

# The Surreptitious Extremism of the Southern Poverty Law Center

*How an “educational” non-profit organization inculcates a radical multicultural ideology*

BY KEVIN LAMB

*The following article is reprinted from The Open Borders Network: How a Web of Alien Activists, Journalists, Corporations, Politicians, and Civil Rights Lawyers Undermine U.S. Border Security and National Sovereignty by Kevin Lamb with permission from the publisher, Representative Government Press (Lexington, Virginia).*

Life without prejudice, were it ever to be tried, would soon reveal itself to be a life without principle. For prejudices...are often built-in principles.

—Richard Weaver

**O**ne ideologically driven nonprofit organization that skillfully overshadows other radical groups on the “educational” nonprofit landscape is the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). Founded, directed, and staffed by “far-left” zealots, the SPLC serves a unique role in the open-borders network. It aggressively promotes a multicultural, multiracial agenda in every political, cultural, and social sector of American society. The SPLC thrives off its adversaries raising millions of dollars annually to combat the nebulous twin categories of “hate groups” and “intolerance,” which form the operational core of the SPLC’s programs and public activities.

To the unsuspecting observer, the SPLC seems nonpartisan and ideologically neutral. The reality

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is that the SPLC, founded by radical egalitarians, actively bolsters the fanatical dogma of political correctness with a zeal that recalls the Ministry of Truth in Orwell’s *1984*. Reflecting the radical orientation of its staff, the SPLC vigilantly strives for broad “social change” of American society. Its ultimate goal is the transformation of the U.S. from a majority European-based culture to a multiracial Third World colony. As unsettling as this is for many Americans—liberal and conservative alike—the tactics employed by the SPLC to accomplish their aims should be just as disturbing: suppressing the free exchange of ideas in a free society.

The following chapter explores the ideological agenda of the SPLC. It highlights the SPLC’s persistent campaign to discredit the immigration-restriction movement, reveals some of the SPLC’s questionable fundraising practices, and dissects the falsehood that the SPLC is an objective, non-ideological institution.

## The Formative Years

The SPLC, according to Wikipedia.org, “was founded in 1971 by Morris Dees, Joseph J. Levin Jr., and civil rights leader Julian Bond as a civil rights law firm.”<sup>1</sup> The SPLC carved out a unique political niche as the nation’s leading monitor of and aggressive litigant against far-right “extremists” and “white supremacist” organizations in the U.S. Over the span of 37 years, the SPLC has eclipsed other hard-left organizations which monitor far-right fringe groups in the U.S. As a self-identified “watchdog” organization, championing the intertwined causes of “civil rights” and “human rights,” the SPLC actively undermines *any* effort that poses a challenge to radical egalitarianism. Mainstream immigration reform activists are one of several SPLC targets. The SPLC routinely labels citizen-activists, such as the Minutemen — reform-

ers who seek reductions in legal immigration levels and vigorous enforcement of current immigration laws (blocking, arresting, detaining, and deporting illegal aliens) — as intolerant “extremists,” “big-ots,” and “white supremacists.”

Dees and Levin, longtime political “activists,” acquired their radical egalitarianism in the vanguard of the “civil rights” movement. Dees built his reputation in the fundraising profession by working as a chief fundraiser for the McGovern campaign in 1972 and as national finance chairman for Sen. Ted Kennedy’s presidential bid in the 1980 Democratic primary. His success in direct mail fundraising is largely the result of cultivating an important left-wing constituency, namely wealthy radical activists and other stalwart egalitarians.

Some of Dees’ former associates are among his staunchest critics. According to Mike Hudson of the *Roanoke Times*,

To his critics, Dees is not so much a crusader for justice as a slick showman who uses fears of racial violence to enrich himself and his organization. They say SPLC is primarily a fund-raising machine that sucks donations away from other civil rights organizations. SPLC, these detractors say, does little to address difficult issues — such as voting rights and affirmative action — that are of more concern among poor and minority Americans than the acts of scattered Ku Klux Klan groups and right-wing militias.

Stephen Bright of the Southern Center of Human Rights, an Atlanta-based anti-death-penalty group, calls Dees “a fraud and a con man” who has “milked a lot of very wonderful, well-intentioned people.”

