



Resurrecting the Right-wing Militia Bogeyman

The Southern Poverty Law Center is up to its old tricks, demonizing conservatives and playing the race card for profit.

Until a long time after Napoleon's death, English mothers would admonish their children with, "Be good or Nappy will get you." Well, now we hear, be vigilant or the "racist" righties will get you. This is the message of a recent AFP news article oh-so ominously titled "Right-wing militias on the rise in US: report."

Here's how the piece begins:



Incensed by the election of the first black US president, right-wing militia groups in the United States are rising again after a decade of decline

Ideologically driven by racism and a virulent anti-government, anti-taxation and anti-immigrant agenda, the homegrown groups that thrived in the 1990s and spurred numerous deadly terrorist attacks are expanding, said the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC).

Ah, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the usual suspect. Now, for those unacquainted with the SPLC, it's an organization founded by "civil rights" attorney Morris Dees in 1971 for, ostensibly, the purposes of fighting for tolerance. Its claim to fame is that it eviscerated certain white supremacist groups in the 1980s and 90s by winning steep civil-rights judgments against them. This brought Dees such acclaim that Hollywood even made a movie about him titled *Line of Fire: The Morris Dees Story*.

The problem is that, to echo Paul Harvey, it didn't tell "the rest of the story."

So, what's wrong with battling white supremacists? Nothing. The problem is, when Dees litigated against them, it was not General Patton vs. the Nazis or MacArthur vs. Tojo.

It was more like Stalin taking down Hitler.

Dees is a master of civil-rights sleight-of-hand. While billing his organization as one that fights hate groups, one will look in vain to find any on the left. It seems that, in Dees' world, only right-wing groups hate.

Yet what truly makes Dees damnable is what he does when he runs out of "rightist" haters. He simply invents them.

Consider how his SPLC framed the issue in the AFP article. It cleverly begins by introducing the supposition that these groups are "Incensed by the election of the first black president" — because first impressions matter in propaganda, too. And to the left of this text is . . . guess what? A picture of a policeman watching a Klan rally.

In reality, the Klan isn't a militia and a militia isn't the Klan. In reality, paramilitary groups have existed for a long time and in many lands. And, sure, while some may advance racial causes, they also might advance Islam, communism, an independence movement, freedom, or most anything else under the sun.



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on August 14, 2009

“Militia” does not denote ideology, only method.

Of course, in *our nation*, militias are generally associated with a certain ideological stance: opposition to federal government intrusion. But that’s the point. Given this, it’s disingenuous to claim that bigotry inspires their creation. Besides, we also saw an upsurge in militia activity under Bill Clinton, who, believe it or not, wasn’t really “the first black president.”

And how does the SPLC buttress its white-supremacist bogeyman claim? The AFP writes, “One man ‘very upset’ with the election of America’s first black president was building a radioactive ‘dirty bomb’... Another angry at the election and said to be interested in joining a militia killed two sheriff’s deputies in Florida, said Larry Keller at the SPLC.”

Note the duplicity. Keller juxtaposes a man motivated by race — who he doesn’t say has militia ties — with a man “interested” in joining a militia but who he doesn’t say had a racial motivation. Where’s the beef? Is this the best the SPLC can offer?

The SPLC then transitions from the anecdotal to the statistical. After giving the impression that the election of a black man has inspired the militias’ proliferation, it says that militia activity increased 54 percent between, get this, 2000 and 2008.

Well, I guess George W. Bush must have been our second black president.

But it gets worse. After associating all militias with the KKK, the SPLC then associates “mainstream” conservative commentators — notably Glenn Beck — with the militias, saying that they “aped and championed” the militias’ ideology. No, they don’t have a picture of Beck sporting a hood or burning a cross; instead, his sin was talking about some “conspiracy theories.” The AFP article also thus smears Texas governor Rick Perry and Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, mentioning the former’s allusion to secession and the latter’s warning about “re-education camps.”

But this is par for the course for Morris Dees. And if this characterization sounds harsh, read ([here](#) or [here](#)) Ken Silverstein’s great expose “The Church of Morris Dees.” Silverstein points out that 95 percent of all “hate crimes” are perpetrated by “lone wolves” with no connection whatsoever to hate groups, let alone militias or mainstream conservative movements. Yet you wouldn’t know it listening to Dees. He has made a career out of showcasing the evils of a few avowedly bigoted radicals, ascribing their motivations to minority-view mainstream conservatives — especially pro-Second Amendment and small-government groups — and then claiming they must be thwarted as well.

But note that I said “career,” not calling, as Dees has used the tolerance business to fill SPLC coffers with more than \$150 million. In fact, Dees has always seemed to be more about dollars than doctrine, as those who know him best will attest. For example, Silverstein quotes former Dees associate and anti-death penalty lawyer Millard Farmer, who said, “[Dees is] the Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker of the civil rights movement — though I don’t mean to malign Jim and Tammy Faye.” Even more telling, the SPLC’s *entire* legal staff resigned in 1986, upset that Dees’ wouldn’t help minorities but was simply interested in peddling the dramatic KKK narrative and milking rich donors.

And this is precisely Dees’ motivation now. He knows his market, and this is why the SPLC report is ominously titled “The Second Wave: Return of the Militias.” Ooh, yikes, *The Empire Strikes Back*, anyone? How about Darth Vader and the Death Star? Ah, the deep pockets in New York City, San Francisco and Chicago will turn inside-out.

You know, there’s a very old, best-selling book man has often looked to for guidance, and it isn’t hate



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that it says is the root of all evil.

Ka-ching, Morrie, ka-ching.

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