



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on April 20, 2010

Leftist SPLC Publishes Patriot Hit List

The leftist Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is worried that non-violent conservative opposition to big government will lead to violence, and has produced an enemies list that includes much of the freedom movement.

"Fifteen years after the Oklahoma City bombing, the United States is experiencing an antigovernment climate remarkably similar to the atmosphere that preceded the attack," the SPLC [reported](#) at a symposium keynoted by former President Bill Clinton April 16. But now it's worse, they [say](#):



Unlike the 1990s, however, mainstream commentators and politicians are pouring fuel on the fire with heated antigovernment rhetoric and outrageous conspiracy theories, such as the suggestion that the president is creating "death panels" or that undocumented immigrants are responsible for a rash of leprosy cases in the United States. "It just stokes the fire and I don't see anything that's moving us toward any kind of calming down," said SPLC Intelligence Project Director Mark Potok.

A big part of SPLC alarm response is a new enemies list of sorts, a catalog of people and organizations the Montgomery, Alabama-based organization doesn't like. The SPLC list of 36 enemies "at the heart of the resurgent movement" opposing big government includes a mix of perfectly reasonable people along with some who have fallen for quirky but harmless conspiracy theories, as well as what the SPLC calls their "enablers": Fox News Contributor Judge Andrew Napolitano and Congressmen Ron Paul, Michele Bachmann, and Paul Broun. Among those who have made the list are *The New American's* publisher John McManus, TNA contributor Chuck Baldwin, Gun Owners of America chairman Larry Pratt, WorldNetDaily founder Joe Farah, radio talk-show host Alex Jones, and constitutionalist author Edwin Vieira, Jr. The list includes birthers, truthers, militia members, and other people the SPLC calls political heretics, but not one of which the SPLC accuses of advocating violence or law-breaking. The SPLC [attacks](#) many constitutionalist organizations, from the John Birch Society to the Oathkeepers to the Three Percenters:

Although the resurgence of the so-called Patriots — people who generally believe that the federal government is an evil entity that is engaged in a secret conspiracy to impose martial law, herd those who resist into concentration camps, and force the United States into a socialistic "New World Order" — also has been propelled by people who were key players in the first wave of the Patriot movement in the mid-1990s, there are also a large number of new players. What follows are profiles of 36 individuals at the heart of the resurgent movement.

Particularly worrisome to the SPLC is the democratization of the mass media; patriots and Americans in general are no longer dependent upon the "Big Three" television networks for daily updates to national and world news. "One reason the resurgent antigovernment 'Patriot' movement is taking off so quickly is the support for many of its central ideas that comes from ostensibly mainstream figures in politics



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and the media,” the SPLC [frets](#), adding:

These men and women have helped to put key Patriot themes — the idea that President Obama is a Marxist, that he and other elites in the government are pushing a socialist takeover, that the United States plans secret concentration camps and so on — before millions of Americans, many of whom actually believe these completely false allegations. Whether these people tell such tall tales because they believe them or simply because they are willing to shamelessly pander for votes or ratings, is anyone’s guess; but the noxious effect on the body politic is the same.

Such a sentiment from the SPLC almost makes one wonder if they have even been paying attention to the news for the past nine years. It’s almost as if they haven’t heard about the [secret CIA prisons around the world](#) or the bank bailouts and government takeover of much of the auto industry. If those highly documented and widely publicized changes are nothing more than “tall tales” and “false allegations” and don’t count as a “socialist takeover,” it’s not clear what changes would count as one.

But there’s another motivation behind the SPLC outrage; they are not so much interested in the ridiculous assertion that non-violent activists would inspire violence. They are mostly concerned supporters of smaller government might actually come into political power and shrink the size of the federal government. “We are in the midst of one of the most significant right-wing populist rebellions in United States history,” the leftist Chip Berlet of the Cambridge, Massachusetts Political Research Associates has [reported](#). To Berlet and his cohort, that’s a frightful image that’s “toxic to democracy.” But to the vast majority of Americans who distrust their own government, it’s a sign of hope.

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