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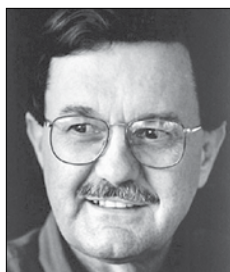
OPINION

The Old General Fought for an Ugly Cause

But even he could lend some wisdom to Trump

BY JIM HIGHTOWER

While our president's moral character seems stuck somewhere between boorish and brutish, it's only fair to note that he also has an aesthetic dimension.



This surprising side of Trump popped out several days after the Charlottesville, Va., attacks by raging white supremacists. In a presidential tweet, he said: "Sad to see the history and culture of our great country being ripped apart."

Yes, very sad to see a resurfacing of raw bigotry ripping so viciously into America's historic attempts to create a culture of mutual respect and unity in a nation of extraor-

dinary diversity — e pluribus unum, as our national maxim puts it.

Oh... wait. That's not what Trump meant.

He was actually advocating keeping the statues of Confederate champions of racism — pieces of bronze and granite that publicly celebrate America's shameful history of slavery, secession, and white supremacy.

The KKK thugs invaded Charlottesville in violent objection to the city's planned removal of a statue of Robert

E. Lee, who led the southern states' war against the United States so they could keep enslaving African Americans. Trump's lament, then, was not about the attack on America's better angels, but merely about "the removal of our beautiful statues."

Apparently, it never occurred to him that most Americans don't consider those statues either "beautiful" or "ours."

Ironically, Robert E. Lee himself opposed erecting Confederate statues across

the south: "I think it wiser not to keep open the sores of war," he said, but instead "to obliterate the marks of civil strife."

We could use a leader with such wisdom today, when bigots feel newly empowered to incite civil strife across our nation.

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Should I go that Neo-Nazi Rally to Fight Back?

When the level of dehumanization is extreme



BY STEPHANIE VAN HOOK AND MICHAEL NAGLER

When we hear that the Neo-Nazi movement is coming to our town, most of us naturally feel called—or pushed—to some kind of action. But not every action is going to be effective, especially if we are walking into a situation where the level of dehumanization is extreme—where people are prepared to harm or kill others. How then can we draw from the power of nonviolence in a situation of escalating violence?

First, we have to understand that nonviolence is strategic, principled and revolutionary. It answers to the violence around us by offering, in a disciplined manner, its opposite.

Nonviolence is by no means passivity. It is not inaction. And, we would include, it should not be shortsighted, reactive action. When using this power we should know what we are taking on and be prepared for encountering hatred without the fear of being overcome by it. Remember, the power of nonviolence comes from not opposing

the real well being of anyone, even — or especially — when we have to oppose their actions.

When we choose to go against our "fight or flight" response, we can find creative, nonviolent ways for responding to "Unite the Right" rallies that do not escalate violent tensions with more violence—whether defensive or offensive.

The real answer to violence is not counter-violence, however strongly we've been conditioned to believe that, but the demonstration of a counter-force.

1. When a hate group is coming to town, instead of directly confronting them and falling into the trap of chaos they want to create, instead of providing them the publicity that blows their importance out of proportion, we can engage in other activities and get the media pointed at those, such as a pro-peace concert or dance contest at the same time as their meeting. Or failing such an alternative, just plain ignore them — the way the good people of Montgomery just ignored a normally terrifying Klan ride in 1958. It shows that we are reclaiming

3. In all this, though, it's important to not unthinkingly imitate past sensational nonviolent actions or tactics. Each situation is different, and we need to explore what is at stake and plan for a variety of possible outcomes. Maybe we'll get arrested by the police, but what happens if we don't? How will we take care of each other if we do? If someone is hurt? If we don't ask these kinds of questions, we leave the door open to violence, which can only add fuel to the fire.

Make no mistake: nonviolent action takes courage, planning, and intelli-

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Here, then, are some of the things we can do.

our spaces with humanity and safety while acting together as a mature, loving community.

2. Another creative solution that can deflate the vehemence of a hate rally is to gather the community to donate money to a group like the Southern Poverty Law Center for every square foot covered by the hate group. Turn their gatherings turn into nonviolent, anti-fascist, pro-peace fundraisers.

gence. It's the best and quite possibly the only way to really counter these manifestations of hatred and ignorance that are disfiguring our society.

Stephanie Van Hook and Michael Nagler write for PeaceVoice. Van Hook is executive director of the Metta Center for Nonviolence; Nagler is professor emeritus at UC Berkeley and co-founder of the university's Peace and Conflict Studies program.