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Introduction

It is a great honor to testify today before the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution. My name is Kyle Shideler. I am the Director and Senior Analyst for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism at the Center for Security Policy, a national security think tank founded by members of President Ronald Reagan's national security team in 1988, committed to promoting the interests of the United States on the principle of "Peace Through Strength."

For more than twelve years I have been researching the nature of ideological movements – both foreign and domestic – that represent threats to American national security and seek the overthrow of the Constitution of the United States. By studying networks organized along ideological, rather than strictly hierarchical lines, I became interested in the ideology and structure of the Antifa movement and have studied it with increasing emphasis since about 2015.

As a subversive and violent extremist international movement committed to anarcho-communist ideologies, Antifa is fundamentally committed to the abolition of the U.S. government and the violent overthrow of the United States Constitution. It is committed to the use of both subversion and violent extremism to enforce its political views by terrorizing American citizens. Antifa's activities clearly meet the definition of an organized criminal conspiracy and terrorism established by federal law.

Careful study of Antifa's primary source documents and recordings, and other materials that Antifa itself promotes and recommends to its cadres and supporters, provides open-source intelligence into the movement, its ideology, and organization. I hope that my analysis and conclusions will benefit our nation's lawmakers as they deliberate ways to improve the defense of the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

History and Ideology

As we have seen through organized violence across Europe, South America, and elsewhere, Antifa is an international movement with a long history. Antifa, or Anti-Fascist Action, identifies itself as the modern descendant of an organization of the same name established by the Soviet-controlled German Communist Party in 1932.

That organization existed for the explicit purpose of using street violence to disrupt the ability of Germany's political center – the democratic liberals, moderates, and conservatives – to organize during the waning days of the Weimar Republic. During these revolutionary periods, Marxist-Leninist doctrine emphasized the targeting of moderate and even center-left parties, seeking to alienate members of the political mainstream and force the political middle to choose between the Communist and the National Socialist (Nazi) party, to disastrous effect.

While the direct connection between this historical antecedent and today's Antifa movement is mostly conceptual, it is worth understanding Antifa in this historic context. Antifa exists for one purpose. That purpose is to engage in violence to prevent its opponents in the country's broad political center – mainline liberals, moderates, and conservatives – from politically organizing or existing in their traditional forms. The end goal of this violence is to terrorize the general public into silence and inaction, peel away a segment of the mainstream for tacit or passive support, goad authorities either into meek acquiescence or violent over-reaction, radicalize frustrated or alienated elements of the population to further alienate them

from America's founding principles and system of government, and to eliminate opposition to its efforts to undermine and ultimately overthrow the United States Constitution.

Antifa was reestablished in the 1980s, also in Germany, as the punk rock ethos of the German Squatter's Movement increasingly combined with the politics of Autonomism. Autonomism is an anarcho-Marxist ideology which was influential among Europe's communist urban guerillas of the 1960s and 1970s, including the German Red Army Faction (RAF), and the Italian Red Brigades that kidnapped and assassinated former Italian prime minister Aldo Moro and kidnapped American brigadier general James Dozier.

The ideological connection is such that the daughter of RAF co-founder Ulrike Meinhof recently described Antifa in a Swiss newspaper as the heirs of that German terror group.ⁱ Many of Antifa's most basic organizational structures such as the infamous "black bloc" came out of this period, as does their instinct to set up "autonomous zones," which we've seen play out across American cities during the ongoing unrest.

Significantly, the RAF was an asset of the Stasi, the security apparatus of the Communist East German regime, which in turn was under control of the Soviet KGB. We know this from Stasi documents discovered after the collapse of East Germany in 1989-1990.

In the United States, Antifa's development followed a similar pattern as it did in Germany. However, Antifa in the U.S. used slightly different terminology and foreign intelligence support for certain elements appear to have come from Cuba. In the United States we saw the rise of "Anti-Racist Action" (ARA) in the 1980s, first in several cities across the country, and then forming regional networks. ARA groups were oriented at recruiting among America's punk rock youth and aimed at expelling those they perceived as "neo-Nazis" from the punk music scene.

Present at the founding of the ARA in the United States were members of an organization known as the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee (JBAKC). The John Brown Anti-Klan Committee was founded as a front organization of the Weather Underground splinter group, the May 19th Communist Organization (M19).ⁱⁱⁱⁱ M19 was most famously responsible for a 1981 Brinks armored car robbery in Nyack, New York, as well as a number of other armed robberies and bombings, including the 1983 bombing of the United States Senate.

