

## The Southern Poverty Law Center:

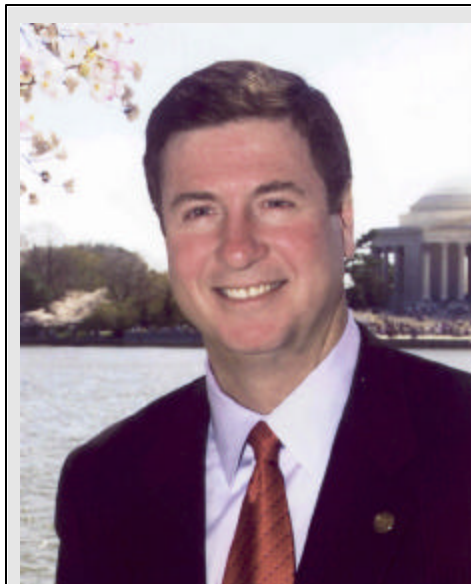
*A Twisted Definition of ‘Hate’*

by Matthew Vadum

**Summary:** *Obsessed with fundraising, the fabulously wealthy Southern Poverty Law Center exaggerates the scope of racism in the United States to frighten donors into opening their wallets. SPLC is nominally a public interest law firm, but it spends little on actual litigation. Instead, it uses politically skewed definitions of racism to indoctrinate children while smearing conservatives who question racial preference programs.*

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has one key message: the nation is boiling over with hatred and intolerance. Decades after the civil rights movement forever changed America and despite the enactment of the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and the imposition of affirmative action, American race relations are always worse today than in the days of Jim Crow, according to SPLC. “Hate in America is a dreadful, daily constant. The dragging death of a black man in Jasper, Texas; the crucifixion of a gay man in Laramie, Wyo.; and post-9.11 hate crimes against hundreds of Arab Americans, Muslim Americans and Sikhs are not ‘isolated incidents.’ They are eruptions of a nation’s intolerance.” That’s the message posted at Tolerance.org, a Center website for its special project, “Ten Ways to Fight Hate: A Community Response Guide.”

“Somewhere in America...EVERY HOUR someone commits a hate crime. EVERY DAY at least eight blacks, four gays or lesbians, two Jews, two whites and one Latino become hate crimes victims. EVERY WEEK a cross is burned,” according to the guide. [emphasis



**Are conservatives Senator George Allen (left) and Representative Tom Tancredo (right) racists? Yes, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, a fundraising powerhouse that poses as a public interest law firm.**

in original] If the Center’s math is correct, 8,760 “hate crimes” are committed in the U.S. every year and 52 crosses are burned. But that’s not exactly a tidal wave of bigotry in an ethnically diverse nation of 300 million people.

The SPLC, which has a whopping \$152 million endowment, understands the importance of language. It fights what it labels “hate,” “intolerance,” and “discrimination,” but it defines those terms very differently than most Americans would. Like Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking-Glass*, when SPLC uses a specific word, it means whatever SPLC chooses it to mean – neither more nor less.

To the Center, you practice “hate” whenever you fail to genuflect with politically

correct reverence before every human difference.

In the SPLC’s world, armies of the night are forever on the march. Cross-burnings, lynchings, and rampant racial discrimination are

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omnipresent. Those who question the SPLC's approach to race are blacklisted as contemptible bigots. Conservative writers have observed that to be called a "racist" today is akin to the label "Communist" in the 1950s. Indeed, the SPLC's tactics are hard to distinguish from those of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy, who was also a fan of guilt by association.

The Center lumps all sorts of groups on America's political right together, labeling them enemies of the Republic. Conservative, libertarian, anti-tax, immigration reductionist and other groups are all viewed as legitimate targets for vilification.

## Cha-ching! Cha-ching!

By nonprofit standards, SPLC has an enormous endowment fund of just over \$152 million, according to its 2005 annual report. According to its IRS Form 990 for the fiscal year ended October 31, 2005 (covering IRS tax year 2004), the Center took in gross receipts of \$49.8 million that year, \$29.7 million of which consisted of contributions and grants.

