

# New York Times echoes Trump's attacks on "violent anarchists"

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On September 30, the *New York Times* published an opinion piece titled, "The Truth About Today's Anarchists," written by Farah Stockman, a member of its editorial board. Duplicating the slanders of President Trump and Attorney General William Barr, she characterizes violence perpetrated during the last four months of nationwide protests against police murder as the fault of outside agitators and left-wing elements, foremost among them, "insurrectionary anarchists."

These "white" interlopers, in Stockman's telling (she is African-American), have been the cause of, and instigators of "looting" and property destruction, which has necessitated the use of militarized police repression against peaceful protesters, thereby fomenting "extremist" attitudes towards police.

Stockman's reactionary and false commentary has been warmly received by those on the far-right including *National Review* columnist Charles C.W. Cooke, who in a column published on October 1, lamented that it took "so long" for the *Times* to reach that conclusion. Similarly, Ed Morrissey, senior editor of *HotAir.com*, chastised Stockman and the *Times* for failing to, "easily [diagnose] the issue immediately when the riots started."

To support her dubious claims Stockman begins her piece by relying on the reporting of amateur journalist Jeremy Lee Quinn. Quinn is a furloughed photographer and former theater student who claims to have first covered "Anarchists" beginning in 2007 at University of California Berkeley, and subsequently at Occupy Wall Street in 2011, and for "122 days" this summer. Stockman writes:

Mr. Quinn discovered a thorny truth about the mayhem that unfolded in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man in Minneapolis. It wasn't mayhem at all.

Black-clad figures break windows, set fires, vandalize police cars, then melt back into the crowd of peaceful protesters. When the police respond by brutalizing innocent demonstrators with tear gas, rubber bullets and rough arrests, the public's disdain for law enforcement grows. It's Asymmetric Warfare 101.

If that sounds familiar, it is because Stockman's conclusions supported by Quinn's "research" are ripped straight from the lips of top Trump officials such as William Barr and acting Homeland Security chief Chad Wolf who have insisted from the outset that protesters against police violence are "violent anarchists."

Quinn, in his latest report, titled "The Anarchists are Here: So I Blended In," claims to have confirmed that "the driving ideological force since the AutoZone windows in Minneapolis were busted out by a black bloc'd, umbrella wielding man in a respirator mask, has been Insurrectionary Anarchism."

It has been reported by multiple outlets, including Fox News, the

*Washington Post*, Associated Press and the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, that the "umbrella man" who vandalized an AutoZone, the first of several similar occurrences to follow, was in fact not an anarchist protester, but a member of the Hell Angels motorcycle gang. This has been confirmed by a Minneapolis police warrant. The still-unidentified man, according to an affidavit, is also a known associate of the white-supremacist Aryan Cowboy Brotherhood and was involved in the harassment of a Muslim woman and her child the month prior in Stillwater, Minnesota.

Stockman's piece neglects to mention any violence perpetrated by police, far-right forces or white supremacists. Nor does she comment on the well-known fact that due to anarchist hostility to Marxist theory and a political orientation to the working class, their groups are vulnerable to infiltration by police informers and provocateurs.

While there may be some select instances of "anarchist" violence, the majority of acts of homicidal violence during protests come from the far-right. This was tragically confirmed this past August in Kenosha, Wisconsin, when 17-year-old Trump acolyte and fascist symbol Kyle Rittenhouse murdered two protesters and wounded a third. In June, protesters were shot by "militia" in New Mexico, while vehicle assaults have continued throughout the summer, in many cases championed by police chiefs on social media, in cities such as Seattle, Washington, Buffalo, New York and Los Angeles, California.

It also must be said that roughly 95 percent of the 11,000 protests and demonstrations that took place between May 24 and August 22, attracting as many as 34 million people, were peaceful, according to a US Crisis Monitor report.

Top law enforcement officials, including FBI Director Christopher Wray, continue to identify far-right extremist violence, not "antifa" or "anarchists," as the "biggest" domestic terrorist threat. Wray testified in front of the House Homeland Security Committee two weeks ago, stating, "within the domestic terrorism bucket ... racially motivated violent extremism is ... the biggest bucket within that larger group. And within the racially motivated violent extremist bucket, people subscribing to some kind of white supremacist-type ideology is certainly the biggest chunk of that."

This conclusion was seconded by Department of Homeland Security Deputy Secretary Kenneth Cuccinelli (himself an extreme right-winger and anti-immigrant bigot), who testified that "white supremacists act as terrorists, more people are killed. That is a higher lethality."

These statements, however, cut across Stockman's hit piece which, in order to reach its false conclusion, is forced to rely on Quinn's accounts as well as a dubious study from Rutgers university. Stockman writes:

If that is not enough to convince you that there's a method to the madness, check out the new report by Rutgers researchers that documents the "systematic, online mobilization of violence that was planned, coordinated (in real time) and celebrated by

explicitly violent anarcho-socialist networks that rode on the coattails of peaceful protest,” according to its co-author Pamela Paresky.

