

PRF Special Bulletin

The Fight for Trans Rights & Gender Self-ID



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A note on the contents: Enclosed are 5 articles plus the text of a proposed censure of Bruce L. The first 3 articles, by Autumn T or Autumn T working with Evan F, are presented in chronological order by the month they were posted on the SA website. The 4th article is an article on the fight for Trans athletes in Connecticut written by Emmett and rejected for publication in the October issue of the newspaper on 9/13/19 by the Political Committee majority. The 5th article is a recent contribution to the SA-IDB by Mike R of the Twin Cities Branch in response to Bruce L. The final inclusion is the text of a proposed censure of Bruce put forward by Chris G. This proposed censure was rejected by the PC and has been sent to the National Committee for consideration by that body.

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Trump administration attacks trans rights

By AUTUMN RAIN and ERWIN FREED

October 2018

The New York Times reported on Oct. 21 that the Trump administration is “considering narrowly defining gender as a biological, immutable condition determined by genitalia at birth, the most drastic move yet in a government effort to roll back recognition and protections of transgender people under federal civil rights law.” This announcement is one in a long line of attempts to take away trans, non-binary, and intersex people’s democratic rights.

The Trump administration has already sought to ban transgender individuals from the military, the country’s largest employer and often the sole option for the poorest workers. It has also rescinded the Obama-era guidelines on transgender access to school restrooms and homeless shelters, and has imposed new policies for the Bureau of Prisons to make “biological sex” the initial determinant in placement in prisons.

The administration has removed mention of “gender” from the Department of Health and Human Services guidelines on sex discrimination, signaling that it would be disinclined to take or investigate complaints against insurance companies, providers, or other federal health programs. It has also lobbied the UN to remove “gender” from human rights documentation.

Imposing rigid definitions of people’s gender is a worldwide phenomenon affecting trans, non-binary, and intersex people across the globe. In the UK the current Gender Recognition Act (GRA) forces trans people to go through a difficult process that makes their gender a question of medical inquiry. Similar rules pathologize being transgender in the U.S., and the Social Security Administration requires documentation from a doctor to change a person’s gender marker. It is dehumanizing to have to get permission from the government to be who you are.

Proposed changes to the GRA would drop the requirement of legal gender change being decided by a state-appointed case-board and instead implement a system of self-identification. Debate around the GRA has opened a Pandora’s box of attacks on trans people, especially trans women, within the feminist movement.

The repercussions of a new and more rigid official government definition of gender could be far-ranging. It could lead to even more intense struggles over access to bathrooms, appropriate health care, and legal protections at work. Furthermore, the

administration's sanctioning of anti-transgender bigotry will lead to a wider acceptance of discrimination and abuse far beyond the reading of the law.

Unsurprisingly, the members of the working class who do not fit neatly into ideal and abstract gender categories face a great deal of difficulties. Workplace discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation is not explicitly prohibited in U.S. federal law or in most states, and trans people report their facing discrimination in massive numbers. Transgender people are more likely to face employment discrimination, poverty, housing discrimination, homelessness, and police violence, and are disproportionately victims of homicide—especially trans women of color. And trans people are, rather astonishingly, 25 times more likely to have attempted suicide.

So-called science

The definition proposed by the Trump administration is arbitrary and unscientific, but reflects an ideologically constructed notion of strict categories in nature that reactionaries uphold. The notion of the gender binary, and the enforcement of gender roles, has been a feature of capitalist development. Though many people are born with sex characteristics that do not fit into rigid categories, the practice of surgically modifying intersex children at birth has been used to force the false notion of binary gender upon human bodies. The idea that biological sex is an immutable category based upon genitals totally erases this practice of non-consensual modifications of bodies, as well as the very real experience of people who develop intersex characteristics during puberty.

A popular “common sense” notion is that genetics are rigidly sex-specific. Men and women are said to only have XY and XX chromosomes respectively. Over the last couple of years the renowned journal *Nature* has published many articles that put to bed the idea that human bodies exist as either purely male or female at any level.

Not only do people come in all different shapes, sizes, and anatomical make-ups but so do their genes! A person who was assigned female at birth, identifies as a woman, and easily is seen as one may have XY chromosomes in her bladder, or even internal testes. Yet the Trump administration's new definition would, ridiculously, require genetic testing as the ultimate determiner in disputes!

Political economy of trans identity

What is the basis for trans discrimination? Is it based on the ill will of individuals, or does it have a deeper relationship to capitalism's profit making core?

The enforcement, and reproduction, of gender roles is quite useful to the profit-system. The abstractions of "man" and "woman" are helpful in establishing the subordinate role of one to the other, just as white supremacist racism is useful in establishing the subordinate role of a group of workers of color.