The John Brown Anti-Klan Committee promoted its view that the entire American system of government is inherently white supremacist, which was a principal position of the Weather Underground and later M19. The Committee's slogan "No KKK, No Fascist USA" is emblematic of this position and is still chanted today by Antifa. The organized violence we have seen directed against law enforcement in the United States at any rally or protest where Antifa is present reflects how this view has been internalized and weaponized. The then-extremist view that America's government and its constitutional founding principles are racist and therefore illegitimate has become mainstreamed over the past four decades.

Like an electrostatic force, the movement continues to push larger elements of the public to become more and more "anti-racist" or "anti-fascist" – as if the vast majority of Americans are not already that way – to compel normal people to believe that lack of militancy is in itself racist and fascist.

The continuity from older movements to present-day violent extremism is seen in the case of Susan Rosenberg, Vice Chair of Thousand Island Currents, an organization that serves as the fiscal sponsor of the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation.

Rosenberg is a career revolutionary –a violent extremist who was a member of the May 19th Communist Organization. Early in her career, Rosenberg stayed in Cuba as a member of the Venceremos Brigades^{iv}, which served as an assessment and recruitment operation for Cuban intelligence for the training and indoctrination of American radicals.^v

Emphasizing the racism of American society throughout her extremist professional career, Rosenberg was ultimately convicted of a range of terrorist-related felonies, from weapons and explosives violations to helping convicted cop-killer Assata Shakur escape from prison. Shakur, whose real name was Joanne Chesimard, was a member of the terrorist Black Liberation Army (BLA) who was convicted of murdering New Jersey state trooper Werner Foerster in 1973. Rosenberg helped Shakur escape prison and flee to Cuba in 1979, where Shakur still resides. President Bill Clinton pardoned Rosenberg, who had served 16 years of a 58-year sentence, in 2001.

This historical connection is important. Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza -herself described as a “trained Marxist”- identified Shakur as one of her inspirations for starting the organization.^{vi}

Thus we see the origins of the violent extremism of today’s movement to use racism as a pretext to ambush and murder American police officers, to demonize the entire police profession, and to de-fund local and state police forces.

Antifa’s Michael Novick is another relevant connection who establishes the historic relationship between the communist guerilla and terrorist movements of the 1970s and Antifa of today. Novick is former member of the Weather Underground terrorist group. He is a founding member of the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee and a founding member of Anti-Racist Action-Los Angeles.^{vii} Novick was recently identified as the web registrar of the Torch Antifa website.^{viii} Torch Antifa is one of the largest regional networks of Antifa in the United States.^{ix} In 2019 Novick travelled to Cuba as part of the 50th Venceremos Brigade, showing the substantial continuity of these movements.^x

Another Anti-Racist Action founder, Kieran Knutson^{xi}, is a leading member of the Twin Cities General Defense Committee of the International Workers of the World (IWW), a labor union with a long history of radical organizing in the United States.^{xii} The IWW General Defense Committee plays an active role in helping to organize Antifa activities. Knutson is no stranger to street-level Antifa activities. In 1996 Knutson was charged – although acquitted after a lengthy court battle – of felony assault.^{xiii}

The details of these and other radical left extremists at the core of what has become today’s Antifa/BLM movement are too voluminous to provide as testimony today, but they are a matter of public record. We at the Center for Security Policy would be pleased to assist this subcommittee with further information.

I mention these organizations and individuals only to establish that Antifa/BLM are not by any means a new movement, but reincarnations of older extremist organizations and movements, some with ties to hostile foreign governments. The young followers of radicals from the 1960s and ‘70s are now among the organizers, funders, leaders of young radicals in 2020. They have worked their entire lives for this moment. They are hardened through decades of street fighting, terrorism, murder, and imprisonment. Some have organized or fought abroad on behalf of foreign violent extremist causes. They have spent two generations or more building and training loyal and professional cadres who have organized in cells and networks across our country. They infiltrated institutions and cultivated financial support and have demonstrated an impressive return on investment.

Organization/Structure

Because of the anarchist ideology which predominates within the Antifa movement, members and supporters will frequently laugh off the notion that it is an “organization” in any meaningful sense of the word. However, the leaders understand themselves as anarcho-syndicalist, a hybrid of anarchism and Marxism-Leninism, the latter of which provides organizational doctrine and discipline. The anarchist half is symbolized by the color black; the syndicalist side by red. Hence the revolutionary heraldry of Antifa’s red-and-black logo. This alliance of seeming opposites has had firm roots since the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s.

American law enforcement and domestic intelligence have largely failed to understand the nature of the movement. Seeking a rigidly hierarchical organization, such as historically found in transnational criminal organizations such as the American Mafia or the Soviet-controlled Communist Party USA, some analysts have concluded, against all evidence, that Antifa does not exist in any meaningful sense.