According to its balance sheet, by October 31, 2005, its total assets ballooned from \$173.2 million at the beginning of the fiscal year, to \$189.4 million by year's end. SPLC's endowment is so large that it reported endowment

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**Editor:** Matthew Vadum

**Publisher:** Terrence Scanlon

## Organization Trends

is published by Capital Research Center, a non-partisan education and research organization, classified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity.

### Address:

1513 16th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036-1480

**Phone:** (202) 483-6900

**Long-Distance:** (800) 459-3950

### E-mail Address:

[mvadum@capitalresearch.org](mailto:mvadum@capitalresearch.org)

### Web Site:

<http://www.capitalresearch.org>

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**Reprints** are available for \$2.50 prepaid to Capital Research Center.

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income of nearly \$3.5 million. It also reported interest income of \$728,356 and "other revenue" of \$226,957.



**SPLC's Morris Dees**

Although SPLC bills itself as a civil rights law firm, it devotes only a fraction of its resources to actual legal work. Of the \$28.9 million in expenses it declared for the year ended October 31, 2005, it spent only \$4.5 million on "providing legal services for victims of civil rights injustice and hate crimes," and \$837,907 for "specific assistance to individuals" in the form of "litigation services," according to its Form 990. Roughly half of its expenditures, \$14.7 million, were devoted to "educating the general public, public officials, teachers, students and law enforcement agencies and officers with respect to issues of hate and intolerance and promoting tolerance of differences through the schools."

In the same period, SPLC paid Morris Dees \$297,559 in salary and pension plan contributions. On the list of nonprofit "employees who earned more than their organization's chief executive," (part of the Chronicle of Philanthropy's annual survey of top nonprofit executive salaries, published September 28), Dees ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation. SPLC President Richard Cohen took home \$274,838, but Center co-founder Joseph L. Levin received only \$171,904 for his efforts as general counsel.

Funders of SPLC include Cisco Systems Foundation (at least \$1.6 million since 2001), Picower Foundation (at least \$1.7 million since 2000), the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund (\$535,000 since 2001), and the Grove Founda-

tion (\$450,000 since 2001).

## Origins

SPLC is based in Montgomery, Alabama, site of the famous bus boycott of 1955-1956 that gave birth to the civil rights movement and made a national icon of Rosa Parks, the woman who courageously refused a command to move to the back of the bus. The Center's fortress-style headquarters seems intended to shield employees from the hordes of neo-Nazis, skinheads, and militia groups the Center claims wish to do it harm.

The co-founders of SPLC are Julian Bond and Morris Dees. Bond is the founding president. Since 1998 he has been chairman of the NAACP but remains active with the Center and currently serves on its board of directors. A highly visible public figure, he is well acquainted with its smear tactics, having compared conservatives and the Bush administration to Afghanistan's ousted Taliban regime.

Bond has smeared black conservatives with relish, deriding them for joining what he calls "a right-wing conspiracy" aimed at eliminating affirmative action, abridging voting rights, and reforming public education. In 2002 he



**Julian Bond of the NAACP and the SPLC. Bond smeared Republicans and then lied about it.**

told an NAACP convention that black conservatives were participants in "an interlocking network of funders, groups and activists... They are the money, the motivation and the movement behind vouchers, the legal assault on affirmative action and other remedies for discrimination, attempts to reapportion us out of office and attacks on equity everywhere." These conservatives are "black hustlers and hucksters... [that] like ventrilo-

quists' dummies, speak in their puppet-master's voice," he said. Bond called anti-racial quota campaigner Ward Connelly a "fraud" and a "con man."