Capitalism relies upon "surplus" populations: a portion of the workers who are unemployed or precariously employed. The exploitation of the working class demands a section of the class that cannot find paid work easily, and can be moved in and out of employment quickly. Thus the threat of replacement workers helps to keep the cost of employed workers' wages down, and the presence of a reserve army of labor helps to facilitate the many overturns of workers into and out of employment demanded by a system constantly revolutionizing the means of production. In the U.S., the temporary demand for workers of color and for women workers in World War II stands as a prime example.

Trans people are forced into this reserve army of labor disproportionately and almost as a matter of definition. From discrimination in housing and on the job, frequent loss of family support, and struggles over safe, adequate, and gender-appropriate health care, trans people are forced to endure struggles that render stability nearly impossible. Long-term poverty and joblessness are extremely likely.

Attacks on the reserve army of labor, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, are attacks on the working class as a whole. They include austerity measures like cutting welfare and social spending. Taking rights and services from trans, non-binary, and intersex people reduces the welfare of all working people, and increases the power and prosperity of the bosses and their class.

There is much to be said about the consumptive behaviors demanded by gender roles. Prime examples are the "pink tax," in which products marketed to women (razors, deodorants, etc.) are more expensive, enforced by social pressure to buy arbitrarily gendered commodities. This is an aspect of capitalism that is, ultimately, secondary to women's and trans oppression as a whole, and is in the last analysis a product of competition between capitalists. Still, the fact of separate markets for men and women re-enforces social segregation based in the home and the workplace.

Women, trans and cis, are burdened not only with smaller salaries and more precarious labor, but also larger expenses, e.g., make-up, artificially high commodity prices for gender specific products, and for trans women special products to make “passing” as female easier.

The gender roles that the family demands continue to reemerge with every crisis and every new austerity measure that pushes the costs of social reproduction onto the backs of workers themselves. The caricatures of “deadbeat dads” and “welfare queens” are invoked to reinforce the notion that the ruling class has no responsibility to provide care to the people whom it exploits for all its wealth. Similar is the image of the trans woman who is “really” a man who wants free things from the government. There was much rhetoric around this when Trump originally proposed cutting funding for trans specific health care in the military.

Democrats: Road to nowhere for trans rights

In 2006-2007, the Democrats faced a crisis of legitimacy. They had campaigned hard as the “sane” and “progressive” response to the “embarrassing” George W. Bush administration. After co-opting social movements through the threat of what another term with a Republican majority would mean and the promise of a Blue Wave, the Democrats won a majority in the House and the Senate. Even with this majority and literally decades of promising to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would make discrimination on sexual orientation and gender identity illegal, the Democrats never were seriously going to fight for LGBTQIA rights. Instead, the Obama administration merely offered new trans-friendly guidelines for federal agencies that were just as easily revoked as they were introduced.

The liberal wing of capitalism and their party, the Democrats offer policies that are a dead-end for all but the most wealthy or upwardly mobile queer people (an exceedingly small minority within a minority). The Democrats, who are openly a party of landlords and real estate agents, will never give trans people the right to cheap or free quality public housing. One of the main issues plaguing the community will therefore go unaddressed and reproduce housing discrimination and homelessness that keep trans people as the most vulnerable human material to be ground through the teeth of capital.

Material issues plaguing those groups who are considered “surplus populations”—free gender appropriate health care, employment benefits like a shorter workweek and more time off, funding for education, accessible housing, etc.—are forever on the chopping block through the austerity politics of both ruling parties. Only the construction of

independent mass movements and of an independent mass party of workers can address the fundamental issues faced by queer people.

Trans people are a small but substantial section of the working class, and their interests intersect with many other hyper-exploited groups. Fights over bathroom access and ease of changing gender markers are crucial. They are in line along with fights over rights to appropriate health care, housing, employment, and for protections from police as material issues that would threaten the security of capitalist profits, and are therefore off the table for the Democratic Party.

Building the struggle

We have no faith in the twin parties of capitalism to support the liberation of transgender people. Instead, we see trans liberation as an inseparable and fundamental part of class struggle. It is necessary to build mass mobilizations in the street to fight for, and win, demands for trans rights. And that will entail forging bonds of solidarity with other sections of the working class, building united fronts capable of challenging the political domination of capital.

Capitalism is a system of social relations, not personalities. We do not seek to appeal to the moral hearts of the ruling class; we seek to overthrow the class system itself. Revolution is the only way to eliminate the existing systems of domination, like patriarchy and cis-sexism, and to prevent their re-emergence. In place of a society directed toward profit-making for the few, we want to create a system consciously organized for the fulfillment of human needs and desires, predicated on bonds of solidarity.