This obsolete form of intelligence analysis of seeking out vertically integrated command-and-control is precisely what handicapped the U.S. from understanding horizontally organized or even un-structured networks like al Qaeda nearly two decades ago.

The reality of Antifa, as a diffuse bottom-up organization and horizontal network of networks, is better understood by law enforcement as somewhat analogous to a criminal street gang or perhaps an outlaw motorcycle gang. No serious intelligence analyst would say that the Bloods, or the Pagans Motorcycle Club, do not exist simply because they are organized principally in small self-identified groups, which taken together form national or transnational networks.

Yet despite claims to the contrary, the reality is that Antifa demonstrates an elaborate and complex but non-hierarchical structure. Websites linked to Antifa attract users who spend inordinate efforts discussing how Antifa groups can and should be organized, easily available to any intelligence professional who chooses to analyze them.

Affinity Groups

The most basic structure of Antifa is the affinity group. An affinity group is simply a small cell of individuals, known to each other, who agree to come together to participate in what they would call an “action.” Members might be actively recruited -as would have been the case in old-style Communist Party cell model- or they might simply recruit themselves and choose to self-identify with the movement. This is a more modern form of recruitment which we have seen with many extremist groups, including Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Once joining an affinity group, members are expected to participate in activities which can range from distributing Antifa recruitment literature on a college campus, to “direct action” such as an act of sabotage or property destruction or acts of violence.

The pro-Antifa website and “autonomous worker’s collective” CrimethInc provides the closest to an authoritative definition:

An affinity group is a circle of friends who understand themselves as an autonomous political force. The idea is that people who already know and trust each other should work together to respond immediately, intelligently, and flexibly to emerging situations.

This leaderless format has proven effective for guerrilla activities of all kinds, as well as what the RAND Corporation calls ‘swarming’ tactics in which many unpredictable autonomous groups overwhelm a centralized adversary. You should go to every demonstration in an affinity group, with a shared sense of your goals and capabilities. If you are in an affinity group that has experience taking action together, you will be much better prepared to deal with emergencies and make the most of unexpected opportunities.

The fact that the radicals cite a RAND study from nearly two decades ago shows that the “swarming” concept is not new for analysts of foreign terrorist groups yet is practically unknown to analysts of today’s domestic violent extremists.

Affinity groups can range between four and twenty members, but generally the smaller numbers are preferred because decisions are expected to be made through unanimous consent, and smaller numbers facilitate both decision-making and operational security. Members may be participants in multiple affinity groups, each with a different emphasis of tactics and unaware of the activity of affinity groups outside their own spheres. Multiple affinity groups may come together into what is described as a “cluster” for a planned action requiring more participants. If this needs to happen, each affinity group may nominate one of its members to participate in planning sessions, often called “spokescouncils.”

These organizational terms are not necessarily unique to Antifa. They are used by other anarchist, left-wing, and other activist groups which regularly engage in direct action. Groups committed to the Antifa movement may use other terms to refer to a similar structure.

Multiple affinity groups in each area may come together to form a single Antifa chapter, or there may be several chapters or groups within one area if there are enough individuals present. Not all Antifa groups adopt the Antifa name. According to a 2017 handbook entitled “Forming an Antifa Group,” produced by the pro-Antifa Website *It’s Going Down* explains:^{xiv}

If the purpose of your group is to do public organizing where your members are clearly identifiable—organizing anti-Trump rallies or supporting refugees and immigrants—using the Antifa label and the traditional Antifa symbols will likely lead to blowback that could be avoided by naming your organization differently. ‘Las Cruces United Against Racism’ will not draw the attention that calling yourself ‘La Cruces Antifa,’ and using traditional antifa symbolism, will.

Old-school law enforcement and intelligence analysts will recognize the different naming as “front groups,” many of which had small and overlapping memberships to project larger numbers and broader support.

The handbook goes on to note that branding one’s group as “Antifa” carries specific “obligations” which include publicly producing information about local “fascist” targets and organizing counterdemonstrations to shut down opponent’s events. Every target of Antifa is “fascist.” Every target of BLM is “racist.” These terms dehumanize the target and not only justify but require the target’s total destruction.

Also noted as an obligation,

Support other anti-fascists who are targeted by fascists or arrested for Antifa-related activities. This could include supporting regional groups or organizing benefits and fundraisers for prisoners and injured comrades.

