

The SPLC State

...and the unprecedented threat to civil liberties

JAMES KIRKPATRICK

The American Constitution utilizes checks and balances to prevent any one faction or person from controlling the State. Yet power over society is not exercised solely through government. Those who favor mass immigration and the abolition of American sovereignty project power from inside and outside the government simultaneously, leveraging law enforcement, the courts, financial institutions, and the media to their ends. And no single group does this better than the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), ostensibly a “Non-Governmental Organization” (NGO) but increasingly becoming a kind of proto-government unto itself.

The SPLC is so effective because it exercises power through multiple levels, each building on the other. Because of “hate crimes” legislation, the political ideology or affiliations of a criminal become highly relevant to any investigation. Though the FBI no longer lists the SPLC on its “resources” page, it continues to work with the organization to investigate hate crimes. It also trains local law enforcement in how to deal with “extremists” and “hate groups.” This begs the question of who constitutes these groups. This is where the SPLC’s “Intelligence Project” comes in, which, as the name implies, serves as a kind of domestic intelligence agency.

Political scientist George Michael noted the danger that this poses to civil liberties in *Confronting Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in the USA*:

The efforts of both NGOs and the government have done much to stymie the threat from the far right in America.... What are the implications of such cooperation between the government and NGOs in this area of public policy? First, it raises some civil liberties issues. For instance, some NGOs provide to law enforcement agencies, information on citizens and groups that they consider extremist. However, the

vast majority of extremist groups are usually law abiding; they just espouse unpopular opinions. Those that do otherwise risk organizational suicide because they are often closely monitored. What is more, many groups and individuals in the far right do not even publicly advocate revolutionary goals and ambitions. Organizations such as American Renaissance, the League of the South, and the Council of Conservative Citizens display characteristics that are not unlike analogous minority organizations that are concerned with identity politics. An obvious double-standard would seem to be present in this situation, whereby analogous left-wing and minority organizations do not face the same level of scrutiny by authorities.... [Routledge, 2003: 192-193].

The SPLC’s influence within law enforcement is magnified by how the organization’s reports of “hate groups” are dutifully reprinted by national outlets every year, despite the fact that many of these groups are either innocuous (such as the Family Research Council) or practically nonexistent. Many local papers also easily generate copy by simply referring to what “hate groups” exist in their area, thus inspiring local watchdog groups and Antifa to begin organizing against a threat which may not even exist.

The key to the SPLC’s strategy is linking “hate groups” to violence in the eyes of the public. Thus, the organization continually generates reports (repeated as gospel by the mainstream media) about violence “linked” to its political enemies. For example, “The Alt Right Is Killing People,” it declared in February 2018, using the 2014 “murderous rampage” against women and interracial couples by the mixed-race Elliot Rodger as its questionable first example.

The SPLC’s claim that incidents of “harassment and intimidation” occurred after the 2016 election has been widely used to portray President Trump as a catalyst for racist terrorism. Yet none of these incidents were independently verified. Some were invented. Others were petty, not even close to constituting criminal

James Kirkpatrick, a regular contributor to VDARE.com, is a Beltway veteran and a refugee from Conservatism Inc.

action, like calling someone a name. However, given the clickbait media culture, by the time a fake hate crime is exposed, the story has spread too far for it to be effectively rebutted.

Name calling may be hurtful, but if the media take up one's cause, a victim can make a career out of it. In contrast, being linked to a "hate group" is ruinous. Because it now has quasi-legal status, being labeled a "hate group" serves as justification for tech companies to deplatform or demonetize a group or individual linked to it. Again, the SPLC serves not just as an activist group, but as an authority determining who is and who is not permitted to operate a group or business. For example, the SPLC is now part of YouTube's "Trusted Flaggers" program, a censorship board which polices the platform.