In February of this year, at Fayetteville State University in Arkansas, Bond warned that Republicans' "idea of equal rights is the American flag and the Confederate swastika flying side by side," the Fayetteville Observer reported. When his comments provoked a firestorm of criticism, Bond lied, denying he likened the GOP to the Nazi Party. He accused "right-wing blogs" of mischaracterizing his statement: "I didn't say these things I'm alleged to have said. There is no one in the audience who can say I said them." How wrong he was: The Observer posted a 45-minute recording of Bond's speech online. (Listen to it at <http://www.fayettevillenc.com/photos/audio/2006/02/0206bondfull.mp3>.) In the same speech, Bond implied that Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice were token black appointees in the Bush administration, which was using them as "human shields against any criticism of their record on civil rights."

For Bond, America is hopelessly racist. "Everywhere we see clear racial fault lines, which divide American society as much now as at any time in our past," he said in 1999. One might expect Americans to push someone with Bond's views to the margins of public

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**"No one has been more assiduous in inflating the profile of [hate] groups than the [SPLC]'s millionaire huckster, Morris Dees, who in 1999 began a begging letter, 'Dear Friend, The danger presented by the Klan is greater now than at any time in the past ten years.'" - JoAnn Wypijewski of the Nation magazine**

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life, alongside racial provocateurs like Al Sharpton, yet Bond is an in-demand public speaker. He holds 23 honorary degrees and is now Distinguished Professor at American University and professor of history at the University of Virginia.

But Bond is strictly B-list compared to Morris Dees.

Dees is admired by left-wing and not-so-left-wing lawyers from coast to coast. A prestigious legal award has been named after him, and on November 16, the high-powered law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP & Affiliates and the University of Alabama School of Law will award the first annual "Morris Dees Justice Award" to U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice of the

Eastern District of Texas. The award will be given annually to "a lawyer who has devoted his or her career to serving the public interest and pursuing justice, and whose work has brought about positive change in the community, state or nation." One of the rulings



**To raise money, the SPLC wants Americans to fear the Ku Klux Klan, a long-marginalized hate group whose membership has dwindled to 3,000.**

for which Judge Justice is honored would puzzle many strict constructionist legal scholars and limited-government supporters. Justice's ruling in a 1982 case, *Plyler v. Doe*, opened the doors for children of illegal aliens to attend public schools through grade twelve at public expense.

Dees, an in-demand speaker at college campuses, is a consummate salesman and a

champion fundraiser. "I learned everything I know about hustling from the Baptist Church. Spending Sundays sitting on those hard benches, listening to the preacher pitch salvation ... why it was like getting a PhD in selling," he said. Dees was finance director for Democrat George McGovern's failed 1972 presidential bid and for other Democratic candidates. He raised more than \$24 million from 600,000 small donors, marking the first time a presidential campaign was financed with small gifts by mail, according to Dees's official biography on SPLC's website.

Years before co-founding the SPLC, Dees launched a successful direct mail sales company specializing in book publishing. However, he experienced an epiphany in 1967, and decided to take his life in a new direction

and "speak out for my black friends who were still 'disenfranchised' even after the Voting Rights Act of 1965," Dees wrote in the autobiographical *A Season for Justice*. "Little had changed in the South. Whites held the power and had no intention of voluntarily sharing it..."

Dees's former legal associate Millard Farmer describes the crusading lawyer as "the Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker of the civil rights movement," adding "though I don't mean to malign Jim and Tammy Faye." Former associates say Dees is obsessed with making money.

### Criticism and Scandal

The media generally accords Dees roughly the same level of respect as the late Mother Teresa. He has been the subject of a made-for-television movie, along with countless articles, and worshipful magazine profiles. Yet a rare, scathing portrait of Dees entitled "The Church of Morris Dees" by left-wing author Ken Silverstein appeared in the November 2000 Harper's magazine. Under the leadership of Dees, SPLC "spends most of its time—and money—on a relentless fundraising campaign, peddling memberships in the church of tolerance with all the zeal of a circuit rider passing the collection plate," wrote Silverstein.

The SPLC took another hit in 2001 when JoAnn Wypijewski wrote in the leftist Nation magazine that the Center was preoccupied with making money. "In 1999 it spent \$2.4 million on litigation and \$5.7 million on fundraising, meanwhile taking in more than \$44 million—\$27 million from fundraising, the rest from investments," she wrote.