This support extends even internationally, with many American Antifa groups promoting and fundraising for the International Antifa Defense Fund, which proudly notes that it has provided financial support to over 500 antifascists in 22 different countries. In most cases this has included hospital bills and lawyers' fees, although in at least some cases it has included emergency "relocation" assistance.^{xv} While the overall numbers in dollars are low, the International Antifa Defense Fund represents clear evidence of organizational activity across national borders.^{xvi} Again, this tradition goes back as far as the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, with Americans supportive of anarchism or communism, or tricked into thinking they were contributing to a fight against fascism, contributing money and expertise and even serving as volunteers in international brigades.

As noted earlier, city or even neighborhood based Antifa chapters can often join regional Antifa networks such as the Torch Antifa network. These relations provide additional mutual support, allow small chapters to create larger groups for direct action, and tie them into national and international networks to share expertise, skills, lessons, and manpower.

Building Blocs

During a major protest or counter-protest action, one will often see Antifa's maneuver element known as the "black bloc."^{xvii} This is the large mass of black-masked rioters who typically confront members of another demonstration or First Amendment-protected event, target law enforcement, or engage in property destruction. While the black bloc is the most common for the Antifa trademark, technically blocs can represent masses of protestors in any prior agreed-upon uniform color. Calls may go out to arrange a specific bloc color or wear other elements for propaganda purposes, or have certain groups, like women posing as angry mothers of peaceful protesters, wear yellow to generate headlines as protective "moms." This color-changing tactic can also be used to help identify those who do not belong to the bloc and prevent infiltration.

Blocs are typically one of three types: Open, Closed, and Semi-Open. Open blocs permit any individual who wishes to answer the call to participate, provided they are wearing the correct bloc uniform. In these blocs, tactics and activities are typically limited for security reasons. They are typically used wherever large numbers are required but secrecy is not.

The closed bloc permits no outsiders to participate and is used when security and secrecy are most important. Closed blocs may, for example, lay in wait outside of police protected "free speech" zones or designated demonstration locations to ambush participants coming to or from First Amendment-protected rallies and protests.

The semi-open bloc combines the most strategically useful elements of both closed and open blocs. It allows the most hard-core affinity groups that intend to engage in direct action to hide within the mass of open participants who may not be aware of all elements of the bloc's operation. It is not uncommon to see the core affinity groups break out from within a semi-open bloc in order to carry out pre-planned sabotage or violent action during a larger protest or distribute weapons and other tools for use by other members of the bloc.

The semi-open bloc is useful for the professional cadres to lure unsuspecting participants – untrained and naïve – and manipulate them into situations that put them in danger or harm. The purpose is to create real images of the unfortunate results and spread the imagery on social media to stoke more outrage against the police. New volunteers in the open bloc who show willingness to commit violence are then assessed for formal recruitment.

Support Groups and Organizations

Antifa relies on a number of organizations to provide crucial elements of support for its mission. Support organizations can be local, regional, national or international in scale.

At the national level in the United States, organizations like the Anti-Fascist Working Committee of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the General Defense Committee of the International Workers of the World (IWW), Refuse Fascism, and National Lawyers Guild (NLG)^{xviii} all provide important services to Antifa operatives, including legal and financial support, political assistance, fundraising, and organizing. In the case of the DSA, IWW, and Refuse Fascism, members of those organizations may also double as Antifa themselves.

The National Lawyers Guild serves as a type of legal auxiliary for the extremists, supporting legal defense on the one hand, and running legal offense through litigation on the other. The NLG has been a legal support organization for anti-constitutional extremists for decades, and historically was identified an appendage of the Kremlin-controlled Communist Party USA and its fronts. A video of an Antifa cell headquarters shows an NLG pamphlet instructing what to do when approached by police or the FBI.^{xix}

In a given area many regional or local organizations, political collectives, and even private businesses also provide support for Antifa activities. Former Antifa member Gabriel Nadales has noted that most in the Antifa movement are recruited from within other political left-wing activist groups, especially those with a history of illegal or quasi-legal direct action such as certain violent extremist eco-activist and animal rights groups.^{xx}

Potential prospects are usually self-motivated. Many will join open blocs, or semi-open blocs as an individual, and may face a period of substantial evaluation and vetting before being recruited into or forming their own affinity group. Recruitment typically begins early, in high schools and on college campuses among disaffected, alienated, or politically active students. Not infrequently, recruiters are teachers and professors.

