



Written by [James Murphy](#) on March 25, 2019

SPLC Meltdown Continues as President and Key Staffer Step Down

When one of the founding members of Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), Morris Dees, [was ousted](#) from the organization on March 13 over unspecified misconduct, there was a sense that something terrible was going on in the left-wing non-profit. That sense only intensified when Richard Cohen, the organization's president, announced that an outside organization was being brought in to audit the SPLC's internal climate and workplace practices.



Now, less than 10 days after the initial shakeup was brought to light, Cohen himself is stepping down from his post as the organization's president. He announced his resignation on Friday evening in an internal e-mail to SPLC staff.

Cohen asked the board of the SPLC "to immediately launch a search for an interim president in order to give the organization the best chance to heal."

Cohen has been with the SPLC since 1986 and has been its president since 2003. The outside audit of the organization's internal climate and workplace practices will be led by former chief of staff for First Lady Michelle Obama, Tina Tchen, a Chicago-based attorney.

Cohen's statement in an e-mail read: "Given my long tenure as the SPLC president, however, I do not think I should be involved in that process beyond cooperating with Tina, her team and the board in any way that may be helpful. Whatever problems exist at the SPLC happened on my watch, so I take responsibility for them."

Both former and current staffers have accused the organization — which is quick to tar other organizations with the sexist and racist labels — of failing to act on accusations of sexual harassment and racial discrimination within its own ranks.

Another key staffer, legal director Rhonda Brownstein, also resigned this week, effective immediately.

Meredith Horton, a highly respected African-American attorney and the highest-ranking woman of color at the SPLC, also resigned in early March, citing the organization's lack of inclusiveness in its own hiring. After Horton's resignation, at least two dozen SPLC staffers signed and sent a letter to management that said they were concerned that internal "allegations of mistreatment, sexual harassment, gender discrimination and racism threaten the moral authority of this organization and our integrity along with it."

Cohen's and Brownstein's resignations also come in the wake of a piece published in [the New Yorker](#) on March 21 in which former SPLC staffer and current *Rolling Stone* reporter Bob Moser called his former employer "a highly profitable scam."



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Moser's piece paints a picture of a "social justice" organization more interested in financial profit than the righting of society's wrongs, of an organization supposedly committed to stopping sexual harassment in all its forms, which tolerated such behavior at the highest levels in its own offices, and of an organization supposedly fighting racism, with a nearly all-white professional staff.

"But nothing was more uncomfortable than the racial dynamic that quickly became apparent: a fair number of what was then about a hundred employees were African-American, but almost all of them were administrative and support staff — 'the help,' one of my black colleagues said pointedly," Moser wrote.

If the chaos in the organization now is finally the comeuppance that it justly deserves, it has come too late for the many groups, including several John Birch Society chapters that have been tarred and feathered by it. For years, the news media and Silicon Valley giants such as Amazon, Facebook, Google, and Twitter have deferred to the SPLC as the arbiter of what should be considered a hate group.

For years, the SPLC has consistently lumped conservative and constitutional groups in with the likes of neo-Nazis and the Klu Klux Klan, resulting in the removal or "de-platforming" of some groups from social media. Currently, the SPLC is facing several high-profile lawsuits by people and organizations who say the SPLC has slandered them wrongly.

Among those currently suing the SPLC are Baltimore attorney [Glen Keith Allen](#), who is alleging that the SPLC is guilty of racketeering and abetting theft; the [Center for Immigration Studies](#) (CIS), which is also alleging that the SPLC committed RICO violations and wire fraud; and former CRTV personality [Gavin McInnes](#), along with the Proud Boys group he founded. McInnes charges the SPLC with defamation. After the SPLC labeled him and the Proud Boys a "hate group," McInnes lost his job with CRTV and was removed from all the major social networks.

Cohen and Brownstein are simply rats escaping a sinking ship at this point. The SPLC — an organization with some 450 million in donor dollars behind it — is a reckless, anti-conservative, anti-constitutional, and anti-Christian group whose fraudulent claims are finally catching up with it. Its phony accusations of "hate groups" and "hate speech" have diluted the term racist to the point where it has no meaning. When news of actual racism is greeted with skepticism nowadays, the SPLC is one of the main reasons for that.

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