A scathing article in the November 2000 *Harper’s Magazine* quoted one critic who called Dees the “Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker of the civil rights movement.” The article charged that SPLC relies on emotional pleas that suggest the organization is under terrible financial stress, skirting the fact that SPLC is the wealthiest civil rights group in America.<sup>2</sup>

Today, with a multi-million-dollar budget, a large staff, and a modern fortress-fortified six-story office building headquartered in Montgomery, Alabama, the SPLC has grown from a small legal office combating local segregation into a massive national operation tracking various movements on the political right. Its adversarial targets span a broader range of activists on the right than from its narrow inception of thwarting the white-robed members of the Invisible Empire. The SPLC’s scope extends across a broad spectrum of Middle America. As an organization that at one time exclusively monitored Klan and neo-Nazi factions under the banner of “Klanwatch,” the



**SPLC co-founder  
Morris Dees**

SPLC has evolved to conquer a wider scope of adversaries, namely anyone who is considered “intolerant” of left-wing causes. This vast category includes (but in no way is limited to) anti-abortion activists, cultural conservatives, pro-family advocates, immigration reform activists, religious conservatives, and assorted political gadflies on the right.

Underscoring their surveillance and monitoring activities, the SPLC vigorously promotes a society with unenforceable border controls, in essence, a nation with an undefined nationality and unlimited diversity; a nation which no longer distinguishes alien from citizen. The SPLC’s website features their quarterly *Intelligence Report* on “hate groups” — what it characterizes as the “racialist, patriotic, and anti-Semitic” fringe of the far right — and tracks various “hate crimes” from coast to coast. A “hate crime” by SPLC standards could be any ethnic slur that was uttered during a bar fight, or a college prank that some intoxicated undergraduates committed during a frat party, or the latest “noose”-displaying incident. In seeking to criminalize “hate speech” and shore up valuable connections with

local, state, and federal agencies, the SPLC regularly conducts seminars and workshops on the “terrorist threat” of domestic “hate groups.” It briefs law enforcement agencies on a regular basis.

The SPLC’s spin-off project, Tolerance.org, has cemented itself in the education establishment, which provides supplemental materials to educators for classroom instruction. Tolerance.org offers a range of advice on combating “hate” and “intolerance.” For example, the website notes that “Historical and modern day images often contain hidden messages about us, about others, and about our world. These subtle lessons lie just beneath the surface. In order to see them, we must replace passive

ing Tolerance” website includes a revealing interview with 1960s militant William Ayers. As a former leader of the Weather Underground, Ayers was one of several fugitives from justice after the militant organization began a series of bombings that targeted the U.S. government in the early 1970s. In a brief biographical description, the interview merely refers to Ayers as an “education activist.” The beginning of the interview, however, notes, “At age 20, Bill Ayers literally walked out of jail into his first teaching position. Throughout his career as a civil rights organizer, radical anti-Vietnam War activist, teacher and author, Ayers has developed a rich vision of teaching that interweaves passion,



**Former Weather Underground fugitives Bill Ayers and his wife Bernadine Dohrn as militants (above) and together (right) during an SDS reunion at Michigan State University on November 30, 2007.**



consumption of images with critical analysis.... We can no longer accept a sculpture or a logo at face value. We must dig deeper. We must ask questions about why we perceive things the way we do.” In the “Images in Action” section of “Planet Tolerance,” the Tolerance.org website asks visitors, “When is a Saturday afternoon game demeaning?” Next to the question is a logo of the Washington Redskins, an NFL franchise.<sup>3</sup> The ethnic symbolism of the Washington Redskins, Atlanta Braves, and Cleveland Indians, is denounced as a form of oppression.

### **Bill Ayers, the Weather Underground, and the SPLC**

To get a sense of the ideological agenda that defines much of the SPLC’s activities, the “Teach-

responsibility and self-reflection.”<sup>4</sup> One infers from this account that, as a bomb-wielding militant, Ayers’ has been passionate in his militancy, responsible for turning himself in to authorities after more than a decade on the run as a fugitive from justice, and self-reflective in reminiscing about his unrepentant Weather Underground activities.

Ayers’ militant past as a member of a domestic terrorist organization, one that was actively bombing government and military structures 30 years ago, is a legacy that he fondly recollects in his autobiography, *Fugitive Days*, published in the fall of 2001 right around the terrorist events of 9/11. Ronald Radosh notes on the timing of Ayers’ memoir:

Poor Bill Ayers. His timing could not have been worse. Just when his widely publicized



memoir of his days as a terrorist was coming out, our nation suffered its worst terrorist assault ever.

