

Standing in solidarity with our unprecedented nation

Within 10 days of president-elect Donald Trump's Nov. 8 victory, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported nearly 900 cases of hate crimes across the country. Oregon topped the list for the number of crimes per capita.

It wasn't because people just started hating.

And recently the Associated Press came out with parameters for the use of the term "alt-right." Avoid using the term generically and without definition, the AP ruled, noting that the term may exist

primarily as "a public relations device to make its supporters' actual beliefs less clear and more acceptable to a broader

audience. In the past we have called such beliefs racist, neo-Nazi or white supremacist."

This didn't happen because racists just starting use new terms to sugar coat their agenda.

Also this week, the conservative nonprofit Turning Point USA, which advocates for free market principles and limited government, created a watch list of so-called leftist professors teaching at universities across the United States. To date, there are more than 100 professors on the list.

Again – this is not the first time the academic community was targeted for liberal thinking.

These aren't new concepts, but the left seems gobsmacked that they are roaring full force yet again, in the 21st century no less.

We're returning to an age when open discussions about singling out people for their faith, their gender and their political beliefs are laying the groundwork for renewed federal oppression. We are even questioning the basic tenets of our Constitution, including free speech, due process and equal protection under the law.

For example, journalists and activists who have been confronting the fossil fuel industry – a leading contributor to climate change – are now facing devastating punishments, mediated by corporate influence with the intent to shut down public dissent. Our feature story on the Valve Turners sheds light on just a few of the people facing what amount to life sentences for their nonviolent demonstrations.

Inflated eco-terrorism charges aren't new, but this kind of corporate influence on our criminal justice system is expected to increase with the new administration's support of private prisons, and its demonstrated disdain for free speech.

We as a nation are even questioning what basic

truths really are. Who decides what is news? Who decides what is illegal? Who decides who the enemy is? We're reduced to debating whether or not the erratic, midnight Twitter posts from the president of the free world qualify as "news."

Rome is on fire and we're arguing over what direction the smoke is blowing.

It's easy to say stand up, fight back and don't be weary, when bullies threaten our beliefs around humanity, civility and the planet. But we need to remember that many of our friends and neighbors were weary long before Election Day. For some Portlanders and Oregonians, what really changed on Nov. 8 is that now hate speech and discrimination are openly sanctioned by the highest powers of government.

In this edition of Street Roots, Shannon Wight with the Partnership for Safety and Justice quotes the author James Baldwin, via Angela Davis, about defending the rights of the imprisoned: "Some of us, white and black, know how great a price has already been paid to bring into existence a new consciousness, a new people, an unprecedented nation. If we know, and do nothing, we are worse than the murderers hired in our name. If we know, then we must fight for your life as though it were our own – which it is – and render impassable with our bodies the corridor to the gas chamber. For if they take you in the morning, they will be coming for us that night."

It is defiant, poetic and relevant to this very day.

Street Roots intends to be on the front lines to preserve the rights and progress of our community. We aren't afraid of watch lists. We stand with all media in this town that refuses to bend under threats to our independence and essential social responsibility as watchdogs. It seems particularly important to say that today – given the threats emanating from the future administration. And while the suppression of a free press has been ongoing, today the challenges are aggravated by the decline of legacy media. It is more valuable and yet more vulnerable than ever.

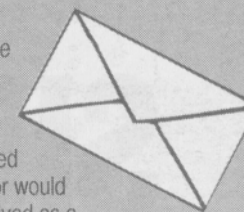
We pledge to stay true to our mission and build upon the cornerstones of our coverage including freedom of the press, environmental oversight, housing policy and immigration issues. And we want you to be a part of it.

Now is not the time for any of us to be silent.

EDITORIAL

Write in

If you would like to have something that you've written published in our pages, or would like to get involved as a member of our reporting staff, contact Managing Editor Joanne Zuhl at 503-228-5657, joanne@streetroots.org. We ask that all submissions include the author's name and contact information, if available.



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Kindred Spirits
by Ed Gould.

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