The movement for women's liberation, trans and cis, is growing. During and after the hearings for Kavanaugh's appointment to the Supreme Court, there were demonstrations in hundreds of cities that included hundreds of thousands of people. In New York City, Grand Central Station was occupied by thousands in a sit-in organized by a coalition of socialist and feminist groups. Following these most recent maneuvers by the Trump administration, dozens of unions have reaffirmed their commitment to protecting the rights of trans workers in and out of their bargaining units. In Argentina, factory workers have gone on strike against discrimination towards their trans co-workers.

Fighting for trans liberation means fighting for the rights and power of working people. The struggle is over who decides the priorities and social provisioning in our societies. Socialists must participate in the existing mass mobilizations for women's rights, trans rights, and the rights of all oppressed groups and work to bring them together on a

class-struggle basis. In our unions the role of a revolutionary is to be the tribune of the people, to take that basic organization of class power and use it as an apparatus to fight for democratic and political rights in all spheres. This is the way forward towards working class power and social revolution.

Japan's highest court upholds sterilizations for trans people

By AUTUMN RAIN

January, 2019

The Supreme Court of Japan upheld an abhorrent law that explicitly requires trans people to be sterilized in order to have their gender recognized by the state—a terrible blow to trans people's rights, and reproductive rights generally.

Trans people are denied the right to have their gender legally recognized in many countries. But even where they have attained this basic right of recognition, they face other forms of state repression.

In Japan, Law 111 allows for legal recognition of a trans person's gender identity after transition. But it explicitly demands that the transition entail sterilization and surgical alteration of genitalia, which is not something universally desired by transgender people. Law 111 was challenged by Takakito Usui, a trans man, but the Supreme Court of Japan upheld the law as constitutional on Jan. 24.

Among the governments of the world that allow individuals to legally change their gender, many still require medical or surgical interventions that lead to sterilization. Though the European Court of Human Rights ruled against these sorts of requirements in 2017, 14 European countries continue to demand sterilization as part of gender recognition (source: Transgender Europe)! And many states in the U.S. continue to demand surgical intervention to change important documents like birth certificates and state IDs, leaving pre-op and non-op transgender individuals at risk of being outed in a country with extremely weak protections, where they exist, against discrimination.

It is important to note that most governments where gender recognition is possible (including the U.S.) pathologize the state of being transgender, forcing trans people to go through a difficult process that makes their gender a question of medical inquiry. So even where invasive surgeries are not required, transgender people face hurdles wherein states treat them as abnormal medical subjects.

But being trans is not a disease, and no one can vouch better for the gender identity of a person than the person herself. Instead of allowing the governments of the world to determine arbitrarily and cruelly which bodies should be deemed authentic, and which surgeries should be required of trans people regardless of their own desires, we should trust that no people other than themselves can determine their own gender identities.

Mere self-identification is the only thing that should be needed to legally change one's gender.

It is dehumanizing to have to get permission from the government to be who you are, yet there are only a few countries in the world (such as Ireland) where people may legally change gender with a mere statutory self-declaration. We must stand in solidarity with the movements in the world for self-identification, for rights to gender recognition, and against the pathologization and repugnant violations of bodily autonomy by all states against trans people in the world.

Furthermore, we need a trans inclusive reproductive justice movement that accounts for the myriad experiences within the working class, and the various ways in which the right to reproduce is denied to workers. The denial of bodily autonomy is paramount for the ruling-class goal of disciplining the workforce and creating oppressed "surplus" populations.

Heritage Foundation panel speak against transgender rights

By AUTUMN RAIN and ERWIN FREED

February 2019

On Jan. 28, the Heritage Foundation, a right-wing and anti-LGBTQIA group, hosted a panel titled, “The Inequality of the Equality Act: Concerns From the Left.” The speakers were trans-exclusive radical feminists (TERFs) who argued against rights for transgender people, ostensibly “from the left.” Yet one would rightly ask why self-avowed leftists would (1) make the denial of rights to one group of people their central political goal and (2) accept help from a notorious reactionary institute to elevate their platform.

The views held by TERFs are anything but leftist, and they have a long and sordid history courting the right.

Speakers on the panel opposed the Equality Act, a Congressional bill that would amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act to explicitly prohibit discrimination of LGBTQIA people, and specifically based on “gender identity.” Instituting protections for trans people would, in their view, have a deleterious effect on cis lesbians, gays, and bisexuals.