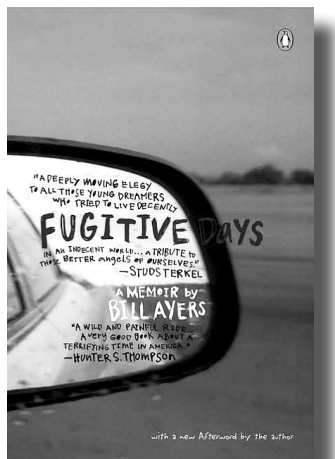
Indeed, the very morning of the attack, the *New York Times* printed a fawning profile of Ayers and his comrade in terror, Bernardine Dohrn. Under the headline “No Regrets for a Love of Explosives,” accompanied by a large color photo of the couple, Ayers boasts that he bombed New York City’s police headquarters in 1970, the Capitol building in 1971, and the Pentagon in 1972 — and proudly adds, “I don’t regret setting bombs. I feel we didn’t do enough.” Asked whether he would do it again, he answers, “I don’t want to discount the possibility.” Or, as he puts it in *Fugitive Days: A Memoir*, “I can’t imagine entirely dismissing the possibility.”<sup>5</sup>

Ayers describes the purpose of the Weather Underground in a posting on his blog: “the catalytic radical student group of its day, the Weather Underground rose, hot and angry, to—in our own terms—smite the war-mongers and strike against the race-haters.” In the years since his terrorist activities against the U.S. government, Ayers, like many ’60s radicals, has reinvented himself as a “distinguished educator” and now holds a respected position as professor of education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

During the Teaching Tolerance interview, Ayers’ response to the following question underscores the relevance that ex-’60s militants place on “educational reform” for “social justice.”

**Q:** *How effective is the education system as a vehicle for bringing about social change?*

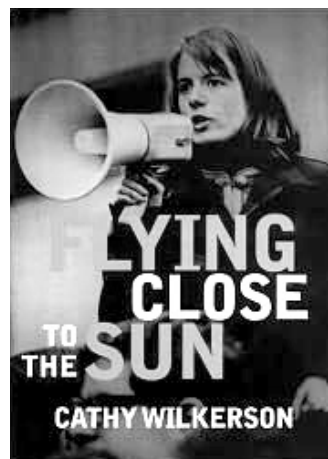
**A:** Because I began teaching right after my release from jail, I’ve always linked teaching



to social justice. There’s a whole group of teachers who came out of the ’60s who asked themselves, “What can I do with my life that would be consistent within an agenda of social change and hopefulness towards a more humane social order?” The most common choice has been to teach; teaching is seen as an extension of their involvement in social change.

Unfortunately, despite that idealism and hopefulness, you end up with institutions that are not geared towards *liberation* or a vision of teaching as I’ve described it but are geared towards reproducing the social *injustices* and *inequities* that exist. For a lot of radical teachers, that’s where the conflict and pain and burnout come in.

It’s important to remember the lessons of organizing for racial justice — and that the struggle is often hard. A lot of teachers my age have discovered that, even though it feels hopeless at times, kids know who cares and parents know who cares. In the end, that becomes its own reward — you struggle against the injustices and you also provide hope and opportunity [emphasis added].<sup>6</sup>



In her autobiography, *Flying Close to the Sun*, Cathy Wilkerson, another former Weather Underground fugitive whose parents owned the infamous Greenwich Village townhouse that collapsed into dust and rubble after a pipe bomb filled with dynamite, nails, and a blasting cap accidentally ignited, killing fellow Weather Underground militants Diana Oughton, Ted Gold, and Terry Robbins. Describing the atmosphere of a three-day conference in Cleveland during the summer of 1969, Wilker-

son found Ayers inspiring as a speaker but “could not...follow the next step in his reasoning” [quoting Ayers],

We’re not urging anybody to bring guns to Chicago, we’re not urging anybody to shoot from a crowd, but we’re also going to make it clear that when a pig gets iced that’s a good thing, and that everybody who considers himself a revolutionary should be armed, should own a gun, should have a gun in his home.<sup>7</sup>

Daniel Flynn, in *A Conservative History of the American Left*, attributes the following quote to Ayers: “Kill all the rich people,” boyfriend [of Diana Oughton] Bill Ayers philosophized. “Bring the revolution home, kill your parents, that’s where it’s really at.”<sup>8</sup>

As this author pointed out in a posting on VDARE and as others have noted elsewhere, Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama’s ties to Ayers surfaced during a debate with Sen. Hillary Clinton.

During the recent debate in Philadelphia between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, Obama downplayed the fact that he had affiliations with 60s radical Bill Ayers, a former leader of the Weather Underground. Obama dismissed a question about his connections to the ex-fugitive by describing Ayers as “a guy who lives in my neighborhood.” Questions about Obama’s association with Ayers had surfaced in recent months on various blogs.

