



# Meeting violence with violence

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I want to start this off by saying in terms of legality, you should never punch anyone. It is against the law and you will more likely than not get arrested for assault. However, is it morally okay to punch someone, specifically a Nazi? I say yes.

This whole discussion on punching Nazis started in January 2017 when self-proclaimed white supremacist Richard Spencer was literally punched in the face on camera. It was instantly made into a meme as internet users made remixes of the punch along with different music.

A whole lot of people ended up finding this hilarious because someone who is pretty well known all around as a Nazi got punched in the face and then made into a meme which angered even more. However, some people disagreed with it as a whole, believing that Nazi or not, he should not have been punched in the face.

In case you do not know why people consider Spencer to be a Nazi, it is because he has quoted Nazi propaganda, chanted “Hail

Trump” to which his supporters responded with the Nazi salute, and refuses to condemn Hitler. On top of all of that he, not surprisingly, marched in the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, which is what makes this topic relevant to right now.

People who agree with Nazis, a group responsible for the death of millions of people, to me, is considered a threat. The Nazis would have killed me, so in my mind if you agree with someone who wants me dead, you probably want me dead too. Wanting to kill me for things that I cannot change about myself is a valid reason for me to punch you. In my mind, it is a form of self-defense.

While some of these people claim they disagree with the Nazi’s killing people, they still chant and quote Nazi propaganda while refusing to condemn the Nazis. If you side with literal Nazis, but draw the line at genocide, that does not make you a better human being; you are still a Nazi.

Those who want to peacefully disagree make the argument that things can be talked out and should never resort to violence. However,

things cannot always be talked out.

In several of my journalism classes, we have learned about schematic structure. A person’s schematic structure is basically the way they think about the world based on their experiences, their background, the way they were raised, etc. Due to their schematic structure, when presented with information people will do one of three things: disregard the information because they disagree with it, store the information in their long term memory because they agree with it, or hold the information in their working memory until they get more information.

It is hard to change a person’s mind through reason because the brain really only tends to process what it agrees with and wants to process.

So, for the most part, people involved in hate groups are so set in their ways because of their background and experiences that they likely will not listen to reason. As many of you have probably seen and maybe even experienced, trying to reason with these people is like trying to reason with a brick wall. However, a punch to the



People gathered together in Pittsburgh on Aug. 14 to protest against hate and bigotry

face could easily get your message across in a way that they understand. Plus it will hurt your hand a lot less than punching a brick wall.

I am not telling everyone to go out and riot with bats and weapons because there is definitely a point where I do not think violence is okay.

I am not even telling everyone to go out and punch every Nazi or hate group member you see because there are situations that could escalate very quickly if you decide to do so. However, in cases like Richard Spencer, one punch is not going to permanently injure

or traumatize a person, but it will definitely get the point across.

Anyone who openly hates another person or a group of people for something that they have no control over like their race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion, deserves to get punched. However, you have to be prepared for the consequences that come with that.

Just like their consequences of spewing hatred was a punch to the face, your consequences will either be retaliation, arrest, or both. You just have to decide whether or not your actions are worth the consequences.

# Violence is not the answer

**RENÉE BORCAS**  
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When white supremacist Richard Spencer was punched in the face during an interview at President Donald Trump’s inauguration last January, I could not help but experience feelings of schadenfreude. After all, what could be more American than punching a Nazi?

As debate over the video of Spencer stirred online, I tried to imagine the situation more complexly. After some thought, I came to a conclusion that opposed my initial complacency: Responding in violence to someone for speaking their opinion is not only illegal, but fruitless and immoral.

All people are born equal with basic human rights, including the freedom of opinion. While someone may have odious beliefs, it is unethical to assault them based on that alone. Even if another person is inciting violence, responding physically is inappropriate unless used in an act of defense.

In cases where a person is in support of prejudice, it is more productive to engage in civil discourse. In my experience, the only way to change someone’s mind is through a well thought out argu-

ment. In some cases, this might not even work. Some people are just stuck in their ways.

But punching people for speaking their opinion, no matter how harmful their opinions may be, creates unnecessary harm and treads on their rights. In the long run, this will only help the cause of the other side—In this case, Nazis.

Ideally, punching a white supremacist would discourage their public presence, but there is no guarantee they will react that way. If a neo-Nazi sees a person with similar beliefs as their own being assaulted in the streets, they might even become inspired to rally behind that person.

The last thing that we need is to have more neo-Nazis in the streets, but if people come out to speak their opinions peacefully and those who disagree decide it is acceptable to cause them harm, that will only start a riot and gain the neo-Nazis more pity because they look like the victim in this scenario.

There are more effective ways to counter the ideas of white supremacy. As I already started, talking to them might make them aware of their harmful beliefs. Even yelling at them could get the point across that their views are unacceptable

in today’s society.

Other means like protesting, calling representatives, and working for causes that admonish harmful ideas, are all better options than resorting to violence. The logic used to support Nazi-punching has been seen repeatedly throughout history: One group thinks that another is villainous, therefore they deem that enough means to violently lash out against them.

Following this line of reasoning opens up the opportunity to punch anyone in the streets if you simply disagree with their opinion. That would be chaotic, to say the least.

I believe that if the world seeks out of peaceful means before resorting to violence, we will be able to reach more effective results.

Encouraging and partaking violence are against the law for a reason and there are legal platforms set up to deliver justice in these situations.

Let’s spend less time being smugly satisfied in jail for punching a Nazi, and more time pushing forward ideas that will improve society.

Once more, I feel it is important to emphasise that I am by no means defending the thoughts of the garbage humans that call



One of the peaceful protesters that was present at the Charlottesville rally.

themselves neo-Nazis and white supremacists. While they deserve the right to freedom of speech like the rest of us, hatred like theirs should have no home in America or anywhere across the world.

It is vital to society that we shut down the ideas of neo-Nazis and white supremacism.

However, that is better that be done through conversation and arguments, rather than violence.

The Collegian

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