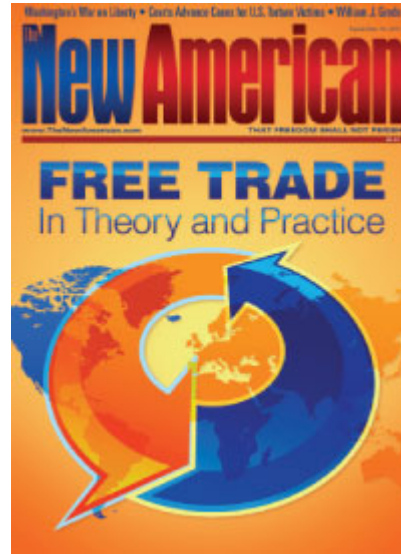




Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on October 4, 2011

Protecting Rights: Loyal Americans Targeted by the SPLC

“Carol Swain is an apologist for white supremacists.” That was the jarring claim of a front-page article that greeted Dr. Swain in her local paper on October 17, 2009. The claim was a quote from Mark Potok, a top spokesman for the Southern Poverty Law Center, the self-anointed “watchdog” that presumes to be the preeminent monitor of “hate groups and racial extremists throughout the United States.”



Carol Swain, then, must be a very bad person, no? Probably joined at the hip to the neo-Nazis, KKK, and Aryan Nations, right? After all, the folks at the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), and especially the organization’s founder, Morris Dees, have acquired sainted reputations as heroic crusaders against these nefarious groups and other purveyors of hatred, bigotry, and violence. Dees, Potok, and their colleagues at SPLC are regularly paraded as the go-to “experts” on all the various extremists that threaten the realm. Surely, they must know something dark and sinister about Dr. Swain’s collaboration with these forces.

Undoubtedly, Professor Swain was not the only one shocked by the SPLC allegation; many of her academic peers and students, as well as the many fans of her books and published columns, would have considered her to be one of the last persons to fall under such loathsome accusations. In fact, on the surface, she would appear to be a natural ally of the SPLC, since she is a certified academic expert on the subject of white nationalism and racism in the United States. Her two books on the subject — *The New White Nationalism in America: Its Challenge to Integration* (2004) and *Contemporary Voices of White Nationalism in America* (2003), both published by Cambridge University Press — were critically acclaimed.

Dr. Carol M. Swain is a professor of political science and law at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. In 2007, she was appointed to the Tennessee Advisory Committee of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. In 2008, the U.S. Senate confirmed her nomination to the National Council on the Humanities, which is the advisory board of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Professor Swain also happens to be black, which, in itself, makes her an odd choice, to say the least, for Potok’s claim of being “an apologist for white supremacists.”

In fact, Carol Swain would seem to be the perfect poster child for the kind of racial harmony and tolerance the SPLC claims to be aiming at. Moreover, her life is a “bootstrap” success story that serves



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as inspiration to many aspiring black scholars. Dr. Swain relates this biographical information:

I am one of 12 children raised in rural poverty by parents who had little education. Our poverty was so great that one by one all 12 of us dropped out of school at around the 8th or 9th grade. Three of us earned high school equivalencies. I dropped out of school after completing the 8th grade, married at 16, and had three children before becoming the first in my family to reach college.

She not only “reached” college, she graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice, while also making the National Dean’s List and membership in the Phi Beta Kappa and Alpha Chi national academic honor societies. She went on to receive her master’s degree in political science at Virginia Polytechnical, her Ph.D. in poli-sci from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a master’s degree in law from Yale Law School.

Her childhood, curriculum vita, professional *oeuvre*, and ethnicity certainly don’t fit the profile of the typical “apologist for white supremacy.” What is going on here?

Derided for Dissenting

According to Professor Swain, it’s fairly simple: She is being smeared as “payback” for her beliefs regarding immigration and illegal aliens, as well as her criticism of the SPLC’s methods, especially its virulent attacks on former CNN news anchor Lou Dobbs, which she describes as shameless vilification.