Antifa cooperates with other organizations based on a set of statements called “points of unity” or POUs. These POU statements represent a baseline of agreement for working with the Antifa chapter, and regional networks of antifa typically agree to these to facilitate cooperation. A model POU is Torch Antifa’s POU statement which reads:^{xxi}

Points of Unity

1. We disrupt fascist and far right organizing and activity.
2. We don’t rely on the cops or courts to do our work for us. This doesn’t mean we never go to court, but the cops uphold white supremacy and the status quo. They attack us and everyone who resists oppression. We must rely on ourselves to protect ourselves and stop the fascists.
3. We oppose all forms of oppression and exploitation. We intend to do the hard work necessary to build a broad, strong movement of oppressed people centered on the working class against racism, sexism, nativism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination against the disabled, the oldest, the youngest, and the most oppressed people. We support abortion rights and reproductive freedom. We want a classless, free society. We intend to win!

4. We hold ourselves accountable personally and collectively to live up to our ideals and values.
5. We not only support each other within the network, but we also support people outside the network who we believe have similar aims or principles. An attack on one is an attack on all.

The POU demonstrates anarcho-syndicalism and the goal of a “classless” society, a fundamentally Marxist strategic vision which, logically, requires the overthrow of the Constitution.

Other antifa groups’ POU may vary slightly. The very first point makes clear that Antifa exists principally to deny the ability of others to engage in political activity or and to prevent citizens from organizing against the movement, and dehumanizing all opponents as enemies, which is anyone Antifa labels practically all its targets as “fascist” or “far right.” The strategy is to intimidate the public from participation in American political life. As author of *The Anti-fascist Handbook*, former professor Mark Bray writes:

Our goal should be that in twenty years those who voted for Trump are too uncomfortable to share that fact in public. We may not always be able to change someone’s beliefs, but we sure as hell can make it politically, socially, economically, and sometimes physically costly to articulate them.^{xxii}

In other words, for Antifa, the “far right” consists of about sixty-three million adult Americans, and it intends to make it “physically costly” for those citizens to engage in legitimate political speech or assembly. This demonstrates a strategic approach to terrorize American citizens from exercising their constitutional rights.

When working with groups outside of its network, Antifa sometimes requires allies to agree to what is essentially a memorandum of understanding (MOU).^{xxiii} These MOUs will typically compel other organizations and protest organizers to accept Antifa’s “community defense” or “protection” in exchange for agreeing not to publicly criticize illegal or violent tactics or inform on Antifa to the police.

Antifa can thus be viewed as a kind of political protection racket that requires allies to subjugate themselves while joining forces intimidate and terrorize their common opponents.

In some case protestors may be asked to participate in Antifa-organized “self-defense” training prior to an event. According to sources who have attended these trainings, this training can include “anti-kidnapping” techniques designed to condition protestors to prevent Antifa members from being arrested by police during demonstrations. This technique manipulates the outer soft core to insulate the seasoned hard core from police action.

In other words, law enforcement cannot assume that Antifa is operating within a given protest or demonstration contrary to the wishes of the protest organizers. Police cannot presume that naïve or unseasoned protestors will not defend violent professional agitators in their midst from arrest. Law enforcement officers dealing with recent violent protests have said – and videos on social media have shown – the organized presence of protestors forming “human shield” or “screen” tactics for armed rioters. This protection tactic has greatly complicated police efforts. Individuals who engage in these tactics need to be understood not as innocent protesters caught up in someone else’s violence, but as accessories to violent extremism.

That said, the presence of Antifa – whose violent activities lead to previously “peaceful protests” being declared riots – violates the free speech rights of other protestors who attend an event or demonstrations and were unaware of, did not intend to participate in, and often objected to, planned violence.

Antifa makes a special point of cooperating and participating with Black Lives Matter (BLM), and so its presence in the recent violent protests is logical and expected. Cooperation with BLM is explicitly mentioned in the “forming an Antifa group” manual produced by It’s Going Down, although it warns against tactics that draw “police repression” to BLM and similar groups.^{xxiv} This is noteworthy because it highlights that Antifa clearly understands that its criminal behavior can prevent the public expression of other participants, and understands the “optics” its violence can have on such events.

Material Support

Terrorism is a particularly low-cost form of warfare. The entire 9/11 plot is estimated to have cost less than half a million dollars. Even by al Qaeda standards, Antifa operations are extremely cost-efficient. Most members are expected to provide their own materials such as gas masks, shields, helmets, firearms, or various weapons to assault opposing demonstrators or police. Even the use of lasers, fireworks, corrosives, Molotov cocktails and other improvised explosives are low-cost. A Molotov cocktail costs less than 25 cents to make. Locations for hosting armed and unarmed operational training, and those training themselves, are typically provided by Antifa supporting organizations or individuals at no or low cost. Individual Antifa chapters frequently raise funds through event and concert admission fees, cash donations, at anarchist book fairs – where they sell stickers, anarchist books, Antifa flags, shirts, and other merchandise. Antifa members even make lists of supplies on Amazon.com to make it easy for participants to equip themselves at their own expense.

