

DEREK BLACK E-MAIL TO MARK POTOK, JULY 15, 2013

I'm writing this letter partly in response to the SPLC's recent article discussing my message to fellow students and also out of a desire to articulate my thoughts. I have decided to write now after thinking about the implications extensively, and I am requesting that this letter be published and available to the public in full, along with the full email sent to my classmates back in November.

A few months ago, the SPLC wrote an exposé about a letter of mine only intended for fellow students. I was not ready for it to go public. A large section of the community I grew up in believes strongly in white nationalism, and members of my family whom I respect greatly, particularly my father, have long been resolute advocates for that cause. From a young age I observed my dad sacrifice dearly for his commitment—a conviction stemming from nowhere else than ardent resolve in the rightness of the cause. I was not prepared to risk driving any wedge in those relationships and I did not believe that was necessary. The number of changes in my beliefs during the past few years, however, has amounted to a shift that I think needs to be addressed. When the SPLC exposed a letter meant only to discourage misconceptions about me among fellow students, I was not prepared then to remark more. I commented and labeled myself as someone who still believed in white nationalism. After a great deal of thought since then, I have resolved that it is in the best interests of everyone involved, directly or indirectly, to be honest about my slow but steady disaffiliation from white nationalism.

Over the past few years, I have been disentangling myself from white nationalism. While the radio show I founded ended in January of 2013, over the course of the prior year I only appeared rarely and typically only when emergency required that someone fill in for the other hosts. I haven't posted on Stormfront in 2013, and I only posted once in all of 2012—then to give a report on my dad's media appearance. I am closing my Stormfront account. Also, in the last article written about me, the SPLC reported that I attended a "European American Leadership Seminar" in 2012, when in fact I did not. And while I did speak at last year's Stormfront conference, I am not involved this year at all and will not be attending.

I acknowledge that things I have said as well as my actions have been harmful to people of color, people of Jewish descent, activists striving for opportunity and fairness for all, and others affected. It was not my intention then, and I will not contribute to any cause that perpetuates this harm in the future. Advocating for redress of the supposed oppression of whites in the West is by its nature damaging to all others because of the privileged position of white people in these societies. Promoting a victim complex for whites does not recognize the oppressed experiences of others not in the position of a white person in society, and that's what my efforts have done. For those to whom the white nationalist perspective is alien, I think it's worth summarizing here:

White nationalism supports the premise that multiculturalism is a failure, and that politicians trapped in a multicultural status quo are oppressing white people in "their own country." They typically blame the West's movement toward inclusion on a conspiracy of Jewish power to promote multiculturalism at the expense of whites. White nationalists cite black-on-white crime statistics and the increasing prevalence of "nonwhite" cultures and values in western society, as well as the growing number of legal protections and employment opportunities that a "minority" status now affords. On the other hand, white nationalists consider white people in the US to be ostensibly the victims of an ongoing genocide brought about by immigration and miscegenation, and feel that when they try to speak up about it, they are subjected to a vicious double standard. They observe that Black Nationalism and Zionism are recognized as tolerable, but whites with a similar declaration are vilified as racists. When they attempt to claim an accomplishment or cultural

production for the white race that produced it, they are called racists. If they produced their own Malcolm X, the nation as a whole would regurgitate. Thus their own white leaders are victimizing white people—the system has turned its formidable weapons against a white identity. Therefore they think that whites must oppose resistance to racism in order to guarantee the future of white people as a people.

I now consider this belief system principally flawed. Most arguments that racial equity programs disadvantage whites who would otherwise be hired or accepted to academic programs mask underlying anxieties about the growth of non-white social status. It is impossible to argue rationally that in our society, with its overwhelming disparity between white power and that of everyone else, racial equity programs intended to affect the deep-rooted situation represent oppression of whites. More importantly, white nationalism's staunch opposition to the gains in numbers and in influence of non-whites makes it a movement by nature committed to suppressing these people. The advancement of minorities in the US is not insignificant, but has not ended (let alone reversed) their circumstances. Particularly bizarre to me is the determination of Jewish social domination. Though there are plenty of powerful Jewish activist groups pursuing their chosen agendas, it is inaccurate and outrageous to talk about people of Jewish descent as “the enemy” of anyone, as it is essentializing a large group into a fairy tale antagonist. It has become clear to me that white nationalism is not a movement of positive identity or of asserting cultural values, but of constant antagonism at the betterment of other groups.

A white nationalist party can't function without standing on these disparities between whites and other groups and essentially endorsing them. To say that white people have let the “minority agenda” go too far implies that the relatively insufficient gains they have made are oppressing us. There is no way to advocate for white nationalism but by arguing that minorities pose a threat to our supremacy. It is not enough to say it is opposition to assimilation when the proposed recourse is to expel, suppress, or marginalize these other groups. Advocating for white nationalism means that we are opposed to minority attempts to elevate themselves to a position equal to our own. It is an advocacy that I cannot support, having grown past my bubble, talked to the people I affected, read more widely, and realized the necessary impact my actions had on people I never wanted to harm.

I believe that a healthy sense of identity and belonging are necessary, and I think being proud of where you came from is important regardless of race or class. I do not believe advocacy against “oppression of whites” exists in any form but an entrenched desire to preserve white power at the expense of others. I am sorry for the damage done by my actions and my past endorsement of white nationalism.