Obama not only served alongside Ayers as a director of the Woods Fund, a Chicago-based anti-poverty organization, but according to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, “In the mid-1990s,

Ayers and Dohrn hosted a meet-and-greet at their house to introduce Obama to their neighbors during his first run for the Illinois Senate. In 2001, Ayers contributed \$200 to Obama’s campaign.”

Although the latest media coverage of Ayers contains a critical edge, much of this reportage puts the past in a nostalgic context and emphasizes how Ayers

and his wife Bernadine Dohrn, also a former Weather Underground fugitive, have transformed themselves into establishment figures and are now “distinguished professors” at the University of Illinois in Chicago and Northwestern University.

Dohrn once praised the Charles Manson massacres of 1969 in which actress Sharon Tate and others were brutally

butchered to death. During a 1969 speech to the “War Council” in Flint, Michigan, Dohrn made her controversial remarks regarding the Manson Family murders: “Dig it. First they killed those pigs, then they ate dinner in the same room with them. They even shoved a fork into the victim’s stomach! Wild!”

The 2003 Academy Award-nominated documentary *The Weather Underground*, a candid retrospective of former Weather Underground leaders reminiscing about their militant past, begins with Dohrn speaking before a press conference in the early 1970s: “Hello, I’m going to read a declaration of a state of war...within the next 14 days we will attack a symbol or institution of American injustice.”



**Cathy Wilkerson reads passages from her 2007 memoir *Flying Close to the Sun* at Bluestockings bookstore in New York on October 4, 2007. Wilkerson’s parents owned the Greenwich Village townhouse that was destroyed on March 6, 1970 when a pipebomb ignited and killed three members of the Weather Underground.**

The headline in [the] *Washington Post*: “Former 60s Radical Is Now Considered Mainstream in Chicago” confirms that ex-60s fugitives, contrary to F. Scott Fitzgerald’s proclamation that there are “no second acts in American life,” often re-establish themselves as distinguished and productive members of American society. As long as the cause is fighting “social injustice,” “racism,” and “inequality,” then the spin on some ex-fugitive’s militant past will be excused as one bad acid trip or some other youthful indiscretion. Imagine the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* describing some anti-government militants on the Far Right in comparable terms.<sup>9</sup>

Navigate around the Teaching Tolerance site and without difficulty one will recognize the politically correct dogma that dominates the nature of the posted selections: “*Making Numbers Count: How social justice math can help students transform people, politics and communities.*” “*Does My Town Have a Racist Past? How students can convert the shameful history of sundown towns in America into a rich opportunity for setting the record straight.*” “*Caroline is a Boy: From kindergarten to college, transgender and gender-nonconforming students face many challenges in school and classroom settings.*” “*Discovering Lewis and Clark: As the nation celebrates the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, educators across the country*

*should be asking what one Oregon teacher does: ‘Is this a celebration for Native Americans?’” “*Drawing on Justice: The Comic Book Project encourages students to address social issues in their lives and schools with art and creativity.*”*

One featured selection from the spring 2008 issue of *Teaching Tolerance*, “Making Numbers Count,” directs the reader to another site: radical-math.org. The website states the purpose of radical-math.org:

RadicalMath.org was launched in April 2006 by Jonathan Osler who at the time was teaching at a public high school in Brooklyn, NY. Since then this website has had over 1 million page views.

Radical Math Teachers are educators who work to integrate issues of economic and social justice into our math classes, and we seek to inspire and support other educators to do the same.

We believe that math literacy is a civil right, and that our nation’s failure to provide students, especially low-income youth of color, with a high-quality math education, is a terrible injustice.

We are committed to making sure our classrooms are places that are nurturing for all students, that celebrate different cultures, histories, and styles of learning, and that re-

## REWRITING HISTORY: Teaching Tolerance on the Lewis and Clark expedition

“ Dazzled by the notion of Manifest Destiny, American history tends to eulogize what Lewis and Clark ‘found’ on their 7,400-mile journey. For Native Americans, the story instead is about what was lost — lives, land, languages and freedom.

‘Within 100 years of Lewis and Clark passing through here, every Native nation they encountered was displaced from their traditional lands and put on reservations,’ says BlueHorse, who works in the Indian Education Program for Portland Public Schools. ‘The ancient forests were clear cut. The great buffalo herds that fed (the expedition) were reduced to fewer than 300 animals, and the last Oregon sea otter, whose highly prized pelts had helped fuel (President Thomas) Jefferson’s mission, was gone.’





flect the just societies we are hoping to bring about through our own lives and teaching practices.

We encourage our students to ask the question: “What are the problems that my community is facing, and how can I use math to understand and help solve them?”