Antifa chapters often make use of internet-based crowdfunding technology, such as Rally.org, or Fundrazer.com. The International Antifa Defense Fund has so far raised \$53,766 via Fundrazer.com.^{xxv} Rose City Antifa, one of the oldest and most notorious antifa chapters in the Torch Antifa network, raised more than \$24,000 using Rally.org.^{xxvi} Some companies like Fundrazer or Rally are used by Antifa groups but are generally content-neutral, though it should be noted that no crowdfunding company has de-platformed Antifa supporters in the way they have de-platformed groups that Antifa or others have targeted. Other crowdfunding websites, such as the Danish Firefund.net, are explicitly ideological in orientation, and only facilitate Antifa and similar fundraising projects.^{xxvii}

Operational propaganda support is provided by a number of Antifa-affiliated websites and organizations, including It’s Going Down, CrimethInc, Three-Way Fight, and Unicorn Riot. These websites, often misreported as being “media,” provide organizational assistance, information on tactics techniques and procedures, and other assistance to Antifa participants. Rose City Antifa is one of the largest “contributing authors” of It’s Going Down, for example, where it has published promotions of attacks on journalists and others.^{xxviii} Individuals who participated in the siege against the Minneapolis 3rd Police Precinct published a long analysis on CrimethInc that can best be described as an “after action report” of the attack.^{xxix}

In 2019 Antifa member Willem Van Spronsen, of the Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club, was killed when he attacked an Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility with Molotov cocktails and small arms fire. Supporters hailed him as a martyr. The websites CrimethInc and It’s Going Down published his final statement, in both audio and text formats.^{xxx}

These and other sites closely compare in function to al Qaeda’s *Inspire* or Islamic State’s *Dabiq* propaganda outlets – sites that, when launched, generated media attention in the US for their “sophistication” in organizing and inciting individual acts of violent extremism outside any command and

control. These sites exist not just to report on the network's activities, but to provide instruction on operations that motivated violent extremists can conduct on their own.

Many Antifa chapters take advantage of Riseup.net for communications. Rise Up is a Seattle-based technology collective that runs secure email servers, listservs, a virtual private network, online collaborative work tools often utilized by Antifa groups, although it is not exclusively dedicated to Antifa activities. Riseup.net is incorporated as a Washington state nonprofit and is registered with the Internal Revenue Service as 501c4 "social welfare" organization.^{xxxix}

Major expenses such as transportation, bail and legal support are often provided by support organizations such as Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the International Workers of the World (IWW), the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), and Refuse Fascism, or by the organizers of the protest or demonstrations in which Antifa participates. Antifa operations may have received funding from wealthy individuals and foundations, either directly or through cutouts.

With proper tasking and oversight, the intelligence community should be able to determine the extent of hostile foreign intelligence service direction or support. It is therefore important to understand the sources of funding of these domestic violent extremist movements and realize that these funders make up a crucial element of infrastructure that enables and encourages Antifa to engage in its terrorist behavior.

Some funders may take advantage of the "fiscal sponsorship" arrangement within state and federal non-profit tax codes to make identifying the eventual source of funds confusing. The following example may be illustrative.

The Antifa support organization Refuse Fascism is a front for the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). The RCP is an overtly Maoist fringe organization, which like the Weather Underground was a splinter group from the original Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the 1970s and led by Robert Avakian, who now lives in France as the RCP Central Committee's "Chairman-in-Exile." Avakian's followers call him their "Precious Leader." RCP's strategic objective is to overthrow the Constitution of the United States and replace it with a Marxist-Leninist regime inspired by of revolutionary Chinese Maoism. [In Avakian's words](#),

"If it is true that the greatest contribution to the world revolution that can be made in the U.S. in this period is the overthrow of U.S. imperialism and the establishment of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat in its place, it is certainly no less true that the course of the revolutionary movement in the U.S. and even its prospects for victory will be decisively influenced by the overall course of the revolutionary struggle in the world as a whole."