In a March 2010 panel discussion entitled “Immigration and the SPLC” at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), Swain stated her belief that Potok’s attack on her “was really about immigration.”

“I had edited a book in 2007 called *Debating Immigration*, in which I tried to bring diverse voices into the conversation,” she explained. One of those was the voice of Peter Brimelow, a British-American immigrant, former financial writer for *Forbes*, *Fortune*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, and currently the editor of Vdare.com, a website that opposes our ongoing open-borders policies and amnesty for illegal aliens. For advocating enforcement of our immigration laws, Brimelow and Vdare were added to the SPLC’s list of “haters,” alongside Ku Kluxers and Aryan skinheads. Swain says she also wanted to include in her book “the voice of Christians that were not open-borders Christians, that believe that the state has a right to enforce the laws of the land, and that we can expect immigrants — people who come here illegally — to obey the laws — and [that we] are a nation of laws and not a nation of just total chaos.”

“Well, because of that book, which has been well received, I think they wanted to shut my voice down on the immigration issue,” said Swain.

But it was not only her immigration views that stirred the SPLC’s wrath. She noted at the CIS panel discussion at the National Press Club:

The Southern Poverty Law Center tries to silence people on a range of issues. It’s not just immigration. It’s also people that are pro-life; it’s people that are concerned about racial preferences, people that are concerned about same-sex marriages, gun control, immigration and patriots.

She made the same point in her response to the *Tennessean* article that launched the SPLC smear. “Today, conservatives and Christians (of which I am both) are targeted by groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center that regularly seek to discredit us,” she wrote. “What is happening is a bold attack



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on free speech and the inner workings of the Democratic process. We must not let this continue.”

Do her charges hold? Is the SPLC “shutting down free speech in a very dangerous way,” specifically targeting “conservatives and Christians” and maliciously smearing them with the “racist,” “bigot,” “extremist,” “hater,” “anti-Semite” — and even “terrorist” — labels? These charges are fairly easy to verify; simply go to the Southern Poverty Law Center’s website (www.splcenter.org), pick up one of its *Intelligence Reports*, or catch one of its spokespersons on CNN, NPR, CBS, or MSNBC. One will discover that Dr. Swain is far from being the only unlikely suspect to be viciously traduced with one or more of the SPLC’s hate labels.

Crucifying Christians

A host of prominent black preachers have come under fire from the SPLC. Among them are Chicago’s Rev. Gregory Daniels; the Washington, D.C., area’s Bishop Harry Jackson; the Atlanta area’s Bishop Eddie Long; the Detroit area’s Rev. Keith Butler; Bishop Wellington Boone of Norcross, Georgia; Pastor Ken Hutcherson of Redmond, Washington; Rev. Jesse Peterson of Los Angeles; and the Chicago area’s Rev. James Meeks.

What is it about these Christian pastors that has Morris Dees and the SPLC all afroth? Since they’re black ministers serving all-black, or mostly black, congregations, it’s not very likely that they are supporters of, or “apologists for,” white supremacy. No, their main offense, in the eyes of the SPLC “watchdogs,” is holding fast to principles of biblical morality in opposition to the militant “gay” lobby, and especially their opposition to homosexual “marriage.” The vast majority of African-Americans do not support same-sex marriage, showing an even larger margin of disapproval than the American population as a whole. Senator Obama acknowledged this political reality when he was running for the presidency by staking out a position in favor of heterosexual marriage. Now he says his position on the matter is “evolving,” and he has been actively courting the big donors of the homosexual activist community. Former Obama aide and gay activist Kevin Thompson told the *New York Times* he believes this was Obama’s plan all along.

The black pastors under attack from the SPLC, however, appear to have taken their stands on marriage out of genuine commitment, not expediency. Thus the SPLC feels compelled to pummel them into submission. It has allied itself with the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), “a black gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered rights group,” and other GLBT groups to attempt to make the case that being “anti-gay” is hateful and closely akin to racist bigotry. “I think it’s disturbing when black people join the contemporary Confederate army,” Sylvia Rhue, a lesbian activist and spokesperson for the NBJC, told the Southern Poverty Law Center regarding the black preachers. They are no different, she says, than those “who wanted a civil war to maintain slavery.”

