

The Daily Tar Heel

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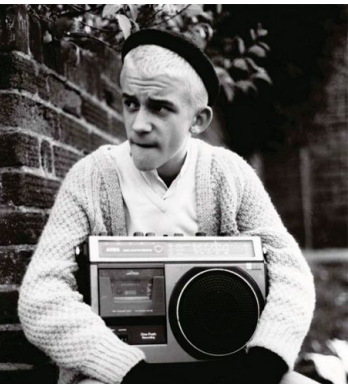
TUESDAY AUGUST 25TH, 2009

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announcement

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

From now on the Daily Tar Heel promises to provide accurate information about all issues, regardless of the stance taken by the UNC administration.



arts | page 3

WHERE'S THE ROCK?

Several bands recently lamented the lack of all-ages venues in the downtown area. Some are trying to remedy the situation.

university | page 9

A HISTORY OF EXPLOITATION

After intense research, faculty members in the history department have determined that UNC's wealth was built almost entirely upon the labor of poor, mostly African-American workers.



national | online

A MEETING TO REMEMBER

On September 24th, the rich and powerful will gather in Pittsburgh at the G-20. Students from around the country will confront them.

city | online

DEVELOP THIS!

Community members continue to oppose Greenbridge, a massive "eco-condo" for the super-rich, which is being built right on the border of the mostly lower-income Northside neighborhood.

this day in history

AUGUST 25th, 1944

Paris is liberated from the Nazi occupation. Just three days earlier, the last transport of French Jews was sent to camps in Germany.

Group co-founder pleads guilty to hate crime

Court documents expose national embarrassment

BY JOHN BILLINGS
STAFF WRITER

Marcus Epstein, the Vice-President and reputed co-founder of the national student organization Youth for Western Civilization, plead guilty on July 1st, 2008 to an assault on an African-American woman in Georgetown. The assault has been classified as a hate crime, court records show.

According to court documents first made public by the news site DC Indymedia, on July 7th, 2007 Epstein was walking down the street making offensive remarks when he encountered the victim, called her the "N-word" and struck her in her head. He was briefly detained by the woman's husband, but was able to escape, only to be arrested minutes later by a Secret Service officer who witnessed the attack.

Epstein initially faced a maximum punishment of 180 days in jail and \$1000 fine, and also had to continue mental health treatment, complete an alcohol treatment program, write a letter of apology to the victim and donate \$1000 to the United Negro College Fund prior to sentencing. He finally plead guilty to simple assault, with a "hate crime enhancement."

Over the last several years, Epstein's political activism has included editing a college newspaper and appearing on The Political Cesspool, a white supremacist radio program hosted by Council of Conservative Citizens member James Edwards that proudly admits to hosting white supremacists

and Neo-Nazi figures. In a press conference this past January, Epstein and several colleagues called for the Republican Party to abandon reaching out to nonwhites and focus only on its white voting base.

In January, a new organization, Youth for Western Civilization, was founded with Epstein as its Vice-President. According to the mission statement on their website, YWC seeks to create a "right-wing youth movement" and encourage "pride in Western heritage." Speaking events sponsored by YWC chapters at Vanderbilt University, American University and the University of North Carolina have been held in the face of public protest. Two different events at UNC this past April were disrupted by angry anti-racist students, one of which ended with ex-congressman Tom Tancredo being physically chased from Bingham Hall.

Tancredo himself has also come under fire recently for his possible connections with Minutemen American Defense, an anti-immigrant vigilante group based out of Arizona. Three members of that group were charged in June with the killing of a Latino man and his 9-year-old daughter, in an apparent attempt to steal funds for their organization. One of those charged, Shawna Forde, participated in an anti-immigration rally Washington co-organized with representatives of Tancredo's presidential campaign.

Like many other anti-immigrant activists, including Marcus Epstein, Forde has participated in both explicitly racist as well as "mainstream" organiza-



(Top) Part of his helping to bring racist ideas into the mainstream, Epstein wrote speeches and campaigned for Tom Tancredo during his bid for the presidency.

tions such as Youth for Western Civilization.

The UNC administration initially denied charges that this group has links to white supremacy, and harshly criticized students' and community members' opposition to YWC, accusing them of "intolerance." It remains to be seen whether the administration will change its position given this new evidence of YWC's racist roots.

Tancredo opposed by Providence College

Decision is another blow against national student group

BY MIA FARRON
STAFF WRITER

On April 29th, the administration of Providence College decided that anti-immigrant politician Tom Tancredo would not be allowed to speak on campus. An event being hosted by the college chapter of Youth for Western Civilization had been planned for that day, but was unable to proceed.

