



**BUILD SPECIAL ISSUE///
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Introduction

This special issue of Build (which we're somewhat cheekily calling Bash) was originally conceived as a one-off article examining how DSA should relate to antifascist work. We wanted to examine all the ways we, as socialist organizers, could counter the rising tide of fascism that's seeping into the cracks in society left in the wake of neoliberalism's decline. But when we talked to comrades from across the country, we realized that this work differed from chapter to chapter depending on local. Hence, Bash was born.

While we appreciate the bravery (and intestinal fortitude) of our Antifa comrades who do the dangerous work of both physically confronting and doxxing the fash scum, we've chosen to focus on the kind of work that's suited to an organization like DSA—one that's more public about its membership, where a strong information culture is not the standard, and where people may have not yet realized that they, too, can be an antifascist. To that end, we've included not just stories from chapters that have organized against the encroaching violence of the far-right, but also a how-to and some personal reflections on anti-fascist organizing (and this is just issue 1).

We like to say "the DSA is yours to Build", but there won't be any DSA left if the fash have their say. It is no exaggeration to say that fascism is an existential threat to our project, and so organizing to prevent the far right from gaining and seizing power is one of our most critical tasks. So for this issue at least, instead of Building, let's look at how we can Bash.

*In Solidarity,
The Build Team*



You—Yes, You—Can be an Antifascist
by. *the Boston DSA DADS Committee*

We, members of the Direct Action/De-escalation/Security (DADS) Committee of Boston DSA, have previously written¹ on our chapter's political education blog to address skepticism towards antifascist work within DSA. This skepticism was expressed by some delegates at the New England regional pre-convention and we have heard similar stories from other regional pre-conventions. In our earlier article, we highlighted the need for greater organizational solidarity around antifascist activism and the potential for internal political education on the matter. This article covers some of the same content, but we wanted to shift our focus from intra-organization conflict to a more positive articulation of what we believe and do.

Antifascist organizing is frequently mischaracterized as unstrategic street fighting, as we discuss in our previous

1. <https://bostonpewg.org/2019/05/21/dads-team-statement/>

piece. Randos running around with no strategy is a risk at any mass action, including antifascist ones—but being unclear about tactics or strategy does not necessarily indicate the lack of forethought, as there may be some context that you aren't yet familiar with. We—and many comrades in other chapters across DSA—have put hundreds of hours into the emotionally and intellectually difficult work of antifascist organizing: reading and analyzing fascist materials; providing security for DSA and other events; organizing street protests across broad coalitions of often mutually distrustful leftist groups; developing plans and contingency plans to minimize risk; facing not just fascists but also cops who routinely stare us down while exposing their backs to the fash; providing jail and court support to comrades who are arrested; and of making space to debrief and comfort each other after a tense or fraught action. Despite the aforementioned assumptions about street brawling, antifascist organizing often takes place outside of public view for security reasons. We are not surprised when casual observers or disinterested parties buy into this mistaken view of what antifascist organizing entails, and we see it as our obligation to challenge these false equivalencies by building support for popular antifascism within our Boston chapter and DSA more broadly.

Fighting fascism requires different tactics and building solidarity across organizations and communities. While we are committed to confronting fascists in the streets, facing them down is not synonymous with throwing punches. Masked and unmasked presence, small tactical groups and mass mobilization all have a role. We state this because we sometimes hear concerns from comrades that all DSA has the capacity to do in antifascist work is to send a few people with signs to an action

in solidarity. While holding signs and chanting can actually help build numbers for safety and shift the media narrative, it is not all we can do. DSA members can and do play many roles at street actions, antifascist and otherwise, including but not limited to communications, medics, legal observers, marshals, security, jail and court support, noisemakers, and behind-the-scenes planners and organizers.

For example, last fall, Boston DSA collaborated with other leftist organizations to provide a security team for a trans youth rally. In practice, this meant calmly using presence and teamwork to corral a group of seven fascists at the very back of the crowd. A few months before that, we collaborated with other leftist organizations on a counterprotest to a fascist rally, including contributing members to the security team and the panel for an educational event a few days earlier, having members organizing and being part of the medic team and the security team on the day of, having members on other teams (such as marshals), and mobilizing a large contingent. Each of these roles contributes to the success of an action, and by building support for popular antifascism within our chapter, we make it harder and harder for fascists to organize in Boston.