Panelist Hacsí Horvath, who formerly identified as transgender, called being transgender “the new eating disorder” and “the new goth.” He made wild claims that children are being manipulated into transitioning at a young age by the media and doctors, a fantasy that mimics the outdated right-wing conspiracy of homosexual “recruiters.”

In truth, World Professional Association for Transgender Health guidelines recommend giving options to children who consistently, persistently, and insisently express an identity other than the one assigned them, and desire to transition.

Julia Beck, who was removed from the Baltimore LGBTQ Commission for her transphobic views, used her time to mock a trans woman for identifying as a lesbian. In her view only cis women can be lesbians. She claimed that the “T” in the LGBT acronym is opposed to the first three letters, meaning that advancing transgender rights will only take rights away from gays, bisexuals, and especially lesbians. Beck believes that gender identities “erase” homosexuals, and that trans men, denied the right to

transition, would and should become lesbians. She lamented, “we are losing an entire generation of sisters to this madness.”

Two panelists on the 28th were members of the Women’s Liberation Front (WoLF), a group that sued the Obama administration to remove bathroom protections for trans students. These protections, in the form of federal guidelines, were revoked by the Trump administration.

WoLF member Jennifer Chavez, who is a staff attorney for Earth Justice, according to their website, read letters from transphobic parents describing the disgust they had for their trans children’s identities and choices. While we were meant to sympathize with the parents, it was actually a rather brutal reminder of the homelessness afflicting young trans people due to family abuse and rejection.

WoLF co-chair Kara Dansky called the movement for trans rights a “men’s rights movement,” comparing activism for transgender rights to a movement that has committed very high-profile anti-women terror attacks in recent years. In her view, the transgender movement will cause women’s rights to “utterly disappear,” and that women are legally “erased” when trans rights are advanced in law. Dansky, whose bigoted views are quite public, is currently general counsel of the Sentencing Commission of Washington, D.C., where she is empowered to determine what constitutes “fair” sentencing of individuals charged with crimes in the District.

TERFs and the political right

WoLF’s political courting of the right is not an aberration, nor is their collaboration with the Heritage Foundation. WoLF has even been the recipient of funding from the political right, including a \$15,000 grant from “The Alliance Defending Freedom,” which has supported the re-criminalization of homosexuality in the U.S. And WoLF collaborated with the Christian fundamentalist Family Policy Alliance in sending a joint amicus brief to the Supreme Court to argue against trans student Gavin Grimm’s right to use the boy’s bathroom at his high school.

WoLF is not alone. “Hands Across The Aisles” also seeks a united action between radical feminists and the Christian Right against trans rights. The group reached out to HUD secretary Ben Carson in hopes that he could be convinced to forbid homeless trans women from using women’s shelters. Members include Kara Dansky and Miriam Ben-Shalom, the lesbian activist who fought for years against the military’s “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” policy. Ben-Shalom has subsequently refocused her activism on attempting to thwart trans rights, and in 2016 Ben-Shalom was disinvited from being the grand

marshal of the Milwaukee Pride Parade for her transphobia and opposition to bathroom protections.

The members of the right who collaborate with TERFs consciously view the work as a divide-and-conquer strategy. The director of “Concerned Parents and Educators of Fairfax County” Meg Kilgannon explained this succinctly: “For all of its recent success, the LGBT alliance is actually fragile, and the trans activists need the gay rights movement to help legitimize them. Gender identity on its own is just a bridge too far. If you separate the T from the alphabet soup, we’ll have more success.”

TERFs and socialists

It is extremely unsettling to find transphobia in the LGB community, and see homophobic talking points reworked in service of the anti-trans agenda. But we should not at all be surprised when alliances are made by so-called “feminist” transphobes with the right, as their central political goal is the denial of rights to trans people.

The error many of us make is concluding that self-avowed LGB “radicals” and self-avowed “feminists” should be taken at their word. There is nothing feminist about fighting to throw certain women into men’s bathrooms and, worse, men’s prisons. There is nothing radical about denying children the right to transition despite expressing persistent and consistent desire to do so. And it’s reactionary, rather than progressive, to side with right-wing fundamentalists in their stated cause of furthering oppression of transgender people. In short, socialists must oppose the ideology and activism of TERFs and instead embrace the fight for trans liberation all over the world.

Political rights for trans people is an essential part of today’s class struggle. Right-wing organizations understand this basic fact and are doing everything they can to confuse the movement. Reactionaries have no problem offering a hand “across the aisle” to individuals and groups that can give them “leftist” credentials. They know that this allows them to enter into political coalitions with a section of the organized left that puts breaks on the left’s organizing united fronts that can effectively contest the bosses’ power.