The college, which is a private Catholic institution, claimed that YWC was not an official student group and therefore couldn't bring Tancredo. Bishop Thomas Tobin, who is a member of the college's board of trustees, said Tancredo's racist ties and anti-immigrant ideas also ran directly counter to church teaching, and that he agreed with the administration's decision.



Bishop says YWC goes "against church teaching."

It is also possible that the school took this stance in order to avoid the embarrassment of rowdy demonstrations that have occurred at other universities, including UNC-Chapel Hill, where Tancredo was run off campus by over a hundred angry demonstrators waving banners and shouting anti-racist slogans.

Instead of speaking on campus, Tancredo spoke to a couple dozen supporters outside the gates of the university, while being protested by over 300 students, faculty, and community members.

Regardless of the reasons for Providence College's decision, it represents one more blow against an organization surrounded by controversy, criminal charges, and accusations of white supremacy.



(Top) Anti-racists clash with the Aryan Guard in Calgary, Canada. Both the Aryan Guard and Youth for Western Civilization are heavily supported on white supremacist websites like Stormfront.org.

YWC adviser chooses to step down

BY SAM MILTON
STAFF WRITER

The fate of UNC's chapter of Youth for Western Civilization is up in the air.

Chris Clemens, the astronomy professor who served as the group's faculty adviser, decided this past June not to continue in the role next year. Once his sponsorship officially ends, the group has approximately 30 days to find a new faculty adviser before they are no longer an official campus organization.

"I'm not willing to sponsor an affiliate of the national YWC," Clemens said. "It's going to be a time consuming task to guide these students in an organization that's becoming inflammatory."

Clemens stressed he is not passing judgment on the national organization itself but the reputation it has gained in the community. "It's a magnet for the radical left to come shut you down," he said. "The name has become an obstacle to constructive dialogue."

This past April, two separate YWC-hosted events were disrupted by angry anti-racist students and community members. The first event only lasted about a half hour, and ended with ex-congressman Tom Tancredo being

physically chased out of Bingham Hall. Another speaking event was disrupted the next week, with 6 community members arrested.

Protesters have repeatedly cited the group's ties to white supremacist organizations and websites such as Stormfront.org and Vdare.org, as well as the group's co-founder Marcus Epstein pleading guilty to a brutal hate crime last year, as reasons for the group to not be endorsed as an official student organization. One protester was quoted as saying, "What is the point of an anti-discrimination policy, if it allows for a white supremacist group with a history of racist violence to actively recruit on our campus?"

Jon Curtis, associate director for student activities and student organizations, said it would be illegal to dissolve a group unless it violates University policy or loses its adviser.

In an interview, several protesters expressed relief at Clemens' decision to step down, saying that they feel "he did the right thing," and that they were hopeful no other faculty would be interested in taking his place.

Regardless of whether or not the group gets a new advisor, YWC



Chris Clemens, the astronomy professor who served as YWC's faculty adviser, will not continue in the role next year.

opponents promised they would continue to confront the organization. "You cannot have dialogue with a hate group," one protester said. "The entire history of white supremacy has demonstrated this. Look at Reconstruction in the South or the rise of European fascism. This ideology represents a violent threat to our most cherished values, and must be dealt with as such."



ANNE HESTON
FIELD CORRESPONDENT

Learning from an anti-racist victory in Houston

On June 27th, white supremacists attempted to distribute hate literature in downtown Houston, TX. Anti-racists mobilized to confront the gathering and sent a clear message to the fascists – “Not in our city!”

The group, called “Aryan Front Line Skinheads,” intended to hold a memorial for and pass out speeches written by a Nazi named David Lane, a member of an armed white supremacist group called “the Order.” Lane died in prison while serving time there for the murder of Jewish radio host Allen Berg.

A call to oppose the racists went out, and in the morning scouts were on location at the downtown federal building where the white supremacists planned to gather. Anti-racists from around the city began gathering in a downtown park at 10 am. By eleven there were over 40 anti-racists, and still no sign of the group. With noon approaching and still no sign of the “Aryan” group, the counter-protesters began to disperse, leaving scouts posted.

About ten minutes later, a blue pickup truck pulled up and a woman with various swastika tattoos was spotted getting out with 3 goateed colleagues. Scouts put out the call for people to reconvene, and the white supremacists were stopped before they had a chance to unpack their literature, surrounded by anti-racists yelling, “Nazis go home!”

The anti-racists kept the group surrounded as they attempted to deliver a speech about their dead hero to an empty street. Finally, the white supremacists realized they had been outmaneuvered, and retreated back to their truck without handing out a single flier.