Maybe you have heard the media buzz around the "Straight Pride Parade" Boston-area fascists are trying to organize.² Maybe you have also heard of the counterprotest to the "Free Speech Rally" in August 2017 where 40,000 community members marched from Roxbury to Boston Common to tell Mark Sahady and his goons to go home, one week after the murder of

2. <https://thinkprogress.org/organizers-behind-boston-straight-pride-parade-neo-nazis-far-right-a3dc225cc7f0>

Heather Heyer in Charlottesville. What you probably haven't heard of are the more than a dozen other occasions when these same fascists have attempted to gather publicly over the past two years. You probably haven't heard of those events because the fascists were consistently and successfully countered by local antifascists, including members of Boston DSA, outside of the increased media attention that a recent tragedy would spur. Together with our comrades in other organizations, we've helped grind down local fascist organizing to the point where their events—which once got a hundred or more attendees—now get a fraction of that, and, on multiple occasions, their events have been cancelled altogether. We've been so successful at demoralizing and minimizing their activity that they've barely been a blip on the radar of the news media or the public, leading to the mistaken assumption that August 2017 was the last time that fascists tried to rally in Boston. We assure you: that was not the last time they've gathered here, and whenever they've assembled, we've faced them down to keep our community safe.

Beyond the streets, there is always day-to-day work to be done to diminish fascist ability to organize in public; to spread security, de-escalation, and direct action skills throughout DSA and among allied organizations; and to keep ourselves, partners, and the community safe, at events and otherwise. DSA members can play many roles in this work as well. Anyone, regardless of their previous level of experience, can participate in a call-in or write-in to a venue to ask them not to host a fascist event. Anyone with a bit of training can help formulate a meeting security and de-escalation plan. These are not elite skills, and they provide the bedrock of day-to-day antifascist organizing that helps keep our commu-

nity safe.

Antifascist and security organizers within DSA should emphatically *not* be the Thin Red-And-Black Line—we are not a cadre separate from comrades. Rather we are committed to skill-sharing and capacity-building through political education and low barriers to entry, advocating popular antifascism, and integrating with the overall work of building socialism. This is why we, as a committee, support many types of direct action, not just antifascist direct action, and from our initial committee proposal onwards we have established training and education for all comrades, whether they do antifascist organizing or not, as a primary mission. As with all other areas of socialist work, some people will make antifascist, direct action, or security organizing a primary focus, while others will do it occasionally or focus on other areas. We value being in an organization where comrades are engaged in, and have the opportunity to learn about, many areas of work. We feel strongly that everyone *can* contribute to this work, not just people who are athletic or imposing. We see both antifascism and security work as collective projects, where numbers, communication, situational awareness, and the ability to work together as comrades are far more effective than having a few physical badasses. Some of our loved ones have expressed surprise or skepticism upon hearing that we have done security at DSA events. A number of us have commented to each other that until we started doing the antifascist and security work that we do, we didn't believe that we were the sort of people who could do it. But as a committee, we uphold that everyone can do this work, this is everyone's fight, and we can support each other in learning and praxis.

In keeping with the themes of skill-sharing and of making antifascism accessible, one thing that we see as badly needed (and much desired) within DSA is training. Many comrades want to contribute to community defense and perhaps have taken steps such as participating in a call-in campaign, signal-boosting a bail fundraiser, or showing up as a member of a contingent at an action. Some of these comrades would like to get involved on a deeper level but don't know how or feel intimidated about doing so. Other comrades who are not involved in direct action may be concerned about the safety of their own events and would like to feel empowered to deal with tense situations that could occur, whether due to fascist disruption, heated conflicts among members, internal harassment, hostile bystanders, or some other cause. For these reasons, our committee has developed a Make Your Own Security and De-escalation Plan training, which challenges participants to actively workshop a plan for a deescalating a scenario that they could experience, using the resources available to their group and including an assessment of those resources. We have run this training for groups within our own chapter, members of other chapters at the New England regional pre-convention conference, and other community groups. We have also run trainings on situational awareness, protest health and safety, and being part of an action comms network, and have co-sponsored trainings on marshaling and civil disobedience.