As RCP Chairman in Exile, Avakian wrote a 91-page [Constitution of the New Socialist Republic in North America](#), which the RCP officially adopted published as a "draft" proposal in 2010. Excerpts of the "constitution" explain the goal to overthrow the United States Constitution by force, through exploiting extreme societal crisis (such as today's coronavirus pandemic):

In order to bring this new socialist state into being, it would be necessary to thoroughly defeat, dismantle and abolish the capitalist-imperialist state of the USA; and this in turn would only become possible with the development of a profound and acute crisis in society and the emergence of a revolutionary people, in the millions and millions, who have the leadership of a revolutionary communist vanguard and are conscious of the need for revolutionary change and determined to fight for it. (p. i)

The New Socialist Republic in North America is, like all states, a form of dictatorship—the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . (p. 3)

Refuse Fascism, the modern-day RCP front, openly declares its objective as “removing” the President and Vice-President from office through mass protest, and because of that political position is often misinterpreted as a legal “progressive” group. Attacking and murdering police officers, and de-funding entire police forces, is part of the RCP constitution’s strategy to “defeat, dismantle, and abolish” the American system. The RCP reportedly played a role in the 1992 Rodney King riots.^{.xxxii} Later it participated in the events surrounding the Ferguson, Missouri riots that resulted in the assassinations of police officers.^{.xxxiii} The RCP “constitution” specifically names “police, courts, and prisons” as instruments of capitalist oppression that must be destroyed in order to overthrow the United States Constitution and install its own “dictatorship.” (p. 1) Indeed, a reading of the entire document provides a vision and strategic action statement for the Antifa movement today.

RefuseFascism.org’s donation button redirects donors to the Alliance for Global Justice, a Phoenix, Arizona-based organization which acts as the group’s fiscal sponsor. Alliance for Global Justice describes itself as founded by the “Nicaragua Network” an organization devoted to supporting “an armed revolution.”^{.xxxiv} The Nicaragua Network was founded as a U.S.-based “solidarity committee” under the direction of the Soviet-backed, Marxist-Leninist Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) which took power in 1979. A parallel solidarity committee for the communist Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerrillas of El Salvador, known as CISPES, is known to have been under Cuban intelligence direction and part of an array of international front organizations vertically integrated into Soviet active measures campaigns against the United States in the 1980s. The Nicaragua Network faced accusations of failing to register as a foreign agent but was never convicted.^{.xxxv} Some of its American operatives were later found to have been connected with the FARC narcoguerrillas of Colombia.

These connections are important for understanding the origins and development of these elements of Antifa and its broader movement. Many of the 1980s radicals aiding the Sandinistas and FMLN remain active in militant organizing, academia, journalism, and even mainstream American politics. Many became involved in the “sanctuary movement” in the 1980s and the abolition-of-American-borders movement of today. Elements of Antifa’s street violence show improvement of tactics based of the FSLN and FMLN’s urban violence in Central America from before many of today’s rioters were born.

The Revolutionary Communist Party-allied Alliance for Global Justice has received funds from large philanthropic foundations including the Tides Foundation and the Open Society Foundation, among others.^{.xxxvi} According video from an investigative report by the organization Project Veritas, a Refuse Fascism leader admitted to having received funding from Open Society Foundation megadonor George Soros, although the video does not identify that funds were provided for the purpose of supporting Antifa efforts.^{.xxxvii}

It may be easy to view Antifa as not a significant target for law enforcement to utilize financial intelligence, given the extremely low cost of its operations. But if one considers all manner of material support -as that term is understood in the context of federal terror finance legislation- to include media, technical assistance, and logistical support, the antifa ecosystem widens considerably.

Is Antifa a terrorist organization?

On May 31st, 2020, the President posted on social media his intention to see the Antifa designated as a

terrorist organization.^{xxxviii} It has been reported that members of the Senate Judiciary Committee have made a similar recommendation.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation would currently classify Antifa members as “anarchist extremists” in the context of countering violent extremism/domestic terrorism. Unfortunately, as far as my research has determined, the FBI’s analytical understanding of anarchist extremists and Antifa is substantially lacking, despite the fact that anarchist violence was one of the primary initiating factors for the founding of the FBI more than a century ago.

A search of the FBI’s public website returns exactly one response for “Antifa.” That reference is contained in a June 4, 2020 statement by Director Chris Wray: “We’re seeing people who are exploiting this situation to pursue violent, extremist agendas—anarchists like Antifa and other agitators. These individuals have set out to sow discord and upheaval, rather than join in the righteous pursuit of equality and justice.”^{xxxix}

The director’s recognition of Antifa opens the way to further discussion and action, but also reflects a misunderstanding of antifa operating as “individuals” rather than as a horizontally organized network with a developed internal structure and shared ideology.

The FBI’s 2010 “domestic terrorism primer” on anarchist extremism notes that “much of the criminal activities of anarchist extremists fall under local jurisdiction, so they’re investigated by local police.”^{xi}

This inaccurate, uninformed view appears to have been institutionalized within the FBI. It does not seem to address – and indeed avoids – the Bureau’s legal responsibility to investigate interstate subversive threats to the Constitution and to enforce the internal security provisions of U.S. federal law, which are directly applicable to Antifa. This myopic, artificial view has allowed Antifa violence to run rampant in cities and states where local and state political conditions have discouraged the enforcement of the state law against Antifa offenders.