Of course, the black Christian ministers now being tarred are just getting the first taste of the smear campaign that the SPLC has been waging against conservative “Christian Right” leaders and prominent Christian organizations for a much longer period. Among the many leaders and groups that have been singled out for SPLC smears are Dr. James Dobson and his Focus on the Family ministry, Beverly LaHaye and her Concerned Women for America, the late D. James Kennedy and his Coral Ridge Ministries, Scott Lively and his Abiding Truth Ministries, David Barton and his WallBuilders ministry, the American Family Association, the Family Research Council, the Chalcedon Foundation, Americans for Truth About Homosexuality, the late Jerry Falwell’s Liberty Council, the Traditional Values Coalition, Catholic Family News, the Christian Action Network, and the National Organization for Marriage.



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These and other similar groups are routinely pilloried as purveyors of “hate,” even though no proof is offered that they promote or incite hatred toward homosexuals. Indeed, most of the groups cited explicitly state that they love homosexuals as individuals and pray for their conversion and healing, as they do for all souls trapped in what the Christian faith defines as sinful practices. Nevertheless, simply opposing homosexuality and the legalization of homosexual practices is sufficient to place these “intolerant” Christians on the SPLC’s “Hate Map” and put them in the organization’s so-called “Intelligence Report” — sandwiched between photos of hooded Klansmen burning crosses and goose-stepping neo-Nazis. And if a homosexual somewhere is bullied, beaten, or killed, then you *know* who is responsible. Most Christian leaders realize that the SPLC’s demonizing campaign is intended as the softening-up prelude to pushing for prosecution of pastors and preachers (and teachers, professors, talk-show hosts, journalists, and employers — as well as ordinary citizens) for “homophobia,” under current and future “hate crime” legislation.

An Anti-hate Group That Hates Widely

The SPLC also has put the Second Amendment in its crosshairs, attacking either directly or with their typical sandwich smear technique, the National Rifle Association, Larry Pratt and Gun Owners of America, the late Idaho Rep. Helen Chenoweth, Conservative Caucus and Constitution Party founder Howard Phillips, former Arizona Sheriff Richard Mack, and other constitutionalists who uphold the right of the people to keep and bear arms. The SPLC prefers to interpret the Constitution to mean that the government shall have a monopoly, or near monopoly, on firearms, which is a surefire prescription for Nazi- or communist-style tyranny. Those who insist on hewing to the same view as our nation’s Founders, that “the people” be armed, are falsely categorized by Dees’ group as “anti-government” and “extremist.”

Likewise the self-proclaimed “watchdogs” claim that the widespread Tea Party groups “are shot through with rich veins of radical ideas, conspiracy theories and racism,” a familiar meme echoed by Nancy Pelosi, the Obama White House, and their many sympathetic acolytes in the mainstream media choir.

However, in going after so many mainstream groups that millions of Americans are affiliated with — and that tens of millions more agree with and identify with — the SPLC may have outstripped itself. Having been showered with adulatory media coverage for decades and having built up an obscenely huge endowment (over \$200 million), Dees and company have grown supremely arrogant and appear to believe they can slander and defame with impunity.

The SPLC’s atrocious actions have energized many on the political Right and have alienated even many of their erstwhile allies on the Left. Over the past several years this has prompted many who had previously given the SPLC a pass — or had even applauded and supported them — to start serious investigations of the organization’s fundraising activities, their incessant, fear-mongering hype, and their radical, left-wing political agenda. The many investigative articles and studies that have appeared in *Harper’s*, the *Washington Times*, *Reason*, the *Nation*, the *Progressive*, *Human Events*, *Breitbart.com*, *World Net Daily*, *FrontPageMag.com*, *Middle American News*, *Vdare.com*, and the *Social Contract* powerfully confirm the findings exposed by *The New American* in articles we have published on the Southern Poverty Law Center over the past two decades.