We seek to foster a love of mathematics in our students and to ensure they become mathematically literate. We also prepare our students for math-based college majors and careers.

We believe that it is possible to teach math from a social justice perspective and at the same time cover state and national standards, prepare students for standardized tests (which we don’t necessarily support), and allow for the exploration of mathematical ideas on abstract, theoretical, experimental and artistic levels.

On the radicalmath.org site, the following is one of several examples of “problems” given students in order to introduce the three “R’s” (Revealing Racist Roots),

Revealing Racist Roots: The Three R’s for Teaching about the Jena 6 — This mini-unit was developed by Joyce Sia and Rico Guts-tein, teachers at the Greater Lawndale/Little Village School for Social Justice in Chicago, and is part of a teaching guide on the Jena 6 put out by the Network of Teacher Activist Group (including NYCORE — the New York Collective of Radical Educators). The central problem of the unit is to *find the probability of selecting an all-white jury in Jena*.

Public opinion polls continue to show that illegal immigration has become a major public issue in recent years. Immigration reform efforts in Congress, as has been noted, have run into intense opposition from the vast range of organized groups pushing for unlimited “diversity” and unrestricted immigration levels. Hence, the latest targets of the SPLC’s surveillance operations are America’s lead-

ing immigration reformers. Leaders in the immigration reform movement are repeatedly linked to political extremists and fringe political subcultures, however removed from reality the relationship may be — such as skinheads and militant malcontents — on flimsy allegations, rumors, and innuendo in an attempt to discredit the motives of these reformers and therefore undermine the legitimacy of reducing U.S. immigration levels.

In addition to aggressive litigation battles that the SPLC wages in court against its opponents, as a non-governmental organization (NGO) the SPLC is highly successful in charitable fundraising. The success it has enjoyed in fundraising as a nonprofit organization is largely due to catering to wealthy left-wing donors and cultivating a base of supporters for its activities. The range of activities includes domestic surveillance operations (monitoring the activities of their adversaries) and promoting multicultural education materials via the SPLC’s “Teaching Tolerance” project website, as well as disrupting the work and lives of their political adversaries.

### **Selectively Targeting “Extremists”**

How many editors or journalists on the political left in recent memory have lost jobs or had to abandon career prospects for being too radical or too far left? How many left-wing scholars have lost employment as a result of the SPLC’s activities, labeling radical leftists as “extremists,” and leveraging their employers with sustained pressure to fire such an individual? Dr. Kevin MacDonald, a professor of psychology at California State University at Long Beach, is a frequent target of the SPLC and the subject of extensive coverage in the SPLC’s *Intelligence Report*. In a search of the SPLC site, MacDonald’s name surfaces nine times. Ward Churchill, the discredited “political activist” and anarchist, was professor of ethnic studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder from 1990 to 2007 when UC found Churchill guilty of “research misconduct.” There is no mention of Churchill on the SPLC’s site.

One technique the SPLC has used to monitor the activities of their adversaries is to attend confer-

ences and meetings of their political foes often using aliases for the purpose of gathering and spreading gossip, innuendo, and rumor on their arch-enemies. Much of this activity, planting news articles and cultivating journalistic sources, is primarily for the calculated intent of generating revenue to further “combat hate, intolerance, and discrimina-



tion through education and litigation.” It has fostered a vigilantly refined image in the mass media as an objective source of reliable information on the fringe of America’s far-right political movements. Scholars and writers who question the empirical validity of universal human equality (recognizing that inequality is a natural condition among human groups) are targets of the SPLC’s wrath. Critics across the ideological spectrum have identified an ideologically driven agenda in the SPLC’s modus operandi. As in the case of immigration reformers, the SPLC traffics in manufactured or distorted information about these adversaries as well, alleging “links” between them and fringe “hate” groups on the far right for the purpose of smearing and discrediting them too.

The SPLC has been highly effective in discrediting its opponents in the public arena. It has included in its vast survey of “hate groups” the Michigan State University chapter of Young Americans for Freedom, pro-life Roman Catholics, and evan-

gelical religious conservative groups. Whereas Sen. Joseph McCarthy’s critics successfully spawned a political backlash over “guilt by association” attacks, the SPLC has waged effective smear campaigns against their adversaries with specious “guilt by linkage” affiliations with minimal repercussions. It has crafted a crusading reputation for its legal victories against far-right “extremist” groups, often winning hefty judgments in the process, and it has skillfully used these cases, which in many instances include uncollectible judgments, as the basis of its bountiful fundraising efforts. The SPLC is considered the largest endowed “civil rights” group in the U.S.