Wypijewski also criticized the Center's work on hate groups. "No one has been more assiduous in inflating the profile of [hate] groups than the center's millionaire huckster, Morris Dees, who in 1999 began a begging letter, 'Dear Friend, The danger presented by the Klan is greater now than at any time in the past ten years,'" she wrote. Of course, the Ku Klux Klan is a genuine hate group. It had about four million members 80 years ago when it held sway over several state legislatures. Today, however, it has withered away to maybe 3,000 members. The SPLC also exaggerates the threat posed by militia groups. Wypijewski interviewed a security guard outside SPLC headquarters who "stood watch for the militia nuts Dees would have his

## Racism In *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*?

The SPLC has strange ideas about race. In 2004, its Tolerance.org website published an article that helped to illustrate its views. The article titled "A 'Return' of the White Patriarchy?" by writer Andrea Lewis savaged the immensely popular film, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, which is based on the novel by J.R.R. Tolkien. An SPLC editor's note attached to the article asserts that the film "is little more than a glorified vision of white patriarchy."

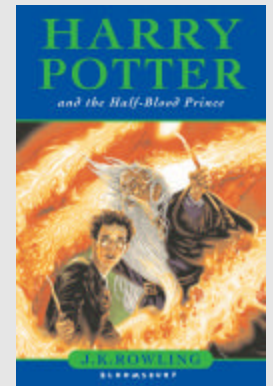


Lewis writes: "Almost all of the heroes of the series are manly men who are whiter than white. They are frequently framed in halos of blinding bright light and exude a heavenly aura of all that is Eurocentric and good. Who but these courageous Anglo-Saxon souls can save Middle Earth from the dark and evil forces of the world?"

By contrast, Lewis praises *The Matrix* trilogy because it gives non-whites more time in the big screen spotlight, thus conforming to her politically correct cinematic tastes:

"Neo, the trilogy's central figure, is played by mixed-race actor Keanu Reeves. His savior and mentor is Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne), a powerful leader who also happens to be a black man. The wisest figure in 'The Matrix' is the Oracle, a warm and witty African American woman. The films also are infused with a strong sense of Asian style and culture, exemplified by the character Seraph (Collin Chou), the Oracle's protector, who is both a martial arts expert and Buddhist meditation practitioner... Most of the really bad guys in 'The Matrix' are Euro, including the very snobby Merovingian (Lambert Wilson) with his French accent; the dread-locked, very British albino twins (Neil and Adrian Rayment); and the Oracle's evil counterpart, the Architect (Helmut Bakaitis), a rather stuffy and pompous white guy with white beard and white suit who reeks of imperialism." [Parentheses in original.]

At the end of the article, Lewis makes it clear that she believes that art should be a slave to politics: "To my African American female eyes, the biggest difference between 'The Lord of the Rings' and 'The Matrix' isn't swords vs. automatic weapons, or low-tech vs. high-tech. It's the patriarchy of the past versus the Rainbow Coalition of the future."



Who knew that the hobbits and elves in a movie that won 11 Academy Awards in 2004 were in reality little Hitlers in disguise?

Then there is the 2005 article, "Harry Potter: A 'Half-Blood Prince' Revealed," by Colleen O'Brien. The mega-bestseller by J.K. Rowling embraces a racist worldview, according to O'Brien:

"In J.K. Rowling's world, half-blood means 'half magic.' But the term — reflecting a dichotomy between magic/powerful and mundane/helpless — implies a hierarchy. This 'magic' hierarchy directly resembles racial hierarchies. Racially speaking, a 'half-blood' could be a person with parents of differing races, such as one Asian parent and one white parent; in this case, not being 'pure-blood' can diminish certain rights and inclusion in the community. Even in the world of magic, the term 'half-blood' implies that one half does not mingle with the other. Half-bloods come from two different worlds, and the idea of these bifurcated worlds conjures images of racial segregation. These inflections of the language of race still make me cringe. Why does the magic metaphor emerge from a language of racial difference? And what do the millions of readers do with these metaphors?"

