

END HATE, WAR & POVERTY!

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE



2016 PRIDE STATEMENT

REMEMBRANCE AND RESISTANCE

The LGBTQIA community lost 49 of our sisters and brothers this month in the horrific attack on the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. As we celebrate Pride, we do so with a spirit of mourning but also renewed resistance.

The attack on Pulse was carried out in a place that was transformational for individuals and foundational for communities. It was Latin night at Pulse – important to remember, as many queer people of color and immigrants struggle to find inclusion amidst the narrow, often white-oriented “gay” norms in society. The Latin night was meant to be a refuge where people could find a community and be true to themselves. What happened that awful Sunday morning was a heartless destruction of queer lives and an attack on a particular queer community at its very core.

Worsening the situation, Donald Trump and right-wing reactionaries are now attempting to make the homophobic killing of 49 people (90% of whom were Black and/or Latinx LGBTQIA people) about so-called “radical Islamic terror.” This is a completely brazen attempt to connect 1.6 billion Muslims to the hateful acts of networks and organizations of reactionary extremists. All over the country, LGBTQIA people and organizations are standing up against Islamophobia, aware that our Muslim brothers and sisters are not the enemy – they are us!

At the same time, Hillary Clinton used the attack to bang the war drum for “hardening our defenses” and announcing that she’s not afraid to say “radical Islam,” only adding fuel to the fire of Islamophobia which conservative leaders have set burning in our country.

RIGHT-WING COUNTERATTACKS

Given the attacks that have rocked our community this month, it is hard to believe that only one year ago we celebrated the victory of marriage equality across the United States. But since marriage equality, LGBTQIA people have faced an enormous backlash. In addition to the horror in Orlando, our trans and gender-non-conforming communities have been under direct attack, led by the sexist and transphobic Republican establishment. The discriminatory and dangerous anti-trans bathroom bills being debated and signed into law across the country – notoriously exemplified by H.B. 2 in North Carolina – must be resisted and defeated.

Although Republicans are leading the onslaught, we must remember that the Democratic Party has never been a reliable advocate for the LGBTQIA community. Eleven Democrats voted for H.B. 2 in North Carolina. Hillary Clinton only endorsed marriage equality in 2013! She also supported DOMA, which prohibited the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages for the purposes of federal programs and benefits. LGBTQIA critics at the time called it discriminatory, yet the Clintons pushed it through. Hillary says they did so because “there was enough political momentum to amend the Constitution of the United States of America” to prevent same-sex marriage altogether. The Washington Post rated that claim “Four Pinocchios” for its dishonesty.

Bathroom bills are based on lies about the danger of women being attacked in bathrooms by transgender women. In reality, it is men’s rooms that are dangerous for trans women. Madeleine Gauss, a trans woman from Raleigh who testified at a North Carolina hearing, explained, “I can’t use the men’s room. I won’t go

back to the men's room. It is unsafe for me there. People like me die there." But H.B. 2 was also a broad attack on LGBTQIA people: it repeals non-discrimination ordinances protecting LGBTQIA people, even though polling shows Americans overwhelmingly favor such protections.

The highest recorded number of reported murders of trans women in the United States in a single year was in 2015. We refuse to forget that the trans community has heroically led LGBTQIA struggle since its modern inception, epitomized by the week of riots in front of The Stonewall Inn in 1969. It was drag queens and trans women of color – like Miss Major, Sylvia Rivera, and Marsha P. Johnson – who led the fightback at Stonewall, not a fictional, whitewashed protagonist thrown up by Hollywood's 2015 film "Stonewall" to erase trans activists and drag queens from our own history. And it is trans activists who today are leading the way in struggle. The entire LGBTQIA community must stand shoulder-to-shoulder to defeat transphobic attacks!

REBUILD THE LGBTQIA RIGHTS MOVEMENT

For too many years, Pride has meant corporate-led parades and celebrations that prioritize the lives and experiences of middle class, white, and cis-gendered gay men while failing to take forward the fight for full equality for working-class and less visible LGBTQIA people.

LGBTQIA people are finding their strength at this dark time. Together with all working people, we can rise up to confront the hate and defeat it. Politically, we must continue to build fighting organizations, and directly confront this system of capitalism that generates bigotry, fear, and violence.

We must link the special oppressions LGBTQIA people face with the broader inequality plaguing the whole international working class. The issue of access to PrEP is a question of accessibility to universal, non-judgmental health care – we need a full Medicare for all system. The need for affordable housing or a \$15/hr minimum wage is more acute for LGBTQIA people, who receive unequal pay for equal work and high rates of discrimination in housing, wages, and hiring. Of course we need stronger laws in place to end these types of discrimination, however even that is not enough. Capitalism thrives on pitting



worker against worker, so that the boss can make a bigger profit. The only way to end exploitation is for all workers, regardless of gender identity, race or sexual orientation, to unite and defeat the bosses, the capitalist class, the 1%. We don't need more gay millionaires – we need a new LGBTQIA liberation movement helping lead the socialist movement and fighting alongside other movements for liberation, higher living standards and a socialist future!

WHAT WE CALL FOR

Socialist Alternative calls for building a powerful and organized movement from below to confront and stop homophobia and transphobia in all its forms: hate crimes, anti-trans bathroom bills, housing and wage discrimination, and extra-judicial killings by the police, particularly of trans women of color and sex workers. But even this is not enough. We must also link our struggles with a broader working-class program completely opposed to all forms of oppression.

Socialist Alternative calls for dismantling the decaying and oppressive system of capitalism and building a new system of democratic socialism, fought for with a bold anti-discrimination, working class program that speaks to all LGBTQIA people. We must also stand up against rising Islamophobia that unfairly attempts to tar our Muslim brothers and sisters with guilt for the actions of violent extremists. Together all working class people can build a world free of discrimination, where LGBTQIA people are safe, healthy and free. Another world is possible! 🌍

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