### An “F” Grade in Philanthropic Practices

Wealthy leftists on the radical fringe serve as the financial lifeline among the SPLC’s major donors. Annually, the SPLC receives charitable grants from numerous left-wing endowments and raises substantial returns from direct-mail solicitations. According to financial reports available from guidestar.org, the SPLC listed over \$45 million in total revenue collected in 2006 and has amassed financial assets totaling \$192 million.<sup>10</sup> The SPLC’s professional fundraising fees are nine times greater than its legal fees. In 2006, it spent nearly \$2.5 million on “postage and shipping,” which is more than the total compensation for officers and directors (\$1.7 million).<sup>11</sup> Also in 2006, the SPLC spent over \$900,000 in telemarketing and mailing list fees.

As a nonprofit (501c3) organization, the SPLC has come under scrutiny for its fundraising and charitable practices. Over the years, “charity watch” groups have given the SPLC low ratings for stashing away charitable funds. It routinely receives low marks from Charity Navigator in their “efficiency rating.” The American Institute of Philanthropy has given the SPLC an “F” for “continuing to raise money while sitting on large reserves.”<sup>12</sup>

According to the Better Business Bureau (BBB) website, the SPLC has refused to participate in the BBB’s charity review: “Despite written Better Business Bureau requests in the past year, this organization either has not provided current infor-



mation or has declined to be evaluated in relation to the BBB's charity standards. While participation in the BBB's charity review efforts is voluntary, the BBB believes that this lack of cooperation may demonstrate a lack of commitment to transparency. Without the requested information, the BBB cannot verify if the charity adheres to the BBB charity standards."<sup>13</sup>

In the high-profile case of JoAnn Little, a black woman who was on trial for the 1974 murder of a white prison guard, according to *Facts on File World Digest*, the SPLC "was reported April 18 to have raised \$200,000 in defense funds for Little. A Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) spokesman said that this fund-raising effort was a "rip-off" because \$20,000 would have been sufficient for the trial. (The total was reported May 5 to be up to \$300,000.) The SCLC further contended, it was reported April 18, that the Law Center had reneged on a promise to give it 30 percent of the funds raised and that it had withdrawn its active support of Little."<sup>14</sup>

In November 2006, the Capital Research Center (CRC) issued a report by Matthew Vadum on the SPLC, drawing particular attention to its philanthropic sources. The CRC noted,

By nonprofit standards, SPLC has an enormous endowment of more than \$152 million, according to its 2005 annual report. Its IRS Form 990 for the fiscal year ended Oct. 31, 2005, shows that the center took in gross receipts of \$49.8 million that year, \$29.7 million of which consisted of contributions and grants. According to its balance sheet, by Oct. 31, 2005, its total assets had ballooned from \$173.2 million at the beginning of the fiscal year, to \$189.4 million by year's end. SPLC's endowment is so large that it reported endowment income of nearly \$3.5 million, including interest income of \$728,356. Although SPLC bills itself as a civil rights law firm, it devotes only a fraction of its resources to actual legal work. Of the \$28.9 million in expenses it declared for the year ended Oct. 31, 2005, only \$4.5 million went to "providing legal services

for victims of civil rights injustice and hate crimes," and \$837,907 for "specific assistance to individuals" in the form of "litigation services," according to its Form 990. Roughly half of its expenditures, \$14.7 million, were devoted to "educating the general public, public officials, teachers, students and law enforcement agencies and officers with respect to issues of hate and intolerance and promoting tolerance of differences through the schools." In the same period, SPLC paid attorney Morris Dees \$297,559 in salary and pension-plan contributions. On the list of nonprofit "employees who earned more than their organization's chief executive," (part of the *Chronicle of Philanthropy's* annual survey of top nonprofit executive salaries, published September 28), Dees ranked 48th in the nation.

Funders of SPLC include Cisco Systems Foundation (at least \$1.6 million since 2001), Picower Foundation (at least \$1.7 million since 2000), the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund (\$535,000 since 2001), and the Grove Foundation (\$450,000 since 2001).<sup>15</sup>

### Scattershot Targets

The SPLC has targeted a wide spectrum of individuals and groups in recent years, from mainstream conservative activists to media personalities. The list includes CNN anchor and show host Lou Dobbs, the American Enterprise Institute, Dinesh

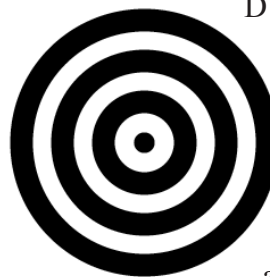
D'Souza, a prize-winning syndicated columnist, Dr. J.

