



# The Society for the Study of Social Problems

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901 McClung Tower University of Tennessee Knoxville, TN 37996-0490  
Phone: 865-689-1531 Fax: 865-689-1534 E-mail: [sssp@utk.edu](mailto:sssp@utk.edu)  
[www.sssp1.org](http://www.sssp1.org)

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August 24, 2017

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

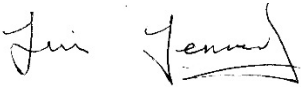
On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP), one of the oldest and most respected social science organizations in the country, we are writing to express our disappointment with your response to the recent neo-Nazi and white supremacist rally that occurred in Charlottesville and to upcoming rallies that are being held in various parts of our nation by these and similarly-minded groups. Furthermore, we disagree fundamentally with those who argue that the violence in Charlottesville was and is about the removal of a statue in honor of Robert E. Lee. If this were solely about statues, there would be no need for the racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic chants that took place during the rally. Further, as far as the statues are concerned, what society honors in this way individuals who engaged in a treasonous act to protect the right to own human beings? Yes, what these statues represent is a part, albeit a shameful part, of our history, just as Nazism was a part of German history. But in Germany you will be hard pressed to find a statue of Hitler, Himmler, Göring, Goebbels, or Eichmann. We can disagree on what to do with the statues after they are taken down, but we should not disagree on whether they *should* be removed. Even descendants of Stonewall Jackson, Jefferson Davis, and Robert E. Lee have stated that the statues should be removed from the public spaces where they stand.

We also wish to extend our condolences to the family of Heather Heyer and to wish others injured in this domestic terrorist attack a speedy recovery. We agree that there should be no place in the United States, and world, for the kind of hatred purveyed by these terrorist groups. Consequently, we feel compelled to join other groups and individuals, including members of your party, in expressing disappointment with your failure to condemn neo-Nazis and white supremacists more swiftly and in the most unambiguous and unequivocal terms possible. Anything less gives aid and comfort to an internal enemy that we have been trying to defeat since the Civil War. Our history is one of slavery, Jim Crow, the near extermination of indigenous populations, the internment of Japanese-Americans, and racial and ethnic segregation. Unfortunately, these white supremacists - domestic terrorists - represent who we have been, and clearly still are in some measure, but which we cannot continue to be if we are to be a truly free and democratic society.

Finally, we beseech you to distance yourself from all white nationalist groups and individuals who applauded your ambiguous response to events in Charlottesville (a response replete with false equivalents); and while we understand that Steve Bannon has now left your administration, we implore you to remove all advisers, such as Stephen Miller and Sebastian Gorka, who in the past have promoted and endorsed racist ideologies and policies. While we remain disappointed with your selection of Jeff Sessions as Attorney General for the same reason, we are pleased with his reference to the murder of Heather Heyer as an act of domestic terrorism, which to our knowledge you have yet to acknowledge in comparable terms. Your ambiguous position regarding white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups does nothing less than fuel more hatred, violence, and terrorism, however unintended.

As a professional, non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to the analysis and resolution of social problems and a commitment to social justice, we felt obligated to send this letter. We hope and trust that you will receive this letter in the constructive spirit in which it is written; and we stand ready to help you or anyone in your administration to address these issues in a more constructive and effective manner.

Sincerely,



Luis Fernandez, Ph.D.  
President, Board of Directors



Héctor L. Delgado, Ph.D.  
Executive Officer



David G. Embrick, Ph.D.  
Vice-President, Board of Directors