By separating gender oppression from the larger struggle against oppression, and by extension class exploitation, in general, the right succeeds in politically isolating different sections of the left from each other. Obvious partnerships, like the lesbian and trans movements, are instead put onto opposing sides of the barricades.

Trans people are an extremely vulnerable and oppressed part of the working class, and the class struggle cannot advance when trans-specific demands are abandoned. Our

aim as socialists must be to unite the various struggles of workers and oppressed people based on the principle that “an injury to one is an injury to all.”

The text of the article by Emmett that was rejected by the PC Majority on 9/13/19

In central Connecticut, two high school students are confronted by foes all too familiar—transphobia and racism. The students, Terry Miller and Andraya Yearwood, from Bloomfield and Cromwell, respectively, are both young trans women of color who enthusiastically participate on their schools' track teams with the support of the majority of their teammates. Suddenly, after several years of athletic accomplishment, Miller's and Yearwood's right to compete alongside young cis women on their respective high school track teams is being brought into question.

On June 24, the Alliance Defending Freedom filed a Title IX Discrimination Complaint to the U.S. Department of Education on behalf of three cis high school runners who claim that the participation of trans girls on their teams infringe on their civil rights. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Alliance Defending Freedom is a hate group that "has become one of the most influential groups informing the administration's attack on LGBT rights working with an ally in Attorney General Jeff Sessions."

This lawsuit comes as no surprise in the larger contexts of the United States and of a capitalist world. The Trump administration attacks trans people and their rights week after week. On April 12, the ban on transgender troops was put into action. The next month on May 2, the Department of Health and Human Services published documents encouraging health-care providers and insurance companies to deny health care to trans patients based on "religious beliefs."

Other forms of care that trans folks rely on were threatened as the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced plans to roll back anti-discrimination protections for trans people in homeless shelters on May 22. Aug. 14 saw the proposition of a rule that would allow refusing to hire and firing employees based on their LGBTQ+ status. Just two days later, on Aug. 16, the Department of Justice issued a statement saying that federal law "does not prohibit discrimination against transgender persons based on their transgender status."

It's clear that the two young athletes have an uphill battle ahead of them, but they're prepared to fight. Terry Miller pledges to "continue to fight for all trans people to compete and participate consistent with who [they] are. There is a long history of excluding Black girls from sport and policing our bodies." According to the *Hartford Courant*, Miller insists that she is "a runner and she will keep running and keep fighting for her existence, her community and her rights."

Andraya Yearwood told the *Courant* that she hopes "that the next generation of trans youth doesn't have to fight the fights" that she has and that "they can be celebrated when they succeed, not demonized."

For the next generation," she said, "I run for you!" In response to critics who imagine that trans girls face the challenge of competition differently than cis girls, Yearwood explained to the *Courant*, "I am lucky to live in a state that protects my rights and to have a family that supports me. This is what keeps me going. Every day I train hard—I work hard to succeed on the track, to support my teammates, and to make my

community proud.”

Connecticut does have more protections in place for trans people than many other states, but it wasn't always this way. It is one of at least 17 states that allow trans high school athletes to compete without restrictions, and these rules were put in place due to the tireless work of activists across the state over decades.

In 2002, after several years of building a grassroots coalition of trans rights activists, It's Time Connecticut and over 20 other groups organized the state's first Transgender Day of Remembrance vigil in Hartford. Attended by 100 trans people, allies, and community members, the success of this vigil helped shape ITCT into the CT Trans Advocacy Coalition (CTAC). Since then, the CTAC and other organizations have continued to fight for and win protections and freedoms for trans people across the state.

In 2015, a birth certificate law was passed in Connecticut, allowing a trans person's gender marker to be changed to align with their gender identity without requiring surgery. Guidelines for homeless shelters and schools detailing gender identity and expression were created. The work has made it easier for trans high school students to avoid overt bigotry and related trauma in adolescence.

Seventeen years of grassroots collaboration in defense of trans rights in the state meant that when Miller and Yearwood became the victims of the Alliance for Defending Freedom, 16 Connecticut rights organizations—including New Haven Pride Center, Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence, Planned Parenthood, the ACLU, and National Abortion Rights Action League—put out a letter in their support, saying, “Together, we reject unfounded fears about transgender athletes in our state and reject the suggestion that cisgender women and girls benefit from the exclusion of women and girls who happen to be transgender. Instead, we recognize that all women and girls are harmed when some are denied opportunities to participate in sports because of stereotypes and fear.”