Philippe Rushton, professor of psychology at the University of Western Ontario and a Guggenheim Fellow, Dr. Kevin MacDonald,

a professor of psychology at

California State University at Long

Beach, a publisher of traditional Roman Catholic literature, attorneys, a former magazine publisher, fundamentalists, evangelical Christians, conservative activist Howard Phillips, and paleoconservative grassroots activists.

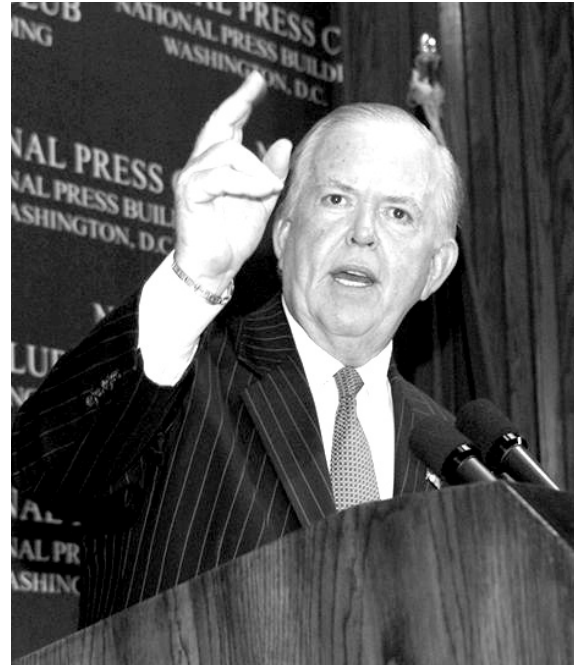


Arguably the SPLC has focused more recent attention on CNN anchor Lou Dobbs and the leaders of the immigration reform movement, including Rep. Tom Tancredo (R.-CO), John Tanton,<sup>16</sup> the founder of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and publisher of *The Social Contract*, former governor of Colorado Richard Lamm, and Minutemen founders Jim Gilchrist and Chris Simcox. (In response to its summer 2002 cover story “The Puppeteer,” *The Social Contract* posted the response, which follows this article.)

The website established by David Horowitz, [www.discoverthenetworks.org](http://www.discoverthenetworks.org), aptly describes the SPLC’s political agenda as catering to left-wing interests:

In the SPLC’s view, American society remains irredeemably rife with bigotry aimed at racial and ethnic minorities.... More recently, however, it is the SPLC that has found itself on the defensive. Critics from across the political spectrum charge the Center with betraying its professed commitment to advancing civil rights. The SPLC levels accusations of racism unjustly, branding as “bigoted” many groups and individuals whose only crime lies in their refusal to embrace the SPLC’s leftwing agenda. Some accuse the SPLC of pursuing revenue rather than justice, by orchestrating fundraising campaigns that exaggerate the prevalence of racism to ensure a steady stream of donations from the Center’s alarmed supporters. The SPLC consistently claims to detect evidence of white racism infesting virtually every crevice of American society. The Center states, for instance, “Like most of the southeastern U.S., Georgia has seen an explosion in Hispanic immigration in recent years — over a half million since 1990 alone. As hate groups exploit the racial tension stemming from the area’s growth, locals have launched violent attacks against immigrant workers.” The SPLC’s ideological biases are evident in its map of Active U.S. Hate Groups. Although the SPLC denounces extremist religious groups like the Jewish Defense

League and Westboro Baptist Church, no mention is made of even a single extremist Muslim group. Similarly, while far-right groups like the Council of Conservative Citizens are tagged as hate groups, the SPLC withholds judgment on extremist leftwing groups. The aforementioned Intelligence



**CNN’s Lou Dobbs remains a target of the SPLC for his continuous coverage of immigration issues.**

Project, an SPLC initiative that monitors hate and extremist groups around the United States, is conspicuously selective in its scrutiny. Whereas rightwing groups are routinely the subjects of Intelligence Project reports, the political left, as evidenced by the dearth of critical literature, is above suspicion. In 2003, for instance, the SPLC hosted a forum called “Right-Wing Extremism in a Transatlantic Perspective,” which, as one SPLC report noted, sought to develop strategies to combat “the radical right.” Of the radical left, no mention was made.

