

August 18, 2017

Dear Members and Friends,

Your elected Executive Committee met this past week, as we do every month, to discuss and to make decisions about the union's business, as you have entrusted us to do. Yet we were keenly aware this time that our proceedings were unfolding in the shadow of the events that took place last weekend in Charlottesville, Virginia and our group thus felt compelled to produce a short statement regarding these events, in addition to the remarks we have already made through our social media channels over the past several days.

Let us then be absolutely clear: we condemn, in no uncertain terms, the white supremacist and white nationalist groups, the fascists, the Ku Klux Klan, and the neo-Nazis who marched on Charlottesville as well as the racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, and anti-immigrant ideologies that fueled that march – and the murderous violence that followed it – and that continue to fuel the activities of these groups, both in the United States and here in Canada. We do so not merely as concerned observers, but as trade unionists and as inheritors of a long tradition of principled opposition to fascism in all its pernicious forms.

We also condemn these groups and their beliefs as scholars and educators who were disturbed by the setting of this hateful gathering: the University of Virginia. We work to defend the rights of academic workers on our campus, in part, because we believe in the principles that underwrite the university's mission as an institution of higher learning, including the principles of integrity and inclusiveness. The presence of these groups and groups like them on any campus is a threat to those principles. We will continue to name and oppose any and all groups that promote hatred when they threaten this university, and we call on all leaders on campus, including the President, to commit to doing the same.

Finally, we grieve with those who are mourning loved ones who have died at the hands of racists and bigots and we acknowledge the heightened risks of violence that communities of colour are facing everyday in the United States and in Canada.

You will recall that we begin each of our meetings with a reading of the Local's Equity Statement, the last line of which entreats members, staff, and elected officers to be mindful that all members deserve dignity, equality, and respect. We believe that the fight to preserve the dignity, equality, and respect that our members deserve implies a responsibility to oppose the people and forces that imperil them. Let this statement stand as a public commitment thereto.

Rest in power, Heather Heyer.

In solidarity,



Graham Baker, President
on behalf of the Executive Committee, CUPE Local 3906