

The Hidden Agenda of the SPLC

BY TOM TANCREDO

With the fifteenth anniversary of the Oklahoma City Bombing on April 19, many liberals exploited the actions of one deranged individual to tar millions of patriotic Americans as extremists and potential terrorists.

Bill Clinton said that it was legitimate to draw “parallels to the time running up to Oklahoma City and a lot of the political discord that exists in our country today.”

The mainstream media and liberal commentators are awash with news stories like “Hate: Antigovernment extremists are on the rise—and on the march” in *Newsweek*.

In an excellent piece, “What’s behind the anti-Tea Party hate narrative?” the *Washington Examiner*’s Chief Washington Correspondent Byron York notes that “Many of the claims that extremism is on the rise in America originate in research done by the Southern Poverty Law Center, an Alabama-based group that for nearly 40 years has tracked what it says is the growing threat of intolerance in the United States.”

The SPLC is not only taken seriously by the liberal media, but also by the Department of Homeland Security. When they issued their now infamous report on “Right Wing Extremists” that warned “disgruntled” military veterans will become potential terrorists, they quoted an SPLC report entitled “A Few Bad Men” that claims racists are infiltrating the military.

Coincidentally, “A Few Bad Men” appeared as the SPLC attacked the American Legion for its support of immigration enforcement, which they called “Legionnaires’ Disease.”

Tom Tancredo represented Colorado’s 6th Congressional District from where he founded and chaired the 100+ member bipartisan Immigration Reform Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives. He retired in 2009 after seeking the Republican nomination for president. He currently serves as president of the Rocky Mountain Foundation and chairman of Team America PAC.

This is indicative of what the SPLC is really about. Instead of monitoring “hate” and “extremism,” they are concerned with tarring patriotic Americans who oppose their left wing agenda as haters and extremists.

As a vocal opponent of uncontrolled immigration, I am a frequent target of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Their website contains over 60 articles that attack me.

Last year, I spoke at a college in New York State. After my speech, a student handed me one of his text books entitled *Understanding Human Differences: Multicultural Education in a Diverse America*. Given the title, I didn’t expect sympathetic treatment.

However, I was still shocked to see myself quoted as saying, “illegal immigrants were ‘coming to kill you and kill me and our families.’”

While illegal aliens disproportionately commit violent crimes, I would never make such a blanket assertion. I contacted the publisher who gave the source as the Southern Poverty Law Center’s hysterical smear piece against the immigration control movement creatively titled “The Nativists.”

The SPLC purported that I said this at a 2004 speech in Illinois. What I actually said was that our open-borders policies allow terrorists to sneak into our country. And yes, terrorists want to “kill you and kill me and our families.” But the SPLC’s intentional misrepresentation is now repeated across the Internet and even in college textbooks.

In an excellent report put out by the Center for Immigration Studies, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jerry Kammer detailed the smear tactics used by the Southern Poverty Law Center to silence those in the immigration debate.

Kammer shows that the SPLC’s attacks on immigration control organizations were carefully coordinated with the National Council of La Raza. La Raza means “The Race” in Spanish. The SPLC recklessly listed the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) as a hate group, just as La Raza began its “We Can Stop the Hate” campaign aimed at pushing FAIR from being quoted by the media or testifying before Congress.

FAIR’s board of advisors includes such right-wing racists as former Democratic Governor of Colorado Richard Lamm and the former head of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Frank Morris.

Kammer shows that the SPLC even sees racism in the Academy Award winner *Lord of the Rings*, which one of their columnists called “little more than a glorified vision of white patriarchy” in which the heroes “are manly men who are whiter than white” and “are frequently framed in halos of blinding bright light and exude a heavenly aura of all that is Eurocentric and good.”

The SPLC not only sees no problems with left-wing racists, they also have no problem with left-wing terrorists. Their “Teaching Tolerance” magazine fawningly interviewed Weatherman terrorist Bill Ayers, whom they described merely as a “civil rights organizer, radical anti-Vietnam War activist, teacher and author” who “has developed a rich vision of teaching that interweaves passion, responsibility and self-reflection.” They did not mention that Ayers set off bombs in the U.S. Capitol, the Pentagon, and the New York City Police Department. Unrepentant, he told the *New York*

Times in 2001 “I don’t regret setting bombs...I feel we didn’t do enough.”

Gabrielle Lyon, a former fellow with the SPLC’s Teaching Tolerance project who interviewed Ayers, co-edited *A Simple Justice: The Challenge of Small Schools* with Michael Klonsky and Ayers. Klonsky is a former leader of the New Communist Movement, “a Marxist-Leninist political movement...which sought inspiration in the experience of the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Chinese Revolution, and the Cuban Revolution.” Lyon, director of Ayers and Klonsky’s School Change Institute at the Small Schools Workshop, received a “Presidential Award for Excellence in Mentoring” from President Obama for “Project Exploration: Changing the Face of Science” on January 6, 2010.

That’s the SPLC in a nutshell. *The Lord of the Rings* is racist, but a group called “The Race” is not. Patriotic Tea Partiers are potential terrorists, but actual terrorists like Bill Ayers are civil rights organizers. ■

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ABOVE: CIS sponsored a forum on the SPLC, March 18, 2010. Panelists included (from left): Vanderbilt University Professor Carol Swain, CIS Director Mark Krikorian, *Harp-er’s* contributor Ken Silverstein, and author Jerry Kammer.



ABOVE RIGHT: Gabrielle Lyon interviewed former Weather Underground fugitive Bill Ayers for the SPLC’s “Teaching Tolerance” website and co-authored *A Simple Justice* with Ayers and Michael Klonsky, a former leader of the New Communist Movement. Lyon received a “Presidential Award for Excellence in Mentoring” from President Obama on January 6, 2010 (seated left in front row).

RIGHT: In the 1970s, Chairman Klonsky toasted Chairman Hua Guofeng, the late Chinese communist leader who succeeded Mao. According to Wikipedia, “Hua Guofeng was nicknamed ‘the butcher of Hunan’ for his use of the PLA to suppress the Red Guards in 1968, which caused more than 140,000 deaths.”