As part of its transparently one-sided approach to outing alleged hate groups, the SPLC is not above flinging fictional charges against its ideological adversaries. One particularly egregious example was a 2003 arti-

cle called “Into the Mainstream,” featured in the SPLC’s quarterly magazine, *Intelligence Report*. Authored by fringe leftist Chip Berlet, this tendentious report deliberately mangled quotes and omitted context, to make the case that “right-wing foundations and think tanks support efforts to make bigoted and discredited ideas respectable.” Among the groups that came in for the SPLC’s scorn was the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, and its founder, David Horowitz. After wresting, out of context, several of his quotes on the subjects of African Americans and slavery, the report charged Horowitz with a “selective rewriting of history”—a distortion so patently dishonest that it prompted Horowitz to pen an open letter to SPLC co-founder Morris Dees, wherein he answered the attack and called on Dees to apologize and remove the report from the SPLC’s Web site. Dees complied on neither count.... In support of the charge that the SPLC unfairly targets groups that do not share its politics, critics point to the Center’s comparatively charitable treatment of leftwing groups. Radical organizations like United for Peace and Justice, for instance, are hailed as “social justice groups,” a designation that also extends to feminist groups like Equality Now, a number of gay rights groups, Human Rights First, Amnesty International, and Jesse Jackson’s National Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.<sup>17</sup>

### Smearing Immigration-Reform Activists

One SPLC newsletter from its “Intelligence Project” is *Immigration Watch*. Launched in September 2005, *Immigration Watch* tracks “the explosive growth of the anti-immigration movement in the United States...providing current information about the rising extremism and anti-immigrant sentiment.”<sup>18</sup> Rising public concern over illegal immigration has created a political vacuum for opponents of immigration reform efforts. Grassroots activists who seek reductions of annual immigration levels are scrutinized by *Immigration Watch* in

terms of “exposing” a hidden “extremist” agenda on the part of leading immigration-restriction groups. Immigration reform activists are often described as promoting “hate” or identified as an affiliate of some “hate group.” Peter Brimelow, a former editor at *National Review*, former editor at *Forbes*, and founder and host of the VDARE website, has also been identified as a “hate group.” Lou Dobbs has been criticized for his nonstop coverage of illegal immigration. Pat Buchanan has likewise been criticized by Mark Potok, the director of the SPLC’s “Intelligence Project.” Potok and the *Intelligence Report* have tried to link the former co-host of CNN’s “Crossfire” and regular MSNBC commentator to fringe “extremists” on the racist right.



Although the SPLC continues to bolster its image in the media and among government officials and law enforcement agencies as an impartial watchdog monitoring the activities of America’s far-right activist fringe, the reality—documented in this chapter—is quite different.

As has been demonstrated by the SPLC’s recent efforts to “monitor” the activities of immigration reformers, the quest to label as “racist” and “hate” any discussion of population or demographic trends as well as critiques of multiculturalism and current problems with U.S. immigration policies is an effective tactic of the radical left to thwart any measure that would place annual limits on immigration. The SPLC maintains an aggressive ideological agenda to transform the culture and traditions of American society—from a legal heritage that seeks a balance between the rights of individuals and the interests of society, as grounded in Constitutionally protected rights of free speech, free expression, and free association, to a futuristic society that represents the Marxian, totalitarian influence on America’s political, legal, and civic institutions in the quest to eradicate group-based distinctions.

In his posthumously published book *Life without Prejudice and Other Essays*, Richard Weaver accurately observed that cultural *pluralism* and *autonomy* accentuate the significance of cultural freedom in free societies. As Weaver incisively points out,



For the freedom of cultures as wholes, two rights must be respected: the right of cultural pluralism where different cultures have developed, and the right of cultural autonomy in the development of a single culture. In a word, cultural freedom on this plane starts with the acknowledgement of the right of a culture to be itself. This is a principle deduced from the nature of culture, not from the nature of the state. Culture grows from roots more enduring than those of the political state.... Culture emerges out of climatic, geographical, ecological, racial, religious, and linguistic soils; a state may have to deal with them at the level where they enter into cultural expression.



**Richard Weaver**

In brief, cultural freedom as an integral part of the free society requires that distinctive cultures be allowed to preserve their homogeneity; that creators of cultural works should not be hobbled by political and sociological dogmas; and that in a given culture a tradition should be left free to find its own way of renewing itself. Violation of any of these shows a fundamental ignorance of what culture is and how it ministers to the life of the spirit.<sup>19</sup>

The Southern Poverty Law Center and its acolytes ultimately seek a society free of both cultural *pluralism* and cultural *autonomy*; one that is rooted in cultural Marxism and one that fundamentally enforces cultural uniformity — a borderless nation without a nationality committed to eliminating cultural and ethnic distinctions and expunging its European-based cultural heritage. ■

## Endnotes

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