Right-wing groups, like the Alliance Defending Freedom, however, continue to try to divide cis and trans women by claiming that trans inclusion will destroy the modest protections for equality of the sexes that is codified in Title IX. The National Women's Law Center has put the lie to this claim. Neena Chaudhry, the general counsel for the National Women's Law Center, in a recent editorial for the *Washington Post*, argues that in terms of the law, “gender” is treated as “sex,” and protections against gender discrimination do nothing to change the protections available under Title IX for cis women. Gender rights do “not change Title IX or the landscape that schools face, because courts have already found that Title IX protects against gender-identity discrimination,” she wrote.

This legal logic is also codified in the Equality Act, which passed the House in May and which, Chaudry says, “makes clear that discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is illegal sex discrimination, and it closes long-standing gaps in some civil rights law by adding protections from sex discrimination.” The use of the threat of loss of Title IX protections by the right to limit trans inclusion is just the old divide-and-conquer technique with new language.

Despite these clear analyses by feminist legal advocates like Chaudry, Selina Soule, a

teammate of Miller and Yearwood and one of the three young women who are complainants in the Alliance Defending Freedom suit against them, remarks: “Girls should never be simply spectators in their own sport, they deserve to compete on a level playing field.” (*CT Mirror*) What level playing field is she referring to here? Certainly not one that is based on actual fairness, one that truly allows *all* girls to succeed.

Aside from this blatantly transphobic push to exclude trans girls from their sports teams, this complaint is also problematic in its reduction of the two girls to being scholarship thieves. In a recent issue of *OutSports*, Robin McHealen, Executive Director of True Colors Inc., a Hartford-based support and advocacy organization for LGBTQ+ youth, explained just how ludicrous was Soule’s claim that trans girls were denying her an athletic scholarship. “Around 100,000 athletic scholarships are awarded by the nation’s colleges and universities, and 98% of high school student-athletes will not earn one,” she was quoted as saying. “Is this a realistic concern because of these two girls running?”

The idea that the road for more financial aid for students wishing to attend college runs through trans-exclusionary policies for high school sports is ludicrous on the face of it, but this illogical assertion will die a hard death given its value to reaction.

Also worth noting is the role that race is playing here: As people of color are pushed aside and ignored, so are their talents, passions, and achievements. Devaluing women of color in sports is a common thread in the attacks on trans athletes of all ages. Caster Semenya, an Olympic runner from South Africa, has received constant berating and backlash from people who label her as a man due to her body naturally producing more testosterone than what is “typical.” Contrast Semenya’s case with Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps and it’s clear that, in the eyes of society, not all bodies are created equal. Due to genetic mutations, Phelps’ body is almost *made* for swimming. His arm span is greater than his height, enabling him to make greater strokes and his body naturally produces less lactic acid, meaning it takes more for him to become fatigued. These traits give him a clear advantage over other swimmers, but are praised as biological blessings.

Yet Semenya is attacked left and right and dehumanized for her higher-than-average testosterone levels, which do not definitively give her an advantage. Aside from the fact that this type of thinking only serves to perpetuate the policing of women’s and Black bodies, this is problematic in that it serves to oppress women and reinforce damaging stereotypes. It also creates a context for the effort of the far right to roll back gender discrimination legislation and discipline the population to perform only as two distinct, mutually exclusive gender groups.

The stakes in the Connecticut struggle to support Miller and Yearwood are huge. On the one side are queer and women’s advocacy groups defending progressive rules won through struggle. On the other is an ultra-conservative think tank and action group whose leaders speak of uniting the church and state, recriminalizing homosexuality and abortion, and otherwise turning back the clock.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Alliance Defending Freedom, “[u]ses its international platforms, works with policymakers and other organizations to

outlaw abortion, deny equality and marriage to LGBT people worldwide, and continue to push for a hard-right Christian theocratic worldview that is reflected in legislation and policies.”

Could such a firm actually be an aid to reinforcing sex equality? Of course not! The firm is predatory in its use of students across the country; it seeks out and capitalizes on any instances of homophobia, transphobia, and sexism with legal potential. Clearly, the ADF did not pick up this case to protect women’s rights or defend Title IX but to lead an offensive on trans folks by pushing for rollbacks in protective legislation. Soule and the two other girls on whose behalf the ADF is supposedly working are not truly being defended; they are being exploited. The law firm is using them as tools to drive a wedge between different oppressed groups within the working class. The welcoming of the ADF into the White House as a consultant demonstrates that powerful sections of the U.S. ruling elite share this agenda and modus operandi.

Only a united movement in defense of transgender and cisgender women’s rights will be powerful enough to slow and reverse this offensive. The defense of Miller and Yearwood is a key step in building such a movement. The history of the fight for women’s liberation and the end of LGBTQI+ oppression demonstrates that no rights won are safe from reversal. Offensives, like the current wave of government attacks on trans people, will not cease until the capitalist system is replaced with one not economically dependent on the subordination of women and the oppression of LGBTQI people that is the corollary of this social set-up.

