

# Vancouver & District Labour Council



## Media Advisory

**March 13, 2019**

**Vancouver, BC**

### **VDLC Calls for Community to Oppose Racism, Fascism, and Bigotry**

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On March 15th, the Hellenic Community centre in Vancouver plans to host an event organized by the "UBC Free Speech Committee" and featuring Lauren Southern and Stefan Molyneux.

These individuals are internet personalities and authors who are associated with far-right extremism as well as white supremacist, anti-immigrant, anti-feminist, and Islamophobic ideas, organizations, and activities.

"Most of us weren't aware of who these individuals were prior to being notified by friends in the community about the event," says President Stephen von Sychowski. "That said, a quick search online allows you to find out what they stand for, in their own words, in short order. These are the politics of the so-called "Alt-Right", which stands for far-right extremism, bigotry, and xenophobia. It's not something we want in our communities and we think that Vancouverites on the whole would agree."

A variety of student, community, and anti-racist organizations are organizing a demonstration to oppose the event. Many are also pressing the Hellenic Community centre to reconsider hosting this event.

"We've tried talking to the Hellenic Centre about the decision to host this event," von Sychowski says. "We were told that nobody who knew about it or could speak about it was available, and we've heard that this same response was received by many others who made the attempt."

The VDLC credits the many student and community activists who have taken the lead on organizing the efforts to oppose this event and encourages broad support for those efforts. "The majority of Vancouver residents want their city to be a progressive, inclusive, welcoming place," von Sychowski says. "We have seen tremendous demonstrations of that in the past, and we need to continue to make that heard whenever these kinds of issues arise."

The Vancouver and District Labour Council represents nearly 100 local unions and 60,000 affiliated members in Vancouver, North Vancouver, Richmond, and West Vancouver.

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