

Portland: Anti-fascist resistance is not a crime

written by Lev Koufax

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Portland, Ore., police target anti-fascist activists.

On Aug. 17, 2019, President Donald Trump took to Twitter to rant about the political left, as he often does. In this particular instance, the racist demagogue called for labeling the anti-fascist movement as a terrorist organization. The president's comments preceded a confrontation later that same day when alt-right demonstrators came to Portland, Ore., endangering its community. Antifa with broader anti-fascist community forces soundly rebuffed the right-wing hate message politically and in the streets.

In recent years, Portland has been ground zero for resistance against a fascist groundswell. Two prominent right-wing organizations, the Proud Boys and Patriot Prayer, have found a foothold of sorts in the Portland area. Subsequently, there has been a corresponding response by progressive forces who refuse to tolerate racism and fascism in their streets.

As the clashes in Portland have continued over the past several years, official documents implicate police targeting of anti-fascist activists and near sympathy for the violent right-wing extremists. [Recently released police communications demonstrate the specific targeting of left-wing activists engaging in self defense at an August 2018 event.](#) Further, the Portland Police department is shown going to serious lengths to ensure the alt-right's "free speech" and "right to bear arms" were protected. However, progressive forces have not received this same protection from the police.

Donald Trump's Aug. 17 rhetoric and law enforcement bias against the left harkens back to similar dynamics that developed after the events in Charlottesville, Va., in August 2017. Beyond Trump's comment about "good people on both sides," FBI documents revealed a new effort to target so-called "[black identity extremists](#)" was under way, ignoring the white supremacist alt-right fanned by Trump's pronouncements.

This is particularly stirring when considering the level of right-wing violence perpetrated during the Charlottesville saga. All of this tells us that the view of the ruling class and their police forces is very clear: left-wing militant resistance is criminal and neo-Nazi violence is acceptable.

What becomes even more stunning about this is the level to which this rationale flies in the face of history. It has been shown again and again that most acts of terrorism in the United States are perpetrated by white supremacists. The list of these crimes is tragic and includes the murder of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville, the fascist

attack on the El Paso Latinx community, the fatal stabbing of Ricky John Best and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche in Portland and many more. Even with all this hate and pain, the right wing is given a pass by government officials and law enforcement. Yet, the injury of one alt-right provocateur journalist at a demonstration is touted as demonstrating the supposedly unacceptable violence of progressive forces. This double standard is appalling.

Anti-fascism is not terrorism. Militant resistance against racism should not be criminal. On the other hand, neo-Nazism is the very essence of terror. When neo-Nazis march in our streets, they march in support of violence against all oppressed communities: Black people, Brown people, Indigenous people, LGBTQ2S people, Jewish people, Muslim people, all immigrants and all workers. Their hate has no bounds and in many ways reflects the true agenda of many in the ruling class. The alt-right movement is not only a shocking expression of racism and hate, but is also a political movement that has its origins in the ideology of big business and ruling-class politicians like Donald Trump.

Progressive resistance against the movement of hate is a stirring and heroic effort against racism in our communities as well as the capitalist oppression that causes it in the first place. All progressive organizations and individuals must support anti-fascist resistance and militant anti-racism. Wherever these fascists march, whether in Portland or Charlottesville or London, they will and should be met by communities unwilling to accept their hate.

Koufax is a Jewish communist and writer for Struggle-La Lucha who has participated in many anti-fascist demonstrations.



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