



# SOCIALIST PARTY OF MICHIGAN MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## May 2023

## Workers of Michigan Unite!

Hello Michigan socialists! We hoped you all had a fantastic May, and that your International Worker's Day (May Day) was a good one.

Workers in Michigan made their presence known with rallies and demonstrations in Detroit and Grand Rapids and other areas around the state. This year brought with it reflections on what workers have gained and struggled for. From Michigan nurses demanding better conditions for themselves and patients, to Starbucks baristas successfully organizing their workplace for the first time, to the continued struggle of college professionals from Ann Arbor to Kalamazoo to make a living wage. Labor is on the march in a way we haven't seen in a long time.

This year also brought with it an acknowledgment of sites of current and future struggle. Police brutality remains a constant for communities across Michigan, with a state principally concerned with continuing to arm and fund the police apparatus rather than give communities the resources they need. LGBTQ+ workers are dealing with an all-out propaganda assault that has seen them targeted by fascist violence and harassment.

May Day is a time for us to take stock of our victories- and in times of such intense capitalist oppression it is all the more important for us to do that. It is also the time for us to take stock of what is to be done, and how to unite the workers to collectively work towards a better world.

### **Notes from the Socialist Party of Michigan 2023 Convention**

- Currently looking for party members who can commit to attending the Socialist Party USA national convention in the fall. Those interested please reach out to the party directly.
- Is there an event in your community that you think SPMI could table at? Let us know! We are hoping to have a larger on-the-ground presence around the state this summer.
- We would like to begin distributing hard copies of our monthly newsletter around the state. If you know a friendly spot in your community where you'd be willing to drop off a stack, let us know!
- Our next meeting will be *Sunday, July 30th @ 2PM*. Location is TBA, but we will be reaching out to general membership soon about those details.

# First as Tragedy, Then as Farce

Anti-LGBTQ Bigotry in My Back Yard  
Andy Argo- SPMI Chair

It came to my attention that some reactionaries were going to be protesting an all-ages drag event in my community. While a local queer outreach organization had been targeted for online harassment recently, this was the first time I can recall a physical demonstration being organized.

The community prepared for a fascist presence with aims to disrupt the event that was taking place at a local church. Many of us still hold the memories of 2020 in the front of our minds when critical lessons about fascism were taught in our streets: tear gas shot at peaceful demonstrators- many teenagers, the Proud Boys including Kalamazoo on their brownshirt road-trip across the country that late summer.

With stochastic and legislative terrorism against LGBTQ+ people boiling over this year people took the threat seriously. This was compounded by propaganda from the Kalamazoo GOP echoing all of the lies and "groomer" tropes from the corporate media.

What ended up happening was more of a farce than a tragedy. A small number of fascists- less than a dozen, outnumbered 4:1 by community members defending their queer neighbors. Several of them, inexplicably, dressed in Bud Light costumes (which, at \$45 a piece, is a tidy profit for the Anheuser-Busch corporation). While understood as a reference to the recent manufactured outrage about Dylan Mulvaney and Bud Light, it certainly also reveals a deep misunderstanding of both the queer community in Kalamazoo and how boycotts work (if you don't like what a company is doing you probably shouldn't give them financial support).

In the farce there is tragedy. People in our communities are deeply confused about the source of their problems, and rather than interrogate the economic basis (capitalism) seek scapegoats (the queer community, African-Americans, immigrants, etc.). We can see the efficacy of capitalist propaganda at work when individuals vilify working class queer people as groomers based on propaganda devised by a **ruling class**\* rife with Jeffrey Epsteins, Donald Trumps, and many, many more who have used their positions of power to sexually abuse both children and adults.

When considering the scale of the propaganda operation it can lead one to despair. The right-wing media outlets have found it effective to dehumanize the queer community and it serves both capitalist and ideological needs- keep the working class fighting among themselves, and give the evangelical base its "red meat."

Much of the media that is not actively spreading fascist propaganda is still willfully blind to the scale of the anti- LGBTQ+ campaign, the particular nasty pieces of history repeating themselves, or engages in a false neutrality bias that frames this as a "debate between two sides of an issue" (this was essentially the response of the CBS affiliate in my town).

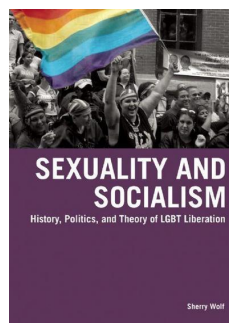
It is up to us to make sure our fellow workers do not get groomed by fascist propaganda. While we may despair at the growing violence and hateful rhetoric, there is hope in solidarity and the fact that most people in this country do not believe the fascist lies about our queer comrades.

P.S.: There were also threats to disrupt a similar drag event in my town the following week. The community came out again, with music in the air and signs of support.

The fascists didn't bother to show up.

\*<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2023/03/anti-trans-transgender-health-care-ban-legislation-bill-minors-children-lgbtq>

## Radical Recommendations



Sexuality and Socialism  
By Sherry Wolf

An essential primer on the intersection of Socialist organizing, Marxist political theory, and the struggle for queer liberation. Available at [Haymarket Books](#).

Pride (2014)

A dramatization of a group of queer activists who raised money to help families affected by the British miners' strike in 1984, at the outset of what would become the Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners campaign. A moving film about working class solidarity.

