

Mission Statement

Trans Liberation Without Permission, Apology, or Assimilation





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What is Trans Army?

Trans Army is not a formal organization or centralized group, it's a **fluid and expansive concept**, part metaphor, part praxis, and part rallying cry. It draws inspiration from the fierce survival and resistance strategies that trans people, especially Black and brown trans femmes, have always had to develop in a world structured against us. Think of it less like a traditional military and more like a **constellation of communities**, projects, and individuals who are fighting in whatever ways they can against the rising tide of fascism, anti-trans legislation, and systemic violence in the U.S. and beyond.

** It is a commitment to each other in a time of collapse.*

Origins and Meaning

Trans Army emerges from a lineage of **radical queer and trans militancy**, from **Marsha P. Johnson's** declaration of war against the police at Stonewall in 1969, to **Miss Major Griffin-Gracy** organizing inside prisons and mentoring young trans women after her own experiences of incarceration. It echoes the spirit of **Sylvia Rivera**, who co-founded the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) with Marsha, providing shelter and advocacy for trans youth long before mainstream LGBTQ+ organizations took notice.

Trans Army also draws power from less known but equally fierce figures like **Felicia Elizondo**, a Latina trans woman who survived the Tenderloin riots in 1966, and **Stormé DeLarverie**, who threw the first punch at Stonewall. **Lou Sullivan**, a pioneering trans man activist, broke ground in trans healthcare advocacy by challenging medical gatekeeping. **CeCe McDonald's** act of self-defense against a hate crime and subsequent imprisonment galvanized the modern prison abolition movement.

Mutual aid pods, self-defense groups, and underground networks of trans care follow this legacy of radical care and protection, adapting these strategies for a 21st-century fight against transphobic violence and systemic neglect.

Trans Army can be:

- A **network of mutual aid**, skill-sharing, and care infrastructures.
- A commitment to **trans-led, anti-fascist organizing**.
- The development of **guides, toolkits, and counterinsurgency strategies** to survive and fight back.
- A cultural and spiritual movement that says: *trans people are sacred, and we will not go quietly.*

This is not about armed struggle in a literal sense (though self-defense is certainly part of the picture). It's about recognizing that **we are at war**, whether we **want it or not**, with white supremacist, capitalistic, exploitative, patriarchal, destructive systems trying to erase us, and so we must strategize, build solidarity, and refuse assimilation.



What Does the Trans Army Do?

Because it's decentralized and visionary, the “actions” of the Trans Army look different depending on who's wielding the concept. But some examples of Trans Army-style work include:

- **Guides** like this one: offering concrete, actionable tools for surviving fascist times, from **legal strategies** to **mental health triage**, to **street tactics**, to **spiritual resistance**.
- **Community defense initiatives**: from collectives to **trans self-defense**, security at protests, or encrypted communications.
- **Art as resistance**: art, culture, and education that help trans people.
- **Knowledge redistribution**: making legal, historical, and tactical knowledge accessible to the most vulnerable, not just academics or nonprofits.
- **Solidarity alliances**: connecting with people sharing the same struggles with state oppression.

Ancestral Lineage

The Trans Army draws on a long line of resistance movements. Here are some of its ancestors:

- **ACT UP**: Queer militancy during the AIDS crisis, combining direct action with radical care.
- **Zapatistas**: Anti-capitalist Indigenous rebellion with horizontal structure and gender liberation as a core tenet.
- **MOVE Organization**: Black radical collective in Philadelphia violently attacked by the state for daring to live communally and independently.
- **The Combahee River Collective**: Black feminist socialists who centered interlocking oppressions in their fight against white supremacy and patriarchy.
- **Leslie Feinberg's “Stone Butch Blues” & “Transgender Warriors”**: stories of gender outlaws resisting state and gender violence.
- **STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries)**: Founded by Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, providing housing and support for trans and homeless youth.
- **Queer Nation**: Direct action activists who fought against homophobia and transphobia during the early 1990s.
- **Third World Gay Revolution**: A radical queer organization that built alliances with other liberation movements, including the Black Panthers.



Guiding Principles

Some unspoken but widely resonant values of the Trans Army include:

- **No one is disposable.**
- **We move at the speed of trust.**
- **Autonomy and mutual aid over charity and hierarchy.**
- **Skills over purity.**
- **It's all of us or none of us.**
- **We fight for and protect everyone*.**

* everyone: fascists and nazis not included.

Why Now?

The rise of fascism in the U.S. isn't theoretical, **it's happening** in real time, across school boards and state legislatures, across police precincts and federal agencies. From book bans that erase queer and black history, to drag bans that criminalize joy and gender expression; from the systematic dismantling of trans healthcare to the use of militarized police and federal task forces to enforce moral panic, it's clear: **they are building a war against us**, and in response, Trans Army doesn't just become relevant. We become inevitable.

This isn't about militarization in the traditional sense, it's about organized survival. It's about resistance by any means available, and the construction of collective power that outlives and outmaneuvers **systems designed to erase us**. We do not want war, but we will not be unarmed, spiritually, emotionally, or tactically, when one is waged against us.

When **states criminalize our very existence**, we don't fold, we build other ways to live. Mutual aid networks. Underground clinics. Radical education pods. Ghost infrastructure. Coded languages. We adapt faster than they legislate.

When medical care is denied, we **do not wait to die**. We train each other to administer hormones, to understand neuroscience, to **make our own pharmacies**, to use herbal knowledge passed down and reclaimed. We **build care webs** stronger than any single institution.

When the legal system fails, and it already has, **we don't beg for mercy**. We build our own safety nets. Legal defense collectives. Bail funds. Data dumps. Exit strategies. Refuge routes. We protect each other not out of charity, but because **that is what liberation demands**: collective defense.

When the world tells us we are too much, too loud, too queer, too trans, too sick, too impossible, we look them in the face and say: we were never meant to be possible under your system. That's the point. We are not here to be assimilated or permitted. We are here to be ungovernable.



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