I first read about this confrontation on the internet, excited to see someone taking an uncompromising position on hate groups organizing in their town. Some people will argue that if you ignore them “they will go away,” or that “they have a right to organize.” But anyone who has studied the rise of xenophobic political parties and hate crimes in Europe, or Hitler’s ascent to power, or the resistance to slavery in our own country, will tell you this is not the case.

I grew up in a town where skinheads would jump you in the parking lot after a concert if you were “anti-american.” My Grandfather almost died fighting nazis in WWII. I live in a country whose entire economic infrastructure was built on the backs of Black slaves and poor immigrants. My great-grandparents were those immigrants.

So let us be clear on at least one point: white supremacy is not an “idea” that can be peaceably debated in a bubble on campus. It is a pre-existing reality, maintained through violence every day in this country. The sooner we realize this, the sooner we can dismantle the racial hierarchies that haunt this country.



Fascists in Spain, Germany and Italy, as well as the more recent anti-immigrant parties in France and the UK, have all used a combination of legal political activity as well as violent attacks against immigrants, ethnic minorities, queer people, and radical opposition.

Refusing to see racists as victims

On “free speech,” political legitimacy, and fascism

Historically, fascists have come to power by utilizing the “legitimate channels” of government while carrying on illegal activity on the sly. This perfectly describes Youth for Western Civilization, who pose as a student group while their founding members engage in racist assaults. Thus, they are able to defend their recruiting and fundraising on the grounds that these are “free speech,” even as they terrorize others and endeavor to exclude them not only from dialogue but even from the United States itself.

This two-pronged approach enables fascists to retain an air of legitimacy in the public eye while exerting brute force beyond all accountability on the street. Extremist actions such as vigilante attacks and clinic bombings make repressive laws and policing appear restrained by comparison; this can serve to “normalize” violence against immigrants, so-called minorities, the

impoverished, and other targeted groups. Such actions also offer justifications for the state to consolidate power “to preserve order”—power that can later be used to enforce more repressive policies. Some people decry the violence of vigilante groups, but accept the same behavior as legitimate once the ones carrying it out are wearing badges and uniforms.

Allowing white supremacist groups political legitimacy gives legitimacy to white supremacy itself, as long as that hierarchy is institutionalized and perpetuated through the “proper channels.” This legitimacy is largely how the systems of slavery and cheap factory labor were maintained for so long in this country, and how racist inequalities are perpetuated today.

Hatred and oppression are never legitimate. It doesn’t matter whether they come dressed in the hoods

and sheets of the KKK or the uniforms of the border patrol. It doesn’t matter whether they are taught in secret camps or college classrooms. It doesn’t matter whether they are propagated through white power websites or speeches by elected representatives. They have to be opposed wherever they appear; they can never be permitted to gather enough momentum to force their skewed version of reality on everyone else.

Those who truly value free speech and freedom itself should not be confused when fascists attempt to paint themselves as victims. Long after his consolidation of power, Hitler painted the Aryan race as a victim surrounded on all sides by hostile forces. Groups like YWC pursue a similar strategy, using the language of “Western pride,” and “illegal aliens” to attract sympathy for a supposedly victimized white race. Do not be fooled.

Denial, diversity, or equality?

The language and limitations of liberalism

UNC is known for being a liberal campus. I speak not of Democrats or “liberals,” per se, but of the older, broader philosophical trajectory that permeates nearly every discussion of social issues in this society.

Nowhere has this discourse been better illustrated than with the social conflicts which emerged last spring over anti-racist opposition to Youth for Western Civilization.

Regarding this subject, liberalism generally took two routes to the same conclusion, that being the absence of meaningful opposition to white supremacy.

The first route was simply one of denial: despite overwhelming evidence of their links to white supremacist movements (a fascist symbol on their website, a co-founder who plead guilty to a hate crime, blogging on white nationalist sites, language taken almost directly from Britain’s National Front Party, the list goes on...), the UNC administration, the Daily Tar Heel, and most of “liberal” campus affirmed YWC’s existence by refusing to acknowledge what the group really was. Thus the group’s right to participate in “democracy” and “the

marketplace of ideas” was affirmed.

Such a position of denial shows a bizarre lack of understanding, on the part of otherwise intelligent people, as to the purpose and function of fascist and white supremacist organizing throughout history.

