

Protests continue against Trump and Nazi rampage in Charlottesville

Our reporters
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Over the past several days, tens of thousands of people across the US have marched and rallied to denounce the murderous rampage of neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, Virginia over the weekend, which left one dead and 19 wounded. The shock and outrage over the virtual occupation of a university town by hundreds of armed fascists has been compounded by President Donald Trump's statements providing political cover for the perpetrators.

Rallies, protests and candlelight vigils in support of the Charlottesville victims and against the fascists have been held in cities such as New York, Chicago, Washington DC, New Haven, Detroit, Minneapolis, Dallas, Miami, Los Angeles, Seattle, San Diego and the Bay Area.

On Monday, protests were held in many locations, including Nashville, Tennessee; Durham, North Carolina; Minneapolis, New York and Washington, DC. In Nashville, protesters at the state Capitol sought to remove a bust of Nathan Bedford Forrest, a Confederate officer and early leader of the Ku Klux Klan. In Durham, demonstrators brought down a Confederate monument.

World Socialist Web Site reporters spoke to protesters in New York City and Washington DC. In Manhattan, thousands gathered outside of Trump Tower, where Trump was visiting for the first time since his inauguration.

Jorge, a City College of New York student and paralegal said, "I'm here to protest Trump after the rampage by the KKK and Nazis. This is what Trump has allowed, and he has to acknowledge that. Even if he is impeached, you have Pence and Sessions, who are connected to white supremacists, and this whole administration has given them a platform."

He continued, "Fascism has never sunk its roots in

the US, but has always been around since the 1930s. I think a lot of these small groups were able to grow under Obama."

After the WSWs reporter compared today's conditions to the economic crisis in the 1930s, Cruz added, "I completely oppose fascism in all its forms. The fascism of Mussolini or Hitler checked capitalism in some way, but what we have is almost a new form. Trump is so openly catering to the rich."

Zack, a high school student attending with two of his friends, said, "We go to a school founded on MLK's ideas, and we came out in order to join the people that oppose what Trump is doing. He hasn't called out what happened in Charlottesville as terrorism. These are the people that support him and have his back."

Zack's friend, Daniel, added, "Trump has a base that supports itself on their own racial ideals. They are really the majority of his base now. They could lead a small uprising, as they already did. They could also expand their influence and use their ideology to suppress people."

After some discussion about the consensus between Democrats and Republicans over issues such as funding the military, their friend, Roscoe, said, "It has become like a football game, and there isn't even agreement among the Republicans on a lot of issues. But the military budget goes through and it is just too much."

Christopher, an unemployed worker, said, "I see an authoritarian state arising now. I came out here, and I normally don't go to protests, because I feel like silence is complacency. Trump's statements make Nazis and white supremacists feel emboldened and we should stand up to them and feel emboldened to stand up to them."

"Trump won't condemn the violence because he wants to keep these groups up his sleeve for when he is

impeached. I'm trying to be optimistic and think this is the rock bottom, but things might get a lot worse before they get better."

Asked about the Democrats, he added, "I'm not sure how I feel about the Democrats. They are more in line with the corporate interest than our interests."

Kambale, who was born in the Congo, said, "I'm in the US as a refugee and I hear people telling me now to go back to the Congo. I'm really shocked to see people supporting Trump, but a lot has changed. Two years ago I used to walk around in African-style clothing, but I wouldn't do that now. You never know who are you going to run into.

"Something was sparked during Trump's campaign, and I remember telling my friends that if he doesn't win the election, this movement will not go away easily. He has agitated people beyond a certain point. I'm worried about matters of life and death. In Charlottesville someone died based on the political narrative of this man."

Asked his thoughts on the political situation, he added, "I don't believe the major political parties, and I mean both the Democrats and Republicans, are addressing the issues facing the American people. Also, a lot has stayed the same with Trump. The US military is still in Africa. It is still in the Middle East."

In Washington DC, WSWs reporters spoke to demonstrators in front of the White House. Some 400 people gathered there and then marched to Trump Hotel in the downtown area.

Emma, a young student, said, "It is obvious that hate has no room here. Yet, we have an armed alt-right in our streets. They were mobilized by the election of a president who sympathizes with them."

When asked why she thought people voted for Trump, she said: "I think people voted for him because they thought he was an outspoken outsider. They did not like President Obama. People in the Rust Belt felt that they no longer have a place in American society, and this is not true."

The WSWs also spoke with Jake and Misha, two young students. Jake said, "I thought what we saw yesterday was disgusting. Even members of the media were doing intellectual acrobatics to avoid denouncing the protests. Yet, 'Love Trumps Hate' has a very American liberal mentality. There are very few genuine socialists or communists here."

The WSWs reporter spoke to the students about the role played by Leon Trotsky in diagnosing the situation in Germany prior to Hitler's rise to power and his struggle to provide a revolutionary leadership for the German working class. Misha said, "I have done a lot of research into this period. Trotsky was a man of action and understood what type of organization was needed to defeat counterrevolution. I believe we need a revolutionary vanguard in this country."

A member of the Socialist Equality Party spoke before the assembled crowd. He said, "It is clear that Donald Trump represents a mortal danger to the working class that must be removed. But on what basis and under what program? The Democratic Party will not stop the rise of fascism. In fact, the far right is emboldened in large part by the betrayals carried out by what passes for the 'left' today. We call for a break with the Democrats and the Republicans. Both are responsible for the rise of Trump and neither party can be trusted to oppose him." The crowd responded with cheers and applause.



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