicians and media relentlessly blame them for society's ills?

What does it mean when this group is deliberately isolated from other communities that should be natural allies? What does it mean when violence against them is not only tolerated, but encouraged?

I believe it's a warning to every other marginalized group, the working class, and anyone who thinks about fighting back: You could be next.

Trans people make up an estimated 1% to 2% of the population. The vast majority of us are workers, but there's no sector of the economy that is reliant on trans people in the way that agriculture, construction, and restaurants are dependent on immigrant labor. To the ruling class, we are expendable. We can be exterminated as an example to others, and since trans lives are so devalued, they believe few will rise to object on our behalf.

In my trans community, in New York, everyone is hurrying to secure whatever health care and documentation they can, establishing networks for DIY care, helping each other with mutual aid, and packing emergency go bags. We all know the moment is fast approaching when we may have to flee or be killed. It's simply understood among trans people that this is the situation we face.

But I think it's important for reproductive rights activists, community organizers, union members, Amazon workers, unemployed people to understand what's happening. Because the only way any of us survive what's coming is if we take seriously the need to protect and support each other.

The word is solidarity: An injury to one is an injury to all.

### **No more business as usual**

We need the left to think bigger about how to fight back. It's not just that electoralism and the Democratic Party have proven utterly bankrupt in the fight against fascism. Local work and mutual aid are crucial, BUT. If that work isn't coupled with a larger, national and international fightback, one that seeks to mobilize millions and build alternative forms of political power, then all it amounts to is hospice care, not liberation.

Business as usual is over. Millions already have or soon will lose their jobs and benefits. Millions will be displaced. It's already begun.

What would it look like to mobilize the affected communities and movements all over the country to occupy Washington, D.C., and refuse to leave? How would that require us to think about things like self-defense and community defense, in ways we haven't seen since the Black Panthers and the Civil Rights Movement?

We need to think more inclusively as our enemies try to make us more isolated from each other. We need to think about what kind of power we need to challenge fascism and genocide.

For me, hope lies in the example of the Palestinian people, and especially Palestinian women. I'm old enough to remember when having a Palestinian speaker at a movement event was rare and controversial. I remember when the inclusion of

Palestine solidarity was considered a reason by many to split the anti-war movement.

But in the last 18 months, the whole world rose up for Gaza – because against all odds, the Palestinians never surrendered. They never gave up on the dream of liberating their homeland, and never will.

Trans people will continue to be born. We walk through fire to be our true selves. Like the people of Palestine, trans people will struggle, will endure, generation after generation, until liberation.

Please repeat after me:

Trans women are women!

Trans men are men!

Nonbinary people are who they say they are!

Intersex people exist!

Reproductive rights, transition rights: Our bodies, our choice!

Death before detransition!

