

Violent confrontation at Sacramento racist demonstration leaves 10 injured

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At least 10 people were injured Sunday when a demonstration led by white racist group, calling itself the Traditionalist Workers Party, clashed with hundreds of counter-demonstrators on the grounds of the state capitol in Sacramento, California.

The melee was also said to include individuals from other racist groups, including Golden State Skinheads, Blood & Honor, National Socialist Movement and the Ku Klux Klan.

Authorities and witnesses reported that violence began almost immediately after the arrival of the white nationalist demonstrators just before noon and lasted about 20 minutes. The groups fought with knives, fireworks, the sticks from their protest signs, and other common items that they had handy.

It has yet to be reported to which group the victims belong, but many of them sustained critical trauma stab wounds in the event that is being called a “mass casualty incident.” A total of 10 were injured, three critically.

The protest, which had been planned weeks ahead of time and for which a permit had been obtained, was attended and led by 30 members of the Traditionalist Workers Party. The group was formed last year as the political arm of the racist, white nationalist, Traditionalist Youth Network, an organization that specifically targets high school and college-age youth.

It is unclear if the counter-protesters were affiliated with a specific group. Many were wearing all black with face coverings and some say they were actively obscuring media cameras. Many media outlets described them as “leftist anarchist” groups. At least one official group, Antifa Sacramento, which identifies itself as an “anti-fascist organization,” promoted a “Shut Down Nazi Rally” event on its web site and social media.

There have also been reports that the Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration, and Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary, usually shortened to By Any Means Necessary (BAMN), was also actively involved. Yvette Felarca, a leading member of that group, was present and is quoted saying, “We have a right to self defense. That is why we have to shut them down.” Some 400 counter-demonstrators were present, outnumbering the racists.

The founders of the Traditionalist Workers Party and the Traditionalist Youth Network, Matthew Heimbach and Matt Parrot, are active supporters of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, though they do not call themselves Republicans.

Heimbach has been described as “the face of a new generation of white nationalists” and is often compared to David Duke. He has a long history of racist activism including the establishment of a White Student Union at a college in Maryland. He was more recently involved in a violent attack at a Trump Rally where he was recorded pushing a black anti-Trump protester while yelling racist commentary.

The Traditionalist Youth Network web site, in a post announcing the rally, said the aim was to highlight “the precarious situation our race is in” after “brutal assaults” at a Donald Trump rally, presumably referring to violent clashes that took place at some Trump campaign events.

A post on the organization’s web site written by leader Matthew Heimbach on Monday celebrates the violence. He writes, “Our Golden State comrades in the Traditionalist Worker Party went up against over ten-to-one odds and won! ... Absolutely all of the credit goes to the Golden State’s courageous warriors, proving that proven street fighters are absolutely vital to our sacred

cause of defending our White American families.”

The emergence of such racist and fascist groups like the Traditionalist Workers Party is a byproduct of a shift to the right in bourgeois politics internationally side by side with the complete bankruptcy of the official “left” in today’s politics.

The extreme nationalist positions, seen throughout the world and most recently in the Brexit campaign in the UK, promoted for decades by bourgeois politicians for their own aims, have created a breeding ground for such reactionary groups to flourish.

From Trump’s demand for the building of a wall on the US-Mexican border and Clinton’s most recent call for the return of the “spirit of 9/12,” both bourgeois presidential candidates have recklessly invoked policies and rhetoric aimed at stoking national tensions and disorienting sections of the lower middle class and working class.

A fight against openly fascistic groups like these, as well as radical right-wing tendencies seen in the 2016 US presidential campaign, cannot be achieved through the anarchistic groups that were apparently on scene in Sunday’s conflict. Violent confrontations between small groups cannot address the fundamental social antagonisms in capitalist society and ultimately play into the hands of the state.

The actions of isolated groups, devoid of a socialist political program or a concept of the class struggle, can never serve as a substitute for the collective struggle of the working class.



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