Platforms which do not expel the groups or individuals which the SPLC does not like are accused of "funding hate," such as when the SPLC complained Paypal had been "obstinate" in allowing certain companies to use its services despite SPLC complaints. Paypal eventually caved after the *Washington Post's* Caitlin Dewey joined the SPLC's campaign. If the Department of Homeland Security had such influence, there would be public outrage. But because the SPLC is ostensibly an NGO, even libertarians go along with it.

More ominously, the SPLC is urging certain groups to be criminally prosecuted on political grounds. For example, former Homeland Security staffer Daryl Johnson authored the controversial 2009 report "Right-wing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalism and Recruitment," which many conservatives argued portrayed them as equivalent to Islamic radicals. After a political firestorm, the report was withdrawn but Johnson now writes for the SPLC. He recently praised a proposed bill in Virginia specifically designed to prevent rallies such as last August's "Unite The Right" by designating certain "hate groups" as "terrorist groups" if they contain people who have committed certain kinds of crimes. Under the bill, even associating with members of the group or providing aid would become an offense in itself, guilt by association enshrined in law.

If the law fails, extra-legal methods are used. The SPLC has a good cop/bad cop relationship with Antifa. Antifa or leftist vigilantes, who claim their violent actions are actually a form of self-defense, as "racists" are inherently violent and pose a threat to certain communities. The SPLC's portrayal of certain groups as "hateful" or responsible for inspiring violence fits into this narrative. At the same time, the SPLC denies responsibility for the violent tactics of Antifa.

In an extraordinary exchange between Congressman Scott Perry and SPLC President and CEO Richard Cohen in November 2017, Perry pressed Cohen on why "Antifa or other anarchist groups that literally call for violence"

were not included on the SPLC's list, but groups such as the Family Research Council were. Cohen admitted the distinction was ideological and the SPLC disagrees with the means, not the end. "We condemn their tactics," he said. "I've said so publicly and we do so always, but Antifa is not a group that vilifies people on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, or the like."

Of course, this is only true if one accepts the frame that the white race is a social construct, as Antifa are quite comfortable with attacking whites as such. Groups which mock Christianity in the most savage terms are also not on the SPLC's list. However, groups which criticize radical Islam appear on the Southern Poverty Law Center's "hate map," with "Anti-Muslim" comprising an entire category. The SPLC claims hate groups are those which "attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics," yet the double standard between criticizing Islam (which is a religion, not a race) and Christianity is remarkable.

The whole strategy of the SPLC is to link its political opponents to violence, or, failing that, of having "inspired" various attacks. For example, the SPLC called the Council of Conservative Citizens mass shooter Dylann Roof's "gateway" into white nationalism. Roof's only interaction with the group was reading its website and seeing crime statistics. Yet the SPLC also grants itself a pass in all but equivalent situations. In an astonishing act of chutzpah before Congress, Mr. Cohen denied the SPLC could be held responsible for Floyd Corkins' 2012 attack on the Family Research Council, a target Corkins selected after seeing it on the "hate map." In other words, the SPLC is exempt from the standards it applies to others.

"Sovereign is he who decides on the exception," as Carl Schmitt begins his book *Political Theology*. As the beginning of President Trump's term shows, the chief executive of the world's sole superpower is not very powerful. He cannot enforce immigration laws, squash opposing media outlets, or ensnare political opponents in legal proceedings. Indeed, there's not a leftist in the country who is afraid to curse the president to his face, or at least, to his Twitter account.

Yet the SPLC, by exercising power through the media, the economy, law enforcement, and the courts, can destroy a group or an individual by labeling them violent or linking them to violent outlaws. Like a tyrannical regime overseas, it links peaceful dissidents to violent terrorists and uses this as an excuse to shut down opposition. It can also make a person a target for Antifa violence, even while denying responsibility for it.

By exercising power and influence along multiple channels, the SPLC can more effectively direct policy, crush opponents, and exercise power than President Trump himself. In the American system as it exists today, the Southern Poverty Law Center is more than just an "NGO." It's a government unto itself. ■