Here are some of the serious charges that are amply substantiated by the SPLC’s public record:

- The SPLC’s *Intelligence Report* and its other publications grossly inflate the number of actual “hate



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groups” and “hate crimes,” while wildly exaggerating the threat from so-called right-wing groups.

- The SPLC engages in the promiscuous use of epithets such as “hate group,” “extremist,” “racist,” “anti-government,” and “terrorist,” and as a standard practice lumps completely law-abiding, non-racist groups with the violent KKK and neo-Nazis.
- The SPLC has raised hundreds of millions of dollars for the ostensible purpose of “fighting hate” and helping the poor and powerless, but in reality has stuffed its own coffers, building one of the largest investment portfolios of any NGO in the country.
- The SPLC’s demonizing attacks are aimed not only at destroying the reputations and credibility of political and social conservatives, but actually criminalizing their beliefs and their expressions of those beliefs, as protected under the First Amendment.
- Utilizing its ties in the media and the Clinton administration, the SPLC developed a close relationship with the federal Justice Department and FBI, and has parlayed that relationship into ties with federal, state, and local police agencies. Its incendiary misrepresentations thus have the potential to cause some jittery and misinformed law-enforcement officers to violate the rights of members of the groups targeted by the SPLC, or even to use unjustifiable deadly force.
- While straining to find even the most tenuous (and oftentimes nonexistent) connections between a targeted conservative organization or individual and some real or reputed member of a genuinely racist or violent group that it can exploit, the SPLC exercises no similar vigilance concerning its own affinity for actual leftist terrorists and communist revolutionaries.

Lauding the Left and Its Terrorists

Concerning the last point above, the SPLC’s unabashed promotion of unrepentant Weather Underground terrorist and self-proclaimed communist Bill Ayers should itself be sufficient to thoroughly discredit the organization’s claims to concern over the dangers of terrorism. Although he had been largely forgotten by baby boomers and never heard of by Gen-Xers, revelations of President Obama’s longtime association with Ayers and his equally notorious wife, Bernardine Dohrn, brought the Weather Underground couple back into the limelight again. Thanks to their connections with old comrades in radical academia, Ayers and Dohrn were able to walk from fugitive status as bombers on the FBI’s “most wanted” list into sinecures as “distinguished professors” at prestigious universities. In his 2001 autobiographical *Fugitive Days*, published on the eve of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Ayers says, “I can’t imagine entirely dismissing the possibility” of setting off bombs once again. In a September 11, 2001 interview with the *New York Times* Ayers stated: “I don’t regret setting bombs. I feel we didn’t do enough.”

Nevertheless, the SPLC’s “Teaching Tolerance” website still proudly carries a glowing interview of Ayers by SPLC activist Gabrielle Lyon entitled, “An Unconditional Embrace.”

Lyon writes admiringly:

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, responsibility and self-reflection.

Ayers has taught in public schools and spearheaded alternative education projects.... As a professor of education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, he helps aspiring teachers recognize and tap the potential of every child.



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For Ayers, challenging stereotypes and reforming inner-city schools is as much about fighting for social justice as about improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Naturally, Lyon asks not a single challenging, probing question of “Professor” Ayers that might cause him any angst. He is not questioned about his murderous Weather Underground bombing rampage that caused, for instance, the death of San Francisco police sergeant Brian V. McDonnell and the wounding of nine other officers. Nor was he asked about his involvement in the Weather Underground bombings of the U.S. Capitol, the New York Police Department, and the U.S. State Department in Washington, D.C., in the 1970s.

Neither did SPLC’s Lyon ask Ayers about his more recent visits to Venezuela and his relationship with that country’s Marxist dictator, Hugo Chavez, who was his host. Unfortunately for Dees and company, the Ayers promotional is not just a one-time website aberration but a symptom of the organization’s overall far-left sympathies and agenda.

