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A message from Donetsk: True anti-fascism knows no reservations

written by Communists and Anti-Fascists of Donetsk
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Communists and anti-fascists rally in Donetsk on Jan. 19. Photo: United Communist Party

In the countries of the former Soviet Union, activists mark January 19 as the Day of

Anti-Fascist Remembrance and Solidarity. Following a U.S.-backed coup in Kiev, Ukraine, fueled by neo-Nazi violence, in 2014, the people of the Donbass region declared independence and formed the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. More than 10,000 people have been killed in Ukraine's war against these anti-fascist republics.

This statement from communists and anti-fascists living in Donetsk — including some who fled Ukraine under threat of death or imprisonment — addresses the selective “anti-fascism” of many left-liberal forces which is also widely seen in the U.S. and other Western countries. Translation by Struggle-La Lucha editor Greg Butterfield.

Today, we remember all those who died fighting the fascists. In 2009, Russian neo-Nazis killed attorney Stanislav Markelov and journalist Anastasia Baburova, people who set an example for all anti-fascists.

Ten years have passed and the situation has changed. Everything has become even scarier. Today, not only street gangs terrorize those who disagree with their cannibalistic ideas. In Ukraine, Nazi battalions are involved in a war against the “wrong” region, march in torchlight processions through the streets of cities, smash Roma settlements. ... The fascists have penetrated into all levels of government, and their ideology has ceased to be marginal.

Some people who call themselves anti-fascists are amazing in their obliviousness. They do not see the terror of the ultraright against people living in the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR) and the territories controlled by Ukraine. They do not notice how the state actively indulges ultrarightist sentiments and uses the fascist scum to harass people who, despite everything, retain their humanity. Such “anti-fascists” see only those crimes which are committed against them. They express solidarity with the intellectuals protesting against Putinism [in Russia], but refuse to acknowledge the people opposing

Ukrainian militarism.

We cannot say how many people have already suffered for their views. In 2014, 67 convictions for high treason were handed down in Ukraine, in 2015 the number rose to 89, and since 2016, the number has exceeded 100. Often, people who are accused of “treason” cannot afford a good lawyer, and their cases will not be covered in the media. And we know that the reasons given to make charges under this law may be quite insignificant. In addition, dissenters can be prosecuted under other laws.

We express our solidarity with all people who disagree with this state of affairs, who do not echo the chauvinists, who do not reproduce hatred. We are in solidarity with those who have been intimidated by the ultraright gangs and silenced.

Worse than the fascist is the fertile ground for dissemination of his ideas. If one day all the Nazis disappeared, the idea itself would not go anywhere. It is generated by the logic of capitalist relations, which seeks to transform all living things into commodities, and pits the exploited and oppressed against each other.

Fascism has a thousand disguises. There is no need to wait for your country to take the same path as Germany or Italy at the beginning of the last century. It is important to nip fascism in the bud. The fascists always act on the margins of bourgeois legality. They will not necessarily kill their opponents. They can also harass, humiliate and morally trample people.

We, the communists and anti-fascists of Donbass, are told to compromise with the Ukrainian authorities. But how can we concede to those who are trying to destroy us? For the fifth year, people here have been killed, robbed and denied civil rights. We live under an economic blockade. We are separated from our families. We were, in fact, driven into the ghetto under the hypocritical words that Donbass is an inseparable part of Ukraine.

We are frightened by the devaluation of human life. It is now normal to divide the victims of the fascists into the deserving and undeserving; into the good and the “pro-Russian,” as they call those who burned in the Odessa House of Trade Unions or have died or suffered during the war.

Despite the delusions of the left-liberals, we are ready to show anti-fascist solidarity.

Anti-fascism is a struggle against capitalism, which generates fascism. True anti-fascism knows no reservations.

— *Communists and Anti-Fascists of Donetsk*