The second route, taken by those liberals purporting to oppose YWC, was that of “diversity.” This was best represented by their “dance party for diversity.” How a dance party is supposed to stop white supremacy we were never told, but we were assured that they were well-intentioned, and certainly better behaved than the other protesters (who were actually effective). The absurdist images of partisans breakdancing away Hitler or Spanish workers doing the twist against Franco come to mind.

Here’s the problem: You can find diversity on a slave plantation (or, for that matter, a tomato farm in Eastern North Carolina.) As a concept, “diversity” merely implies a pluralistic society, with the acceptance of different social groups participating in a capitalist economy and “democracy.” Diversity has little to say about the relation-

ships between these groups or individuals, however, and therefore has little to say about white supremacy or the capitalist relations which it assumes. It is a useless language, on the one hand irrelevant, on the other hand inadequate.

The broad notion of equality, in contrast, deals directly with exploitation and power dynamics. It sees the mere “acceptance” of marginalized groups into the hierarchies of the national economy and political framework, as implied by the white liberal discourse of diversity and denial, as inadequate and ultimately misguided. The anti-racists who disrupted YWC’s events, who are fighting the racist Greenbridge development in Chapel Hill, who have confronted the campus administration repeatedly over issues of sweatshop labor and union-busting, seem to understand this.

So the next time you react to white supremacy and its opponents on campus, ask yourself: Are you reacting from a place of denial, diversity, or equality? If it is denial or diversity, you are wasting your time. If your goal is equality, it might take more than dancing.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Racism is a much more hidden kind of phenomenon, but at the same time it’s perhaps far more terrible than it’s ever been.”

ANGELA DAVIS, PRISON ABOLITIONIST, WRITER, AND TOTAL BADASS



GET INVOLVED!

A FEW OF THE GREAT RADICAL RESOURCES IN CHAPEL HILL, CARRBORO, AND DURHAM

Student Action with Workers - A worker/student organization that mobilizes support for worker-led campaigns on campus.

Feminist Students United - A group that hosts feminist speakers on campus, co-organizes demonstrations for a variety of progressive causes, and sponsors a variety of feminist events.

Black Student Movement - The second largest group on campus, BSM formed in 1967 as the leading voice for black students, and members have participated in the struggles of house- and groundskeepers as well as the building of a black cultural center on campus.

Students for a Democratic Society - Formed several years ago to bring together opposition to the Iraq War, members have also fought tuition hikes, supported struggles against sweatshop labor, and participated in demonstrations against YWC.

Chapel Hill Prison Books Collective - This prison abolitionist group sends books and radical materials by request to prisoners throughout the South, publishes prisoners’ writing, does educational work about the prison-industrial complex, and acts on a number of other issues like gentrification.

Internationalist Bookstore and Community Center - Founded in 1981, I-books has long existed as a gathering place for a wide variety of radical ideas, causes, and groups. It is located at 405 W. Franklin St.

The Really Really Free Market - For almost 5 years, hundreds of town residents have gathered on the first Saturday of every month at this anti-capitalist market/picnic, where people teach workshops, play games, and give away free items like groceries, clothes, and furniture.

El Kilombo Intergalactico - This Zapatista-inspired, people-of-color led collective has a social center in nearby Durham, and works on projects like a community health clinic, garden, and cooperative housing and employment.

a timeline of opposition to Youth for Western Civilization at UNC

- April 14th** - A speaking event hosted by YWC is quickly ended by protesters who disrupt the event with yelling, banners, and smashing out a window of the classroom. The speaker, anti-immigrant ex-congressman Tom Tancredo, is chased from the building.
- April 22nd** - Another YWC-hosted speaker, this time Virginia politician Virgil Goode, is repeatedly disrupted by song and dance, yelling, banners, and small noisemaking devices. Six people are arrested on charges of disorderly conduct.
- April 23rd** - UNC student Haley Koch is arrested while leaving class for her participation in the actions of the 14th. She is charged with “disturbing the peace” at a university event.
- April 24th** - Several student groups hold a joint-press conference in the pit, decrying police use of chemical weapons and tasers against protesters on the 14th, and calling for all charges to be dropped.
- May 27th** - A Washington, DC news site, DC Indymedia, publishes a story that uncovers a YWC co-founder’s hate crime, as well as his links to other white supremacist groups. The Daily Tar Heel never prints the information.
- June 1st** - The anti-racist protesters’ first court date is held. All 7 plead not guilty and refuse to take a plea, while dozens gather outside to demand the charges be dropped and YWC be disbanded. Their case is continued.
- June 16th** - Chris Clemmons resigns from his role as YWC’s faculty sponsor, citing militant protests and YWC’s racist roots as his reasons. YWC cannot remain an official student group without a sponsor.