“The ability to continue to spread and to eventually bring more violence, including a violent insurgency, relies on the ability to hide in plain sight—to be confused with legitimate protests, and for media and the public to minimize the threat,” Dr. Paresky told me.

The Rutgers study, whose contributing authors include a former chief of the New York Police Department, a former Republican attorney general, and military doctors (more on that later) likened “Anarcho-Socialist extremists” to ISIS terrorists and Boogaloo bois, listing their supposedly many shared “characteristics” including “use of creative memes and online propaganda” as well as “use of private or fringe internet forums.” Presumably, the anarchists and fascists shared other “characteristics,” like using the English language. What a revelation!

The researchers concluded that “politically charged memes and codewords that ‘dehumanize’ targets (police, in particular) proliferated in tandem with the recent protest events.” That is, researchers discovered more “anti-police ... codewords” appeared on social media forums after instances of police violence and murder were reported.

Despite the dubious value of the report, Stockman uses it to solidarize herself and the *Times* with the Trump administration:

Her report will almost certainly catch the attention of conservative media and William Barr’s Department of Justice, which recently declared New York, Portland and Seattle “anarchist jurisdictions,” a widely mocked designation accompanied by the threat of withholding federal funds.

This filthy passage is a clear indication from the *Times* that whatever state repression Barr and the rest of the US government carry out against protesters is justified, up to and including assassination, as evidenced by the silence of Stockman and the *Times* on the state murder of self-identified “antifa” sympathizer Michael Reinhoehl last month by US marshals and local police.

And just who is this Dr. Paresky and why do the well-heeled editorialists at the *Times* care what she has to say? Paresky is the Director of the Aspen Center for Human Development, which caters to an elite clientele, primarily CEOs and the military. Paresky previously taught “leadership” at the US Air Force Academy.

Joining her at the Aspen Center for Human Development is Christine Balling, who according to her biography on the website is a “subject matter expert to the US Special Operations South commander on demobilization and counter recruitment issues.”

Balling “worked with the Colombian military’s demobilization group, and in collaboration with the Colombian Army, Air Force and National Police, she led counter-recruitment projects in areas where the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) insurgency operated. The Colombian Army incorporated her counter-recruitment model into the non-kinetic component of its mission.”

Balling also boasts that her articles have been published in *Foreign Affairs* and the *National Interest*. For her service to US imperialism and the Colombian bourgeoisie, Balling received the Colombian Armed Forces’ Medal of Distinguished Service.

These are the class interests the *Times* and Stockman are speaking for and why her piece was written: To denigrate the largest and most widespread protest movement in modern US history as the product of

“outside agitators” and violent “anarchists,” so that it can be snuffed out by the state and diverted back into the dead-end of “police reform” and the capitalist system.

To conclude her article, Stockman, voicing the racialism promoted by the *Times* and the Democratic Party, castigated the “violent anarchists” as privileged and white, citing Portland City Commissioner and former Democratic legislator Jo Ann Hardesty.

Hardesty told Stockman: “As a Black woman who has been working on this for 30 years, to have young white activists who have just discovered that Black lives matter yelling at me that I’m not doing enough for Black people—it’s kind of ironic, is what it is.”

Charges of “anarchists,” “outside agitators,” and “violent rioters” have been made by both Trump and his Democratic opponent Joe Biden throughout the summer. Following the Republican National Convention, Biden immediately pivoted to a “law and order” message and reiterated his pledge to not defund police but increase funding. While Trump and Biden vilify all violence at the protests as the work of “anarchists,” both turn a blind eye to police violence, excusing it as “a few bad apples.”

Stockman concludes her filthy piece with a line that could have been written by Barr, Trump or any number of police chiefs around the country.

In other words, it’s not really about George Floyd or Black lives, but insurrection for insurrection’s sake.

Stockman’s column is, in essence, an olive branch to the Trump administration, an acknowledgement that despite their objectively false narrative, the *Times* is prepared to present it as correct. This paves the way for further far right and state violence against peaceful protesters.

In the end, what unites the *Times*, and capitalist politicians around the country and the world, is their shared fear of growing resistance in the working class, not only to police violence, but to the homicidal “back to work” and “back to school” campaigns initiated at the behest of the financial oligarchy. The growth of rank-and-file safety committees at auto plants and schools, along with the ongoing resistance against police violence are warning signs to the ruling class that the working class is entering into struggle.

The *New York Times*, the unofficial organ of the Democratic party, and columnists like Stockman, do the dirty work of injecting racist politics “from the left,” while Trump and far-right publications serve a similar function with their promotion of anti-immigrant and nationalist chauvinism. Both are attempting to stifle the growing solidarity between multiracial and multi-ethnic protesters the world over, who face a common class enemy. These shabby attempts to defuse growing resistance to their outdated social order will fail.



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