Two Ways Forward - Inclusion or Death

Mike R, Twin Cities, SA-IDB contribution

My name is Mike R, and I'm a member of the twin cities branch. I've been a member of SA for the good part of 15 years now. My life got very busy, and I've been unable to contribute to the party in the way that I would like for the last few years. Things are still very busy, so my ability to contribute to this discussion will be limited, but I have been following and have read every contribution up until now.

I joined believing I was a man, and in the last couple of years discovered that I am transgender. I haven't completed this journey yet, but as of right now I prefer to use they/them pronouns, though he/him is just fine too.

That's just to say I have some skin in this.

Bruce writes on bathrooms for trans people:

"...revolutionary socialist[s] might propose the building of single-person spaces (bathrooms, locker rooms, whatever) alongside the existing multi-person male and female spaces. The single-person spaces would be open to anyone, would provide full privacy and would not impinge on anyone else's space."

When I read this suggestion, my heart literally began to pound in my chest from fear. This is tantamount to forcing trans people to out ourselves every time we go out in public, which makes us bigger targets than we already are, and protects no one.

Our choice of bathroom isn't just a preference, it's for our own safety. Trans women are assaulted by men too.

A third of cisgender women have been sexually assaulted, and that number is tremendous to be sure. However, half of all transgender people have been sexually assaulted.

Stats taken from here:

<https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics>

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-assault-and-the-lgbt-community>

If you are transgender, you are more than twice as likely to live in poverty as the cisgender population (12% vs. 29%), and have a 3x higher unemployment rate (5% vs. 15%). And nearly 30% of all transgender people experience homelessness in their life time.

Source:

<https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>

This stereotype that trans women are secretly men "infiltrating" cisgender women spaces is reactionary and absurd. A person who is assigned male at birth opts in to multiple layers of poverty and oppression just by coming out as trans. Cisgender men are far more effective predators presenting as men than they would be if they pretended to be women.

And as our VP candidate Heather B previously mentioned about trans women in the shelter they work at:

"We accept trans women and have had no issues. It is true that a man could pretend to be a woman and sneak into a shelter. Abusers can be calculating, relentless, cruel, and obsessive in many ways. It is actually far more likely that an abuser would recruit a female friend, relative, or current partner to enter a shelter. So, excluding trans women from shelters would not make women safer, as women themselves can be used to undermine other women."

As far as sports are concerned, transgender athletes already exist and are competing. We don't need to speculate on this one, it's already been happening for a decade.

This isn't my wheelhouse, so I'll just leave you a couple articles by Katelyn Burns who has written extensively on this topic.

<https://everydayfeminism.com/2017/01/no-unfair-advantage-trans-athletes/>

<https://www.wired.com/story/caster-semenya-and-the-twisted-politics-of-testosterone/>

Bruce writes about children:

"Some in the trans community have pushed for rapid medical intervention for minors with gender dysphoria – a diagnosis that means different things to different people."

This is not true, gender dysphoria has a medical definition, and those in the transgender community know what it is. This language is intended to cast aspersions on the transgender population's ability to diagnose our own lived experiences.

Continued -

"On one extreme is the belief that a female "essence" is born within a biologically male body (or vice versa.) On the other extreme is the notion that there is no limited set of objectively valid female or male feelings, desires or preferences but only

socially constructed stereotypes. Doctors disagree as to whether early medical intervention for children claiming gender dysphoria – including puberty blockers, hormones and surgery - is ethical, appropriate or even efficacious."

This is sensationalist pseudoscience. Puberty is tremendously painful for transgender kids both physically and psychologically. Puberty blockers are a stop gap measure to pause puberty before it makes permanent changes to a youth's body, and then they can decide to continue on with hormones, or surgery, or nothing.

Puberty blockers are 100% reversible. Puberty is not reversible.

More information here:

<https://youtu.be/sgKuVY-s75w>

As far as the efficacy of hormone therapy, it's tremendously effective in treating gender dysphoria. This is well documented.

"Cross-sex hormone therapy has been shown to have positive physical and psychological effects on the transitioning individual and is considered a mainstay treatment for many patients."

"Many patients may have concurrent mood disorders related to their gender dysphoria, and experienced providers may have success alleviating the severity of these symptoms by allowing the patient to begin the medical transition process."

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5182227/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/treatment/>

Bruce writes extensively about how trans people "adopt gender stereotypes traditionally corresponding to the opposite sex", but this itself is just a stereotype. Trans people dress and act in multitudes of different ways, just like cisgender people!

