

Reports on the Resistance: Demonstrations Across the Country in Solidarity with Charlottesville

August 15, 2017



Thousands demonstrated in dozens of cities and universities across the United States to protest the “Unite the Right” racist march and rally in Charlottesville Virginia and the automobile terrorist attack on anti-fascists that took the life of Heather Heyer on Aug. 12.

The demonstrations took the form of vigils, rallies, and marches that took place on Aug. 13 and 14. In New York City, thousands demonstrated at Trump Tower as he returned from the golf links to New York. In Durham, North Carolina, anti-fascists pulled down a statue of a Confederate soldier. In some cities there were multiple events called by a variety of progressive and leftist organizations.

Everywhere demonstrators expressed their opposition to the Ku Klux Klan, the Nazis, and the alt-right and their sympathy with Heyer and the many others who were injured some of them critically.

The protests have been accompanied by renewed calls for Trump to fire White House aides Steven Bannon, Stephen Miller, and Sebastian Gorka, whom the peace and justice group Code Pink called the “neo-Nazi axis of evil.”

The far right’s racist attack and the murder of Heyer have moved some who have stood on the sidelines to speak out and to stand up. As Siva Vaidhyanathan, professor of media studies at the University of Virginia, who with his wife and family had decided not to attend the anti-fascist protest wrote afterwards in a remarkable op-ed in the *New York Times*:

I now believe we made the wrong choice. Does my status as a parent make me special? It shouldn’t. A young man named Dre Harris was ambushed in a parking lot and took dozens of blows by club-wielding thugs. He took them so I wouldn’t have to. Next time I will stand on the street with my neighbors, even at the risk of injury or death. It’s the least I can do to repay those who stood bravely this time.

Many other Americans must be being touched by these events in a similar fashion. We may see more ordinary Americans go into motion if the far right continues its fight.

President Donald Trump initially condemned the violence, but refused to speak out against white supremacists, clearly for fear of alienating the white racist element in his base. Criticized by both Democrats and high level Republicans, the White House issued an unsigned statement condemning the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, and white supremacists.

Only after two days did Trump himself finally make a statement condemning those groups. But that was followed on Aug. 15 by a statement condemning violence on all sides, by both the alt-right and

the “alt-left.” The allusions to the alt-left could be the very beginning of a new era or red-baiting such as the United States experienced in the 1920s and the 1950s.