Now that we have talked a bit about what DSA can do, let us touch on why. As socialists, we must discuss how best to stop fascists from building power, and the comrades doing antifascist work constantly have these discussions on tactical, strategic, and ideological levels. One thing is clear: If we do not stop them from building

power in the streets, then they will build power in the streets uncontested. It's not as if the fash will just get bored and go home if antifascists don't show up—they'll instead attack and harass passers-by, especially those in targeted groups, and leftist and liberal events, as they have done³ previously⁴, unimpeded. Attempts to hide behind respectability will not prevent them from targeting DSA; whatever it is that we do, they will hate us for it, because we are doing it as socialists and in a comparatively high-profile organization. As many comrades are aware, DSA was on the "hit list" of Christopher Hasson, the Coast Guard lieutenant who was recently arrested for plotting massacres.⁵ This detail was glossed over in the mainstream media but discussed by DSA members on social media, in an example of DSA members sharing information for mutual safety. DSA has been and will continue to be a target for fascist disruption and violence, as seen in Portland, OR⁶, and Louisville, KY⁷, and as we have ourselves experienced through physical violence against chapter members and the targeting of Boston DSA for harassment. This reality motivated many members of Boston's security team to decline to be delegates to our regional pre-convention in order to ensure adequate security staffing due to a nearby gathering of Threepers that weekend—which highlights the need to build popular antifascism within our chapters, as some of the comrades who are

3. <https://splinternews.com/white-lives-matter-mob-attacks-inter-racial-couple-aft-1819954832>

4. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/two-star-proud-boys-donovan-flippo-and-tusitala-tiny-toese-hit-with-felony-assault-charges-for-portland-attack>

5. <https://wtop.com/montgomery-county/2019/02/silver-spring-man-accused-of-plotting-domestic-terror-attack/>

6. <https://www.wweek.com/news/courts/2019/01/24/portland-iww-union-hall-and-cider-riot-vandalized-with-graffiti-targeting-antifa/>

7. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/democratic-socialists-white-nationalists-pepper-sprayed-us>


most knowledgeable about fascist threats may be actively opposing the fash or providing routine security at moments where solidarity from our comrades is needed the most.

Encounters with the far-right can be very stressful, and we would like to improve emotional and practical support for comrades who are dealing with this stress, something for which we feel structures are lacking at local and national levels. The sensationalized, misrepresented nature of the subject also ends up being harmful to people who have experienced far-right violence, as it is generally harmful to victims of violence to listen to people for whom it's an abstract concept reiterate the myths and misinformation floating around the mainstream. As socialists, we can and should attempt to build supportive structures around each other in fighting our common enemies such as capitalism, nationalism, racism, and misogyny, rather than holding comrades to damaging, militaristic expectations of psychological "toughness."

Antifascism is a lot like public health: when it's working smoothly, you don't even see it. It's like the safe water supply or successful vaccination campaign that you don't even notice because it successfully prevents that epidemic from happening in the first place, and the fascists aren't able to assemble in public. Where you see it is in those inflection points where far-right contagion has gained a foothold, and where a full diversity of tactics is necessary to control the outbreak—not just preventative approaches, but also defensive. People watching from the outside may only see blocked-up comrades facing down the fash in the moment, without realizing that there's an entire surveillance and containment infrastructure to reduce the likelihood of a fascist

outbreak in the first place and to mobilize the necessary resources to neutralize it when it emerges. By writing this piece, we're making the choice to peel back the curtain and emphasize how vital and diverse day-to-day antifascist work really is and to show that each of you can take a role in doing this important work. Who keeps our community safe? We—all of us—keep our community safe.

“**THIS IS EVERYONE'S FIGHT**
AND WE CAN SUPPORT EACH OTHER
IN LEARNING AND PRAXIS”





Reflections on A12

by. T

I have a difficult time talking about the “summer of hate” in Virginia.

