

Charlottesville, Virginia

Editorial Comment
(www.oldandnewproject.net)

August 15, 2017: Politicians of both major parties have been calling on President Donald Trump to clearly and specifically denounce the “alt-right” (read “Nazi/Klan”) violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, on Saturday, August 12, in response to Trump’s press conference where he instead blamed “many sides” for what happened. Everyone except Trump knows that “many sides” are not to blame, only one side is: the side of racism and bigotry.

What all of these politicians fail to call for, however, but the citizens of this nation ought to, is for Trump to not only denounce the violence in Charlottesville but to take personal responsibility for it, since it was Trump’s public validation of this previously fringe ideology in US society—both during his campaign for the presidency and by his post-election appointments—which created the atmosphere where those who advocate the most virulent forms of racist ideology are today able to conceive the kind of demonstration they held in Charlottesville, attempting to make their variety of racism/white supremacy an accepted ideology not only in the White House but also in the political discourse of US society more broadly.

This right-wing demonstration was organized, specifically, to protest the city of Charlottesville’s efforts to lead the way in telling the truth about the racist history of the U.S. South, in particular the glorification of the Confederacy which has continued throughout most of the South up to the present. As part of its truth-telling process the city government of Charlottesville is proposing to dismantle images that have been used to help perpetuate a positive view of Confederate history—specifically a statue of General Robert E. Lee that presently stands in a public park. This decision to remove Lee’s statue was the declared target of the racist demonstration. By all indications, however, the city’s effort reflects the overwhelming majority viewpoint of Charlottesville’s residents, of all races. The city deserves our deepest praise in response to what it is trying to do, as do other cities in the South that are engaged in similar efforts.

At the same time, given Monday’s news reports of police who repeatedly stood by while right-wing protesters attacked peaceful counter-protesters, we demand that the police, and the city and state governments, examine how their policies, and choice to stand aside while violence occurred, contributed to the death and injuries in Charlottesville on Saturday.

This, of course, is the most tragic result of these events: the loss of life by Heather D. Heyer, a member of the International Workers of the World (IWW) who was there to register opposition to the KKK-fascists. There were also injuries, many of them critical, to more than a dozen others. These peaceful protesters were deliberately mowed down by a single right-wing motorist who drove his vehicle into a crowd of pedestrians. That was, clearly, not an act undertaken by “many sides.” A fund to help cover the medical expenses of those who were injured has been established. We urge everyone of conscience who possibly can to show their solidarity by making a donation at <https://www.gofundme.com/medical-fund-for-comrades-in-cville>, even though the campaign has already surpassed its original goal.

In the wake of this tragedy, memorial/solidarity actions have been taking place across the country. We expect them to continue, and we hope once again that everyone of conscience who possibly can will find a way to express their political agreement with the anti-racist protesters of Charlottesville by

participating in one or more of these actions. We can also expect the alt-right/Klan/fascists to organize more demonstrations designed to make their virulent variety of racism an acceptable part of the political discourse in the USA. This means that the rest of us must also be prepared to mobilize as often as is needed, in numbers large enough to let these open advocates of white supremacy know that they are not welcome anywhere in the streets, on the campuses, in the parks or other public spaces of this nation. We must send them scurrying back to the rat-holes from which they have emerged—and that includes the racist gang which is presently in control at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC.