

ANTI★CAPITALIST RESISTANCE SAYS NO TO TRANSPHOBIA! NO TO QUEERPHOBIA!

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In 2015, drag artist and activist Michelle Tea started the first Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH) in San Francisco, USA. This child-friendly reading event to promote books and diversity has become a global cultural phenomenon that showcases an inclusive queer culture. The idea is both to establish positive role models and to resist attempts by bigots to cast queer people as sordid or threatening to children.

Opposition to DQSH arose from [expected](#) directions. Reactionary conservatives, fascists, and religious extremists have always attempted to spark outrage by mischaracterising drag and queer culture as inherently sexual, and therefore inappropriate for younger people. They imply that DQSH is a part of a conspiratorial agenda to corrupt youth, embellishing this fabrication with their other prejudices.

Their aim is to shift the idea of what is socially acceptable closer to their hateful worldview, one that not only denies queer existence but that would further marginalise racially oppressed people, women, disabled people, and others. They understand that when faced with opposition, the liberal impulse is to make seemingly small concessions that result in a general retreat towards barbarism. Trans people (and all marginalised people) are easily depicted as extremists for demanding liberation in a society that regards them as aberrant. Liberals soon abet the far right, because however well-meaning, too many of them have no skin in the game and can be moved to betray those who do.

Worse than such progressives, however, are prejudiced opportunists within working-class and marginalised movements. Sometimes, they even make common cause with the far right to pursue their bigotries, which fatally undermines the liberating solidarity we need to develop the hopes of socialism and freedom.

One such group is the gender-critical (GC) feminist movement, which has two origins. The first is in a conservative religious pseudo-feminism that attempts to divide the feminist movement with anti-choice rhetoric. The second arose out of the failures of the labour movement to loudly champion women's humanity. GC feminists either reject a socialist understanding of women's oppression as rooted in class society, or propose a 'two-systems' theory whereby a socialist explanation is unnecessarily supplemented by one based on biology. The latter system, which does not reflect the actual history of women's oppression, is the radical feminist theory of gender.

Radical feminism is not always transphobic. Its leading figures include the late Andrea Dworkin, who adopted admirably pro-trans viewpoints. In *Women Hating* (1974), she wrote, '*We are, clearly, a multisexed species which has its sexuality spread along a vast continuum where the elements called male and female are not discrete.*'



However, trans-inclusive radical feminism is an anomaly, because it is at odds with radical feminism's understanding of oppression. It has become a minority view within a movement that primarily draws in women who are anti-trans. Moreover, the GC viewpoint—which is broader than radical feminism—is a big-tent transphobia, encompassing perspectives which, however contradictory, share a foundational hatred of transgender people. In this way, radical feminists can share politics with misogynists like Donald Trump, while veiling their views behind defences of 'biological sex' and other dog whistles.

Trans-exclusive radical feminists (TERFs) have a political background that should make them [blush](#) at allying with fascists. However, there are no such qualms among their apolitical copycats, who range from washed-up celebrities to alienated middle-class reactionaries who are radicalised on Mumsnet. [Extensive evidence shows](#) that the [GC](#) movement has allied with fascist groupings like Patriotic Alternative to engage in deplorable activities such as protesting DQSH events. Unfortunately, during our current culture wars, they also get coverage from the liberal press.

As usual, the British left has a shoddy profile on this matter of solidarity as well. For example, Nabil Abdurashid, the semi-official comedian of respected new left media outlet Double Down News, tweeted 'I don't know why everyone is so scared of the vaccine? My brother just had it a few weeks ago, and she's fine!' He also used his 2022 year-in-review video to make bad pronoun jokes. That video failed to mention the waves of reactionary transphobia that have been prominent across the British media and in Parliament.

Some on the left have been even more daring. Former Unite the Union leader Len McCluskey signed an overtly anti-trans open letter that was published in the *Morning Star*. Such bigotry festering in the labour movement has consequences: it gives succour to our reactionary enemies while demoralising and splintering an already weak working class.

This Saturday (11 February 2023), Patriotic Alternative will protest a DQSH event. A counter-demo is assembling outside Tate Britain Millbank. It will not be a surprise if we see GCs aligning with the racist, misogynist, and homophobic far right in their shared hatred of queer people.

A★CR makes two demands. First, to GCs who might reconsider their alliances: it is not too late to reject hate and rejoin the cause of universal human liberation. Second, to everyone else, make your rejection of fascism and transphobia loudly clear this Saturday! Let us overwhelm the fascists and their GC allies with a message of acceptance and community self-defence.

Say NO to fascist Patriotic Alternative



Solidarity with Drag Queen Story Hour

Assemble 10am, Saturday 11 February
Tate Britain Millbank, London SW1P 4RG

A★CR believes solidarity is an absolute principle of socialism. Shirking solidarity is often presented as the easier path. That can mean betraying Palestinian or Gypsy, Roma and Traveller liberation to avoid upsetting popular prejudices in organisations toeing a bigoted line. It can mean antisemitism, the socialism of fools; or the fantasy of campism, such as in failing to amplify the Ukrainian struggle against Russian invasion; or ignoring the slaughter of disabled and clinically vulnerable people during the coronavirus pandemic; and so on.

Solidarity is not solely a means or an end for socialism; it is both our means and our end. We use solidarity to create a world where it has become second nature. To betray this duty is to cease to be socialists. **That is why we say no to transphobia, no to queerphobia, and no to the GCs and fascists!**

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