Charlottesville is more than a single hot day in August. Even that single hot day is not just that single hot day. Months of incidents led up to the largest fascist march in modern American history. Even these dramatic moments—the first torchlit march in the spring, the vigil on August 11 which ended in violence, the Klan rally itself on the 12th—cannot be cleaved from the context of the brutal history of Southern reaction in general and Charlottesville in particular.

Some scholars of fascism argue that the post-Reconstruction Redeemers and the Klan represent the first truly fascist movement in history. It’s all there: the costumes and pageantry, the mysticism, a stabbed-in-the-

back myth, the support of rich plutocrats with a social base of a downwardly mobile middle class, and a cult of vigilante violence and murder leading to the rebirth of the Nation. In the South, we live with that legacy of a victorious reactionary force crushing nascent egalitarian revolutions every single day as we try to organize for a better world.

I grew up about an hour and a half east of Charlottesville. Where I come from, that college town in the mountains had a reputation as a rich, hippie town of liberals. Oh, we still heard stories from our friends about the vicious frat boy culture of UVA or how the hometown of Thomas Jefferson barely acknowledged the cruelty of its most famous son, but despite all that, I loved (and still love) the city and its dedicated organizers. These organizers fought long before A12 and continue to do so at an incredible cost to themselves, and I could not allow them to carry that fight on their own. I remember how my brother and I talked to comrades from across the United States at the 2017 DSA Convention in Chicago and encouraged those near to Virginia to attend in solidarity.

I wasn't physically wounded that day on Water Street. As one of the protest marshals for the DSA contingent, I was close but not close enough. I heard the crash and I heard the screams. I saw people running in all directions. However, I had a job to do and that was helping the other marshals get our people out of there.

In the weeks after August 12 I had trouble eating or sleeping, and I am pretty sure I experienced my first ever nervous breakdown in the immediate aftermath. It's hard to say if it was, as I never sought professional help, but a coworker with her own mental health strug-

gles begged me to see someone. I haven't fully confronted what that day means for me. I don't think I will ever be able to. So much more happened that day and in the days after. It's beyond the scope of a short essay like this to fully, or even partially, capture all the complex ways that day changed me.

Even now, I'm left with survivors' guilt. As I write this, a voice is murmuring with a sneer: *you did nothing of value. You failed. You could have done more. You are stealing the suffering and trauma of others with a greater claim to their pain.* And I guess that's the main thing I take away from that August day in Charlottesville: there is no "after August 12, 2017" for me and for dozens of others, and the pain and doubt that we carry with us will linger as long as we do.





The Coward's Guide to Jail Support

by. Bryan C. - NC Piedmont DSA

If you ever make the mistake of discussing political strategy with me, you know that within about five minutes I will inevitably turn the conversation towards the need to build durable infrastructure to sustain struggle. I couldn't even give an approximate estimate of how many times I've asked the question that I keep returning to: what does our system of political logistics look like?

This question cuts across all approaches to politics, be it electoral work, mutual aid, union organizing, or antifascist organizing. It's this question that motivated my support of comrades arrested in antifascist struggles in North Carolina, as my obligations as a union organizer would make it hard for me to participate in the more confrontational elements of antifascist organizing.

What follows is what I've learned over the past year or so of waiting for good people to get released from de-

tention, people who had been slammed to the ground and arrested on bogus charges by lying cops. I am by no means an expert, but I've spent enough time hanging around the Orange County Detention Center in Hillsborough, NC to share some basic nuts-and-bolts advice on the subject.

The first steps to do this work right take place well before the planned action. Anyone responsible for jail support needs to work with the organizers of the demonstration to conduct a risk assessment. A permitted march or rally is unlikely to produce arrests, but plenty of good comrades are uncomfortable with participating in a permitted action, as they view such involvement as complicit with the ever-hostile and frequently violent police. Even still, police have arrested demonstrators at some permitted events, so you need to get a feel for the likelihood of arrests, the expected size of the crowd, what the weather will be like, and how long the protest is supposed to last. This information then shapes the material you need on hand for jail support.