We are more than our genitals, and those are none of your damn business anyways. Like I said above, trans people opt into multiple levels of oppression by coming out as trans, yet we still do. We lose our jobs, our friends, family, and our comrades. Yet we still exist. If you want to boil our existence down to stereotypes, you're evaporating entire human beings.

The trans population is an oppressed group, and we deserve your solidarity. What's more, we're not a hard sell that capitalism needs to go, many are already there. Bruce wants to paint us as people who want to take rights away from cisgender women, but the opposite is true. We have the same interests, and even those of us who can't get

pregnant are fierce defenders of abortion rights, because we know what it's like not to have control over our own bodies.

And quite frankly, many other socialist groups have sizeable transgender contingencies. This is not a difficult question, comrades.

I once read somewhere that coming out as trans was like taking off a pair of gloves that you didn't know you were wearing your whole life, and touching something for the very first time. This has absolutely been my experience. Living for 33 years as a man couldn't make me a man.

When I say inclusion or death, I meant that literally. Transition services, gender inclusive health care, and a supportive community helps trans people immensely. And if we're serious about recruiting and keeping trans people in this organization, that's where we need to start.

***Proposal to September 13, 2019 Political Committee Meeting
By Chris G.***

Motion to Censure Bruce L. For Creating an Environment Hostile to Trans Comrades

Whereas, in the course of the SA Literary Discussion launched by the April 22, 2019, document called "Revolutionary Socialism and Trans Gender Politics," Bruce L. has deliberately misgendered trans people, mockingly calling "trans women" "trans men," or lately, "trans identified men," and vice versa;

And Whereas, trans comrades and allies have explained over and over in written and oral form that this misgendering is a tactic used by the far right to mock and harass trans people;

And Whereas, Bruce also posted numerous contributions denying the legitimacy of the gender expression of trans women (for example, in the recent document "In Defense of Women's Sports," he says: "Ask a trans identified male how they "know" they are a woman and they'll rattle off a list of stereotypical female characteristics and behaviors that they admire and embrace. This not only objectifies and demeans women, it artificially limits the attributes, behaviors and preferences that are allowed to be associated with being male.")

And Whereas, trans comrades have repeatedly explained to the whole party that these assertions by Bruce were experienced as a denial of their right to exist and have made Socialist Action feel like a hostile place (see contributions by Emmet and Mike R.);

And Whereas, trans comrades and allies have repeatedly asked Bruce to stop these activities and desist from creating an environment that is transphobic and hostile to the goal of trans-inclusive life in Socialist Action (see contributions by Sam, Ian, Mark, Mike R., David K., Evan F., Chris G., Hutch, Dan, John K. and others);

And Whereas, Bruce has refused all requests to cease misgendering and mocking the gender expression of transitioning or transitioned people;

And Whereas, in the contribution called "In Defense of Women's Sports" (p. 5), Bruce referred approvingly to the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory that the Jewish financier George Soros was one of the key sources of so-called "gender extremism," intensifying the alarming character of his posts;

And Whereas, the Political Committee, between meetings of the National Committee, is the body responsible for ensuring, according to the statutes of the Fourth International*, that SA comrades can live in an organizational space free from racism, sexism,

ableism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and transphobia, this body censures Bruce for creating an transphobic environment in our party and urges that he immediately cease the above cited activity.

* On Lesbian/Gay Liberation, Resolution, Aug. 10, 2003

* <http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article177>

27. In our revolutionary Marxist current, we have a conception of social and sexual liberation for LGBTs that goes beyond the limited demand of formal equality within capitalist society. We seek a profound revolution in gender relations and a society where, as heterosexual privilege begins to disappear, sexual identities are unlikely to be constructed in the same way as today.

The 'private' sphere - where women as well as LGBTs are more oppressed and where their oppression is more complex - is where we have to question our habits. That struggle is fundamentally an ideological one against patriarchal and heterosexist society, as well as their value systems and practices, which demands organized discussion in the sections, not only at the leadership level, but also in our base structures and cadre formation. Heterosexist prejudice must be fought in the sections by all their members.

In the words of the 1979 resolution on women's liberation, 'We have no illusions that sections can be islands of the future socialist society floating in a capitalist morass, or that individual comrades can fully escape the education and conditioning absorbed from the everyday effort to survive in class society... But it is a condition of membership in the Fourth International that the conduct of comrades and sections be in harmony with the principles on which we stand... We strive to create an organization in which language, jokes, personal violence and other acts expressing chauvinist bigotry are not tolerated'.