Director Wray’s public reference to Antifa is an encouraging development but more needs to be done.

As we did after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and for which then-director Robert Mueller formally recognized members of our organization for their support, we at the Center for Security Policy will be pleased to assist the FBI to improve its analytical approach.

The Federal government’s criminal definition of terrorism, either domestic or international requires:

“violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State;

(B) appear to be intended—

(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;

(ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or

(iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and assassination.^{xli}

Antifa's violent attacks against demonstrators, political rally participants, and journalists with the explicit purpose of intimidating and coercing them are clearly terrorism under this definition. While the federal government to my knowledge has yet to charge any Antifa members or adherents with terrorism offenses for their violent behavior, the State of Oklahoma recently charged three individuals under state terrorism statutes following a violent riot in which an Antifa flag was displayed.^{xlii}

The Center for Security Policy is currently working with state legislators to develop state terrorism statutes where they do not exist, and to improve statutes where they do exist, to provide state law enforcement increased tools to respond to Antifa and other extremist threats.

Because anarchist extremism is locked inside an analytical silo as "domestic terrorism," Antifa's international links and ideological commitment to overthrow the Constitution of the United States go unexplored. Antifa institutionally encourages and inspires attacks, provides training and instruction on how to organize and conduct attacks, and afterwards provides medical, legal, and financial support, including in some cases from funding received from overseas, and yet no investigations or arrests into the Antifa network have taken place. Instead, individual members and adherents are arrested, bailed out immediately, and then return to wage more violence. Foreign Antifa members or adherents are granted visas to enter and reside in the United States. Lack of card-carrying membership in Antifa does not preclude federal authorities from regarding any Antifa participant as a "member."

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, federal law enforcement has a responsibility to investigate the role of Antifa in violating the civil rights of American citizens, both those whom Antifa assaults, as well as the rights of those seeking to assemble and petition their government peacefully. The ultimate goal of Antifa's elder sponsors, its leaders, its members, and its adherents is to overthrow the United States Constitution through violence.

Conclusion

The federal government has a fundamental responsibility to protect the civil rights of all its citizens, and paramount among these rights are the freedom of assembly and the freedom of speech.

Using violence to enforce a political orthodoxy and terrorize into silence those with whom they disagree makes Antifa a growing threat to fabric of the American way of life and the inalienable rights of all citizens enshrined by our Constitution. Antifa and its support movement have grown increasingly bold over the past forty years. Novice and fanatical bombers and cop-killers from the 1970s have matured into a hardened cadre of veteran professionals who, with two follow-on generations of supporters, have penetrated our institutions of learning, law, politics, journalism, and culture. Their ideological extremism against our Constitution has penetrated the mainstream.

Their violent networks now operate with near immunity in a growing number of cities across the country. As part of their strategy to destroy the Constitution, they incite others to target federal law enforcement and even lay siege to a federal courthouse for days on end, while their not-yet-violent supporters seek to de-fund our police forces and more. Neither the FBI nor the Department of Homeland Security have given any indication that they have prioritized intelligence collection and analysis of this growing domestic terrorist threat. It is clear that the threat has been underestimated and swept under the rug for too long.

All federal officials have sworn an oath that they "will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic." Such an oath is required in Article VI of the Constitution and a matter of law in 5 U.S.C. 331. It was later applied to all federal officials.

It is a requirement of every elected, appointed, or career federal official who took that oath, in every department and agency, to live by it. "Domestic" enemies, according to the legislative history of the law, applied to those engaged in open rebellion or insurrection against the United States.

Everyone in the Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security have an especially profound obligation to live by that oath. That Antifa's unique structure is too "disorganized" to understand, or that Antifa claims to be "anti-fascist" or "anti-racist" is not an acceptable reason for governments – federal, state or local, to tolerate Antifa's private street war to overthrow the Constitution.

Just like their predecessors in the Weather Underground and Red Army Faction, Antifa will continue to escalate its behavior unless it is checked. There will be more attacks, and attacks and violent rioting techniques will continue to grow in capability and sophistication. Their cadres and followers will grow. They will align with other disaffected forces, as they have done already. There will be more autonomous zones, and they will remain in place for increasing periods of time.^{xliii} And more Americans, of all political persuasions, will be terrorized.

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Showing results for: TORCHANTIFA.ORG

Original Query: torchantifa.org

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