Those sympathies and agenda are underscored by Dees’ and the SPLC’s longtime ties to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). In addition to many SPLC staff members who also once served as ACLU staffers (including SPLC attorneys Katie Schwartzmann, Christine P. Sun, and Sam Wolfe), the ACLU and SPLC also team up together on lawsuits. Dees is a proud recipient of the ACLU’s annual Roger N. Baldwin Award, named for the ACLU’s co-founder and longtime executive director. Baldwin was one of the young Soviet Union’s staunchest advocates and an ardent defender of Stalin’s dictatorship. He traveled to Stalinist Russia and wrote glowingly of it. William Z. Foster, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and Louis Budenz, all of whom served on the ACLU’s original executive board with Baldwin, were actual top officials of the U.S. Communist Party. While Baldwin may not have been an official Party member, he was with them completely in spirit. Later in life he wrote:

I am for socialism.... I seek social ownership of property, the abolition of the propertied class, and sole control by those who produce wealth. Communism is the goal.... I don’t regret being part of the communist tactic. I knew what I was doing. I was not an innocent liberal. I wanted what the communists wanted and I traveled the United Front road to get it.

Although for a while during the 1940s and ’50s the ACLU went through the pretense of expelling Communist Party members, many communists remained in the organization. Communist Party members Anne Braden and Frank Wilkinson were even awarded the same Baldwin medal as Dees, in 1989 and 1999, respectively. And the ACLU has remained wedded to the same militant atheism it inherited from the communists. Hence its incessant attacks on religion and all laws based on Christian morality, as, for instance, our laws against abortion and sodomy. The SPLC appears to be wedded to the very same atheist, anti-Christian agenda.

Sitting on the SPLC’s board of directors is James Rucker, the chairman of the board of ColorOfChange.org, a radical group Rucker co-founded with Van Jones. Yes, *that* Van Jones, the Obama “Green Jobs Czar” who was forced to resign after his extreme communist views and activities were exposed. In October 2005, Jones said he was “a rowdy nationalist before the [Rodney] King verdict [in Los Angeles], but by August of that year [1992] I was a communist.”

Jones became a leader in STORM (Standing Together to Organize a Revolutionary Movement), an ultra-radical collective that declared its commitment to “revolutionary democracy, revolutionary feminism, revolutionary internationalism, the central role of the working class, urban Marxism and Third World Communism.”



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STORM's manifesto declares:

We began with Marxist "basics," laying a foundation on which to build.... We studied philosophy, ... Lenin's theories of the state, revolution and the party, and the political ideas of [communist mass murderer] Mao Tse-tung and [communist theoretician] Antonio Gramsci.

Jones' SPLC comrade James Rucker served as director of Grassroots Mobilization for the far-left, Soros-funded MoveOn.org Political Action, and MoveOn.org Civic Action.

Much more could be written about the SPLC's hard-left connections. No "mainstream" journalist whom we are aware of has ever asked SPLC's Mark Potok to explain his chummy 2006 interview with the Socialist Workers Party, a Trotskyite communist terrorist group. (The interview has since been taken down from the SWP's website.) Perhaps it was set up for him by Chip Berlet, who frequently writes for SPLC. Berlet, who runs Political Research Associates in Somerville, Massachusetts, used to work for the Socialist Workers Party and was a staff member for the National Lawyers Guild, which was described in a U.S. congressional investigation as the "foremost legal bulwark of the Communist Party, USA." He has also written for the communist *Guardian* newspaper of New York, and for the Institute for Policy Studies, a conduit for the Soviet KGB and the Cuban DGI.

Most importantly, as it relates to national security, extremism, and terrorism, Chip Berlet has been a key player, working closely over the past three decades with the top activists of the ACLU, the National Lawyers Guild, the Communist Party, and the Socialist Workers Party to abolish the House and Senate internal security subcommittees, the investigative committees of the state legislatures, and the intelligence agencies of all the major metropolitan police departments. They were successful in this subversive effort; most of these investigative agencies were dismantled and their intelligence files destroyed.

Incredibly, now the SPLC pitches itself to law-enforcement leaders as their intelligence lifeline that can help them survive the ever-present threats from the "radical Right."

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