Building on that risk assessment, jail support should be in communication with any legal observers who will be at the demonstration, such as the National Lawyers Guild's green hats. If arrests are likely, those working jail support should make arrangements to cover any bail required for arrested demonstrators, either through plans to crowdfund on social media or through pre-existing bond funds. In North Carolina, we are fortunate to have institutions like Take Action Chapel Hill and the Durham Solidarity Center's Freedom Fighter Bond Fund that have covered the bail for comrades in the fight against neo-Confederates and white supremacy in Chapel Hill, Durham, and Raleigh. In places without such organizations, creating them should be a pri-

ority during any sustained campaign of direct action.

In addition, you need to familiarize yourself with the jail where arrested comrades are likely to be taken. Where is it in relation to the protest? What kinds of stores are nearby? Are there bathrooms available to the public? Are there wall outlets that people who weren't arrested can use to recharge their phones? What does the transit situation look like? If there's no or very little transit, what does the parking situation look like? Will you need to recruit others with cars to provide rides to arrestees? Having answers to these questions guides the remaining preparations you will need to make.

Finally, you need to assemble material needs for jail support. At a minimum it means the following:



A CACHE OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES

OTC painkillers like ibuprofen, naproxen, and aspirin will help those sore from rough treatment. A basic first aid kit with a bottle of Aleve and Motrin will go a long way.



WATER

Taking direct action outside in the South is thirsty work, and people coming from the demonstration to help with jail support often arrive dehydrated and tired. Instead of getting cases of bottled water, I suggest getting a few sleeves of paper cups and several gallon jugs of water. It will be cheaper per ounce of water, produces less plastic waste, and is easier to manage when everything is said and done, as you will have no half-consumed cases of water to have to manage.



SNACKS Make sure you have something for anyone to eat. Be cognizant of dietary needs, and make sure you have something that vegetarians, vegans, and people with food allergies can eat.



A POWER BANK AND AC WALL CHARGER FOR CELL PHONES

Taking photos and videos to post to social media during an action rips through a phone's battery like nothing else. Having some method to help people coming from the protest recharge their phone is a necessity.



LIGHT Flashlights and lanterns are extremely useful, especially if the authorities are dragging their feet about releasing the comrades they've arrested and you're waiting after dark.



GEAR TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS

Does it look like it's going to rain? Then you need to have ponchos and a few umbrellas handy. Protest in the middle of the summer? Consider having a cooler with ice on hand. People arrested at an action in the middle of winter? Hand warmers and some kind of thermos to keep hot liquids like coffee are godsend.



MORALE NEEDS Having lighters and a few packs of cigarettes on hand will make you a shining golden god to any smokers among your comrades, and a few

small games like Uno or a pack of cards are a good way to kill time while you are waiting for your people to be freed.

You can have other things on hand that might be useful, like camping chairs or a folding table, but these are optional and might not be usable depending on where the jail is and how big of assholes the authorities are going to be. This list is by no means exhaustive, and you should tailor what you have on hand for jail support to the specific needs of the area, your comrades, and what you can acquire.

One last thing, though, that anyone responsible for jail support has to understand: you are there until everyone is out or it is impossible to get them out. No one gets left behind. No one. The only time I have ever left jail support before everyone was out was to give a ride to a YDSA co-chair who was just released from holding, and that was only after making sure with other organizers that it was fine. If you are working jail support, you should not be at the demonstration, and it is your duty to carry the weight for your comrades who were in the streets as the adrenaline fades and they run out of steam. So clear your schedule for the evening, wear comfortable shoes, and be able to kill a few hours as the wheels of 'justice' slowly turn.

Like most vital organizing work, jail support ain't glamorous, but it is necessary. Making the choice to fight against the far right (and the government authorities that enable them) is much easier when you know that someone will be there waiting for you if you get arrested in the process, because that's what solidarity is.

Because, in the end, all we have is each other, and we are the only ones who will keep us safe.

Fighting a Far Right Personality in Red River Valley DSA

by. Kevin A, RRV DSA

For several years a white nationalist named Peter Tefft has lived in Fargo. Tefft's Twitter account contains frequent references to alt-right memes and white nationalist dog whistles, and, most tellingly, he made an appearance in the Vice documentary about A12 as an attendee in Charlottesville (he claims the rally was about "free speech"). As a result of his involvement with A12, he has since been disowned by his father (a story that attracted national media attention) and kicked out of the local Republican organization.

