

Protests against Nazi violence, in support of Charlottesville victims held across US

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One day after the Nazi rampage in Charlottesville, Virginia—which left one dead and 19 injured—thousands of people participated in protests and vigils throughout the US to oppose fascist violence. Similar demonstrations are planned this week.

In Seattle, Washington, protests were held in opposition to a far-right demonstration that was scheduled to take place in Westlake Park. Joey Gibson—who is associated with the Oregon-based group Patriot Prayer—organized the so-called “Freedom Rally.” In the past, Gibson, a Trump supporter, has compared Islam with the Ku Klux Klan. He also organized two protests in Seattle earlier this year that resulted in fighting between anti-fascist groups and Patriot Prayer members.

While the counter-protest yesterday was predominantly peaceful, Seattle police took advantage of minor skirmishes to retaliate against left-wing protesters. This included police in full SWAT body armor using tear gas against protesters.

Police also tweeted pictures of alleged weapons used by left-wing protesters and carried out several arrests. As of Sunday night, police had not disclosed how many people were arrested.

The counter-protest in Seattle, with about 1,000 people, was roughly five times the size of the right-wing demonstration.

The protests elsewhere in the US were mostly called by Democratic Party-affiliated organizations, but attracted a broader layer. Those attending expressed their solidarity with the victims in Charlottesville and voiced their opposition to the Trump administration.

Many expressed hostility to the entire political establishment.

Rick, who attended a vigil in Ferndale, Michigan, said, “They have to have an enemy, and rather than

having an enemy that’s wealthy and powerful, they pit us against each other.

“In the ‘70s they had social unrest and so there was democratization. The youth went out and said we need voting rights and want to oppose the war. Events since have eroded those gains, and we haven’t had a mass movement to claw things back from the rich and powerful. Maybe Trump’s actions will create that movement.”

Andrew attended the protest in New York. “The events in Charlottesville are a really sad thing to see,” he said. “I was also surprised to see this in Virginia. That is where many of the Founding Fathers were from, and you would hope that it would uphold that democracy is for everyone.

“The rhetoric in the last election clearly empowered these people to say what they would not normally let them say. The president has made them feel like they can do this now.”

Eliza, a production assistant in New York, said, “I felt the need to have my voice heard, and so I came out here. I’m really terrified at how separated the country has become. I really believe that there should be equality and freedom for everyone, and anything against freedom is the antithesis of America.

“In this the two sides just don’t have equal weight for their arguments. I was glad to see a lot of Republican Congressman speaking out against the attack, but I wasn’t surprised by Trump’s response.”

Following some discussion about the mass dissatisfaction with the entire political system, she added, “I’ve always been a politically active person, but I see that a lot of people aren’t. There is a lot of corruption in politics and many areas of this country have been abandoned. We need politicians that are acknowledging the problems.”

Abei, who attended a rally in Ann Arbor, Michigan, said, “I am firm believer in equality. I have only been in the US for a week but I’m interested in this because similar things are happening everywhere. I come from India and have lived in Australia, and you see attacks on immigrants and racism there as well. Far-right parties too.”

After some discussion with a WSWWS reporter, he added, “I suppose I support the Democrats, but only because there is no other choice really. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, other places, and even under the Obama regime. It just seems like even with all that, there is no way out of this, between those two war crime parties.”



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