I realize not all will instantly believe me, or may perceive this as a seemingly abrupt change when it has been instead a gradual awakening process. I understand that my words don't suddenly heal all wounds caused by my actions or my encouragement of others. Time, however, will demonstrate my full lack of involvement. To white nationalists, I have remarked that most people face a huge hurdle before they embrace an unpopular opinion, referring to those unwilling to risk being called racist for what I had believed was a just cause. Now I look at it from a new vantage point: I should be the one who calls out what I disagree with. I can't support a movement that tells me I can't be a friend to whomever I wish or that other people's races require me to think about them in a certain way or be suspicious at their advancements. One revelation for me was when I grasped I would be much more likely to help an individual through our legal system towards citizenship than to work towards his or her expulsion. Minorities must have the ability to rise to positions of power, and many supposed “race” issues are in fact issues of structural oppression, poor educational prospects, and limited opportunity. The differences I thought I observed didn't go nearly as deeply as I imagined. I believe we can

move beyond the sort of mind-boggling emphasis white nationalism puts on maintaining an oppressive, exclusive sense of identity—oppressive for others and stifling for our society.

Below please find the letter I sent to my classmates in November. However you may receive this letter or comment on it, I'd appreciate having my text also made available. I genuinely hope this letter—and the full copy of the earlier one—will have a positive effect in some way; at least they will allow me to clarify my thoughts when I have not done so for a long time.

Derek Black

Original letter to the student forum from November:

I haven't defended myself on here or responded to anyone except when they've approached me personally because I've discovered it's a no-win, very hostile situation all around. Posting this goes against my general judgment, because I don't think that people have an obligation necessarily to explain themselves for anything. It's been brought to my attention that people might be scared or intimidated or even feel unsafe here because of things said about me. I wanted to try to address these concerns publicly, as they absolutely should not exist if they don't need to.

I have done my best since arriving to New College to stay out of people's hair. Since returning after the big thread about me while I was abroad, I have tried hard to not do anything of note whatsoever. Before I competed in the talent show last year, I debated whether I wanted to live with the potential forum war resulting from me singing a folk song. I always have to weigh whether I want to attend a public lecture for fear of the glares, and a couple club leaders have expressed that they'd prefer I not attend their meetings (including Pluralism Committee). During my first semester back I would go sailing to escape the occasional middle finger in the library, the murmurs when I'd get food in Ham, and the occasional threatening emails. An easy response to this from someone who's never talked to me could be along the lines of, "Well, that's the type of discrimination you've advocated against minorities!" I do not and would never support discrimination or unfair treatment against anyone insofar as my privilege allows me to identify it.

Anything else can be addressed to me personally. I'm not going to debate on the forum about anything. Since this thread is closed, I obviously won't be posting here again. Some of these may seem redundant, but I want to cover all of the bases.

- 1) I am not a white supremacist, nor do I identify with white supremacy.
- 2) I don't hate anyone because of their race, religion, or anything similar.
- 3) I do not have a dislike of anyone on account of race, religion, or anything similar.
- 4) I don't wish ill-will towards people based on race/religion/anything similar.
- 5) I don't think a person's race/religion/any similar factor predetermines a person's life course.
- 6) I have nothing against anyone because of their race, religion, or anything similar.
- 7) I do not believe people of any race, religion, or otherwise should have to leave their homes or be segregated or lose any freedom or whatever other terrifying similar-vein ideas have been posted in threads about me. (Whoa.)
- 8) I am not a Nazi, nor do I identify with Nazism.
- 9) I am not part of the KKK, nor do I identify with the KKK.
- 10) I do not support oppression of anyone because of his or her race, creed, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, or anything similar.

Since the SPLC article was linked here, it may also be relevant that my quote in Details magazine from 2008 about Obama and burning tires was prefaced by an equally disparaging remark about McCain that wasn't printed. It was not actually a quote about a black president.

As for the Republican Executive Committee of Palm Beach County, it's a committee whose primary job is to organize their neighbors to go vote. They also have a barbeque fundraiser every year, they allocate funds in the county, and they send their chairman to Tallahassee to vote in the state committee. It's certainly not Congress. And I ran (and won) based on the libertarian-ish views that I hold (such as protection of personal liberty, no foreign wars without imminent threat), as well as regulation for environmental conservation and an inclination towards protection of domestic industry. I thought it would be fun and a good experience. Because of how it all erupted (complete with death threats), I wanted to start the radio show for people to hear my voice and my opinion about it all. What I began as a two-month interesting learning experience of AM radio was taken up by a group of folks to turn it into an institution. As far as Stormfront goes, it's my dad's website, and though I have moderator privileges, I don't moderate. And as should be understood for both the radio and the website, only things I've said myself are things I can be held accountable for.

tl;dr, I don't want people to feel uncomfortable here because of me, but I also do not want to outline every belief system I have. These seem to be the major issues of contention. (If anyone cares, I'm also pro-choice (regulated by states), pro-gay marriage (with gov't not defining marriage between people), and anti-death penalty (regulated by states).) If people want more information about what I actually believe as opposed to what people frequently say, then message me privately to set up a conversation. I am thesising, busy, and I don't like hostile situations.

Making these statements obviously does not instantly create comfort or security for everyone who's uncomfortable, but I hope it might help slightly.