Despite those setbacks, Tefft remains undaunted in his quest to spread his fascist ideology. He often tweets to a local media personality named Chris Berg, host of a local right-wing news program called *Point of View*. *PoV* is exactly what you'd expect from a low-budget, local news program dedicated to racism and xenophobia. Featured clips on the *PoV* website include "Should The Constitution remain the same or should it be changed to add protections to the flag?", "What Percentage of Asylum Seekers do NOT show up for their hearings?", and "Will Farmers appreciate what President Trump is doing for them?". Red River Valley DSA members know Berg well; after we bird-dogged then-EPA director Scott Pruitt, Berg had reached out asking for a comment (instead of commenting, we made fun of him to his face).

After Tefft was identified in the A12 documentary, he was invited on *Point of View* to give his side of the story. Unsurprisingly, instead of challenging Tefft's talk-

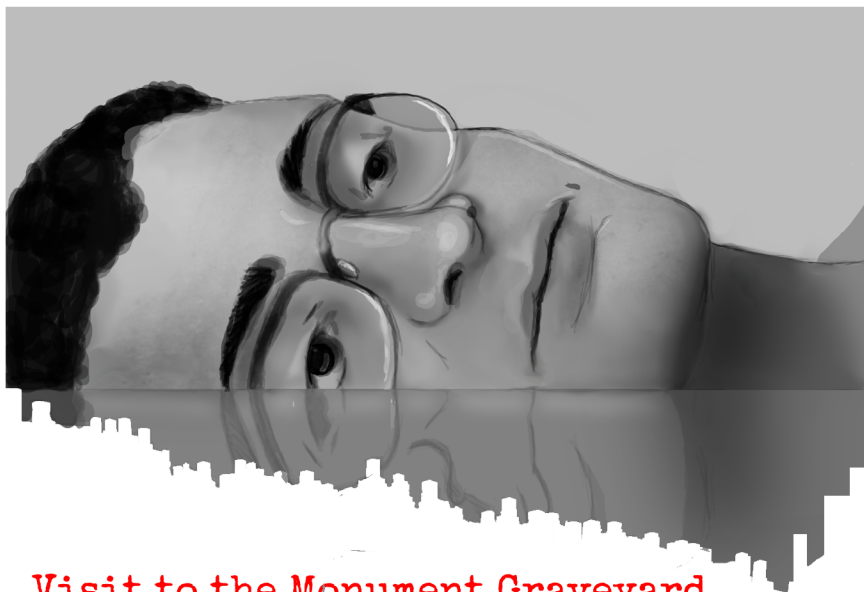
ing points, Berg gave Tefft a softball interview, where Tefft was given 30 minutes of almost uninterrupted time to spout white nationalist talking points for a television audience. More gallingly, the news chyron identified Tefft as a "Pro-White Activist" rather than accurately identifying him as white nationalist. When challenged on not putting a qualifier such as "self-identified" before "pro-white activist" and thus legitimating the dog-whistle term, the news station defended itself by comparing self-identifying as a pro-white activist to self-identifying as one's preferred gender identity.

Because we believe that a media organization has the responsibility to provide adequate context when interviewing someone with odious views, lest they use your microphone as a propaganda tool, we sprung into action. We gathered a list of advertisers for Valley News—including a weight loss company, a furniture company, a Jewelry store, Toyota, Subway, and a Bowling alley—and called their offices and posted on their social media pages to ask them why they were advertising during a show that allowed white nationalists to speak. Most of them had no idea they were running ads next to such content, and were shocked and horrified (or at least, scared of the impact such an association would have on their bottom line). The manager of the local bowling alley was particularly distraught, telling us "do you know how many Somalians like to bowl?" (Fargo has one of the largest Somali communities in the country).

Because of our effort, we got 4 out of 6 advertisers to pull out from the daypart in which *Point of View* aired. Unsurprisingly, Berg was unhappy, and called us to try and intimidate us, claiming we were anti-free speech fascists, but we have been undeterred—we believe that

sunlight is the best disinfectant, and need to disrupt white nationalist organizing everywhere it pops up. Tefft is still active—Identity Europa flyers featuring Jussie Smollett have appeared around town, and we suspect this was his work. Still, Tefft’s loss of a sympathetic media outlet has put a hamper on his ability to organize, and we are proud of our work in fighting white nationalism in our own backyard.





