

A Return to Popular Antifascism

by Keystone Anti-Racist Action

This year has seen yet another rise in organized hate groups and neo-nazism throughout the world. In North America, groups such as Patriot Front, Proud Boys, The Goyim Defense League, The Blood Tribe, White Lives Matter, Project 171, National Justice Party and various offshoots of the now disbanded “Rise Above Movement” have become emboldened by their grassroots success. In a marked change from our previous plague known as the “alt right” these groups have returned to explicitly utilizing nazi imagery and tactics.

In many ways, these hate groups are operating the way they have in the past. White supremacist propaganda in the form of fliers, graffiti, music, speeches are distributed among followers, as well as those they seek to convert and those they wish to intimidate. The white supremacist propaganda machine has evolved into a slicker, more youth friendly version of itself. In the past

few years hate music has spread into different genres such as power electronics and hip hop.

At the forefront of these fascist activities are white nationalist groups. Some of their best recruitment efforts have come from the mainstreaming of fringe ideologies by corporate media as well as being acknowledged by mainstream “right wing” politicians including the previous (and current Republican frontrunner for) President of the United States. With a solid core of far right neo fascist politicians and a growing number of authoritarian left wing politicians, racist and anti-Semitic ideas are pushing the already corrupt government of the U.S. farther to the extreme. Our corporate ruling elite have been cultivating and manufacturing a dangerous new form of extreme nationalist populism.

It is important to recognize the way in which militant neo fascist and neo nazi groups grow and retain members. Like most of our society today, fascist recruitment is primarily started in online formats. The “culture wars” in society are at a fever pitch, and hate groups have been actively recruiting from these divisions. They search for disaffected people by casting a wide net into the cesspool of social media. In the physical world these groups exploit corporate and environmental disasters as well as civil unrest caused by the inequities and unbalance in our world. They claim to offer an enlightened, stronger, healthier, supportive community to those disaffected in our society. They even co-opt good ideals in order to gain influence and followers. For example, there are multiple hate organizations in Ohio advocating for organic farming, a rejection of over processed foods and for the consumption of a whole foods diet. Yet they attempt to connect these values to white supremacy. It is as much a mistake to ignore the ways in which these groups identify very real problems in our world as it is to let their completely flawed conclusions go unchallenged or unchecked.

There is a particularly disturbing trend among hate groups that must be on the radar of everyone who is involved in environmental defense. White power hate groups often push environmental degradation as a way to convert people to nazi ideology. Once again the slogan “blood and soil” is being used as a rallying cry. This concept was weaponized in the late 1800s to push racial superiority. During the Third Reich in Germany, it was catapulted into the mainstream by the Nazi propaganda machine. At its core, it is an idea that people are tied to their land based on bloodline. It preys upon economic and social insecurities by promising a secured physical, economic and cultural place. In towns such as East Palestine, Ohio various neo fascist groups showed up at the town hall meeting after a Norfolk Southern Railway freight train derailed, spilling at least 100,000 gallons of toxic chemicals. The subsequent burning of chemicals contained in other cars contributed to a massive disaster for that region. The fascists who

showed up all sought to use it as a propaganda and recruiting opportunity. One group in particular has maintained ties with the region and recently hosted a gathering, albeit covertly. In the case of East Palestine these groups were quickly identified and exposed by antifascists. This exposure dramatically hampered the fascists' plan and ability to integrate themselves into the community and those who would otherwise stand in solidarity with them. It proved once again that anyone who wants to stand for environmental justice must at the same time be explicitly and actively antifascist.

Another main component of the nazi resurgence is political action and demonstrations. The vast majority of these have been targeting "drag" or pride events but a smaller number have focused on violence perpetrated against white people by people of color. In both instances the fascist groups have semi-publicly promoted their actions but kept details private to a smaller group of people who mostly know each other. These "political actions" have tended to be aggressive shows of strength intended to intimidate, take on the "state" or shut down events. In all cases these various groups utilize the footage from these events for propaganda, often from actions that they make look big but that in reality have lasted less than a half hour.

We strongly suggest everyone reading this consider taking action against the rising fascist tide. No matter who you are, or how you choose to take action, there is a place for you on the side of antifascism. Opposition to fascism (and all of the associated social ills that come with it) is the only way to force it back into the shadows and break its publicity/propaganda machine.

All types of action are needed. These groups thrive on fear and intimidation. Challenging this through comedy, distraction, strength, diversion and volume are all great ways to break their momentum. Using drums and bullhorns to disrupt their speeches or shouts of hate can have a dramatic impact upon their messaging and even foil their attempts at producing propaganda with footage from the event. Brightly colored umbrellas to shield targeted event participants and volunteers from rightwing demonstrators can greatly increase participants' comfort and empower them to follow through with their event/celebrations. These tactics are similar to the classic abortion clinic defense where allies physically shield women seeking medical care from being exposed to grotesque images and abusive anti-choice demonstrators.

In almost every case of public facing fascist action there has been an antifascist response and confrontation to the fascists. In the small town of Chico, California residents militantly defended their pride event against known fascists. Residents of Philadelphia spontaneously shut down a Patriot Front march, sending the fascists running terrified. When the fascists made a priority of targeting 2023 Pride events, people naturally responded

to challenge these attacks using a wide array of tactics.

We should all look toward networking with other groups who want to challenge fascist action. Broadcasting information pertaining to nazi rallies among antifascists will help to have a larger response to the actions. If their rallies are known ahead of time, canvassing of the communities should be done. This will alert folks who reject fascist organizing and empower them to defend their communities.

Fascists have been utilizing online platforms to spread lies, propaganda and organize, but antifascists have been able to successfully infiltrate, hack, and monitor their activities. This work is incredibly important. Exposing hate groups and their organizers often crushes their momentum. Fascists organize in secret because they know the vast majority of the world rejects their hateful ideologies. Keeping detailed logs and files of your research is extremely helpful. It is important to take some easy practical security measures when doing this work. Utilize a VPN service to conceal your location and scrub any pictures you post or forward of metadata. If you are unfamiliar with these security practices, a quick google search will provide you with sites that can help you, often for free.

Many members of fascist groups take screen names that often give them notoriety online. They attempt to make themselves sound more intimidating with these names. Learning and knowing their real names and personal history can help make them seem less frightening. Including these names in communications about fascist activities can help others demystify the threat.

One People's Project has been tracking hate groups and individuals within those groups since 2000. Founder Daryle Lamont Jenkins has been on the front lines against many different fascist and hate groups since then. Check them out at onepeoplesproject.com and their news site Idavox.com for information on fascist groups, events and how antifascists directly confront and counter them.

Unicorn Riot also maintains an extensive online database of leaked Patriot Front chats. This information is extremely useful for learning about the inner workings of that group and its various members. This information is free for all to access.

The dangers of fascism cannot be overstated. They seek to control every aspect of our lives and subjugate/exploit the earth to their destructive agendas. Throughout history, people have had to counter this toxic ideology. We all find ourselves living in one of these times. Stand and be counted.

You have what it takes to be an anti-fascist. Together we will win.