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# Speak Out Now

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## We Can Defend Ourselves

The horrific events in Charlottesville, Virginia shocked people across the country when a young neo-nazi drove his car into counter-demonstrators, killing Heather Heyer and seriously injuring 19 others. This was the outcome of the mobilization to “Unite the Right”, a recruiting effort by far right fascist, white supremacist, neo-nazi groups.

Friday night, hundreds of white supremacists marched across the Virginia University campus, torches in hand, chanting racist, anti-immigrant and anti-Jewish slogans. It was like a scene from the last century. Their goal of violence for their demonstration the next day was clear when they attacked a small group of anti-racist protestors.

The appearance of these far right groups may come as a surprise to some. They have been growing, especially since the election of Trump. There has been an increase of attacks on Muslims, mosques and immigrants. Trump has given these groups the confidence to crawl out of the shadows and sewers to spew their toxic hatred. Following the killing of Heather Heyer and their attacks on counter demonstrators, these groups said their demonstration was a success, especially after Trump’s comments, where he claimed that “both sides” were equally responsible for the violence.

This is not new to the U.S. These groups serve to keep deep-seated racist, anti-immigrant and other bigoted ideas alive. They are funded by the rich to try to keep working and poor people divided in an effort to undermine our struggles to better our lives. We saw this with the Ku Klux Klan that was formed following the Civil War and used to carry out vicious attacks at the end of Reconstruction to destroy the new society freed slaves and poor whites were building. We saw similar groups attack workers following the rise of workers’ struggles after WWI, through the 1930s. The Klan rose again during the rise of the Civil Rights movement in the South. Those movements were often able to fight back successfully against these rightwing forces.

Now they are in our face again, holding demonstrations in support of Trump, supposedly in

support of “freedom of speech”. These rallies are provocations to get a response from people who oppose their racist, white supremacist goals. They want to get media coverage to recruit to their cause and create a climate of fear, in hopes of preventing people from standing up against them.

We can’t afford to be frightened into silence. These groups do present a threat, but they are small now and can be stopped. Following the recent violence, some politicians are speaking out against these hate groups and say that we should support new laws restricting people’s right to assemble. And we should stay home and depend on the police.

This is not the way for us to organize to defend ourselves. We don’t have to depend on the police. We can’t give up our right to assemble because these hate groups are using our rights to their advantage. We don’t have to fear them. We don’t have to meet them on their terms – with only a handful of us battling a handful of them. We can stop them by turning out in the tens of thousands to say “NO” to their messages of hatred and bigotry. They don’t have a right to march in our streets, or assemble in our parks, advocating violence.

In Boston tens of thousands of people recently forced a small demonstration of far right haters out of their city. In the Bay Area we saw more than 100,000 people in the streets following Trump’s inauguration. We can do the same again and again. We can begin to organize now and talk with our friends and family, co-workers and neighbors to discuss what these fascists represent.

We can begin to organize now. There is a demonstration - **Bay Area Rally Against Hate** on Sunday, August 27, from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm at Oxford and Addison Streets in Berkeley for people ready to begin to organize against these right-wing groups who say they are coming to Berkeley.

**Speak Out Now is having our summer BBQ Sunday, August 27, 12-4** There will be food, sports, and activities for children. And a discussion about organizing to face the growing threat of these right-wing groups.  
**\$5 for Adults, kids 10 and under free.**  
**Tickets in advance only.**