Visit to the Monument Graveyard

by. Tawny T.

In December of last year, I got to make a sort of pilgrimage to Budapest. Because I worked on a play about the city (Maria Irene Fornés's *The Danube*), I had read about its history. As a socialist I wanted to see a place that fascism, then communism, had transformed.

My friend and I said our prayers at the *Shoes on the Danube Bank*, a monument made of iron shoes, strewn as if just removed. Installed by sculptor Gyula Pauer and conceived by Can Togay, the

monument honors the memory of the Jews forced to remove their shoes before being shot into the river by Arrow Cross, the fascist party which governed Hungary from October 1944 – March 1945.

In the Jewish Quarter, we walked the streets along the path of the former ghetto wall, and we spent hours in the Dohány Street Synagogue, the largest in Europe and one of the only to survive the Nazi occupation. A mass grave is within its walls, as are monuments and memorials to various antifascists who hid Jewish families or helped them cross the border. The exhibits on the museum floor show a fierce survival, naming those brave enough to sequester artifacts and letters in hidden places to ensure a record of Jewish life in Hungary.

We also took the subway to a bus on the outskirts of Budapest, and that bus to a tourist attraction called Memento Park. Its name sounds grandiose or at least pastoral, but in truth Memento Park is a bare grass lot surrounded by a low brick wall on the side of a two-lane road in the Hungarian countryside. Across the parking lot from the low wall is a wide, half-story structure large enough to walk around on, topped by a pedestal with human-size iron boots; the remainder of what was once an iron Joseph Stalin of a truly staggering scale.

The boots are all that remains, and the display of this deflation in such a remote spot as Memento Park is intentional: *all that's over now*, it says; *come see what we used to foolishly believe*. And you almost can't blame Hungarians for wanting to sequester the monuments to Communism away. After all, it's the country where a worker uprising was quashed by Stalin sending in tanks; literally the origin event for the slang term

Even still, walking through Memento Park is inspiring. Huge statues to the triumph of the common people are everywhere, most large scale and imposing. "Liberation Army Soldier," for instance, was probably more than 10x my size as I stood for a photo next to it, my fist raised.

There are also smaller monuments. Busts litter the edges of the dividing walls, and on some walls are plaques in Hungarian, thankfully translatable with Google Translate's Augmented Reality feature. I translated all of them to my friend as we walked, and what we learned shocked me.

You see, Hungary did not just sequester its communist past in Memento Park, but also much of its explicitly antifascist past as well. Many plaques and busts honored fallen antifascist heroes, those who opposed the Arrow Cross and the Nazis, those who hid Jews, and those who attempted both successful and unsuccessful assassination plots. Two particularly surprising cases of erasure were Kató Hámán and Endre Ságvári, who both at one time had plaques on their homes memorializing them, as well as a street named after them nearby. Hámán was a Communist and an Esperanto activist who served on the leading committee of the Hungarian Communist Party before Miklós Horthy's Nazi-allied regime arrested her and murdered her in prison. Ságvári was part of the resistance to the German occupation in WWII and died in a shootout with the police. However, the guide to the park claims Hámán died of a disease she contracted in prison, and in Hungarian popular culture, Ságvári is portrayed as an ordinary criminal rather than an anti-fascist martyr. Now all that remains of their bravery and commitment to humanity is the remaining bronze, sequestered in a kitschy tourist

park, on the cusp of being lost to history.

Antifascism is not just opposition to a terrifying and violent order that erases and extinguishes difference. It's also a positive commitment to protecting others, staking out a belief that life is sacred and that our common humanity is worth celebrating. When we downplay antifascism, we risk losing these legacies, our shared left history, and potentially the lives of our marginalized comrades...maybe even ourselves. Let's take the fascist threat seriously, and let's make that a part of building a better world, one where we re-affix these plaques and uplift our solidarity.

*“ANTIFASCISM IS NOT
JUST
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Bash: A Special Issue of Build – Issue 1 (Summer 2019)

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