Again, who knew the endearing little magicians of Hogwarts were actually agents of Nazi-like racial pseudoscience?

-Matthew Vadum

donors believe are lurking around every corner."

The SPLC seems to have steered clear of scandal in recent years, but it received plenty of bad press in the mid-1990s. In 1994 the Montgomery Advertiser published a series of investigative articles alleging improprieties, including financial mismanagement and

institutionalized racism. Black former employees of the Center complained that white supervisors ran it "like a plantation." The series was a nominated finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in 1995, but Dees orchestrated a lobbying campaign to stop publication and prevent it from being considered by the Pulitzer board.

Jim Tharpe, then managing editor of the

Advertiser, described his SPLC-related adventures at a Nieman Foundation for Journalism panel discussion held at Harvard University in May 1999. According to Tharpe, SPLC deployed what is typically considered a corporate public relations weapon to prevent the investigation. It threatened what has come in recent years to be known as a strategic lawsuit against public participation, or SLAPP action. Such suits are calculated to intimidate and silence critics by burdening them with the cost of a legal defense unless they withdraw their criticism.

"These guys threatened us with a lawsuit from the moment we asked to look at their financial records," Tharpe said, according to

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**[www.capitalresearch.org/blog](http://www.capitalresearch.org/blog)**

a transcript of the talk provided on the Nieman Foundation's website.

Reporters found the center had accumulated a huge surplus. "It was 50-something million at that time; it's now approaching 100 million, but they've never spent more than 31% of the money they were bringing in on programs, and sometimes they spent as little as 18%. Most nonprofits spend about 75% on programs," Tharpe said. SPLC donors had no idea how financially secure the Center was, he said. "The charity watchdog groups, the few that are in existence, had consistently criticized the center, even though nobody had reported that." (The Center has earned one of the lowest ratings offered by the American Institute of Philanthropy, in part because it hoards money.)

Reporters also uncovered that what is arguably the nation's wealthiest civil rights group—which argues that racism pervades all of American society—had no blacks in top management positions. "Twelve out of the 13 black current and former employees we contacted cited racism at the Center, which was a shocker to me. As of 1995, the Center had hired only two black attorneys in its entire history," Tharpe said.

Tharpe's team also uncovered what he called "questionable fundraising tactics." The SPLC handled the case of Michael Donald, a young black man who was brutally murdered in Mobile by Klansmen in 1981. After the perpetrators were convicted, the Center filed suit against the KKK organization to which they belonged and secured a \$7 million judgment, Tharpe explained.

"The problem was the people who killed this kid didn't have any money. What they really got out of it was a \$51,000 building that went to the mother of Michael Donald. What the Center got and what we reported was they raised \$9 million in two years using the Donald case, including a mailing with the body of Michael Donald as part of it. The top center officials, I think the top three, got \$350,000 in salaries during that time, and Morris got a movie out of it, a TV movie of the week."

### Senator George Allen and "Macaca"

In August of this year, Virginia Republican Senator George Allen came under fire for singling out S.R. Sidarth, a volunteer for Allen's Democratic opponent, Jim Webb, at a campaign stop in rural Virginia. Allen pointed out Sidarth, a so-called opposition tracker who was taking video footage of the senator's

speech, and said:

This fellow here over here with the yellow shirt, Macaca, or whatever his name is. He's with my opponent. He's following us around everywhere. And it's just great. We're going to places all over Virginia, and he's having it on film and it's great to have you here and you show it to your opponent because he's never been there and probably will never come... Let's give a welcome to Macaca, here. Welcome to America and the real world of Virginia.

As the video found its way onto the popular video hosting site youtube.com and Americans were told again and again and again in the news media for weeks and weeks and weeks after the fateful remark, the word "macaca" refers to a genus of monkey and is sometimes used as an ethnic slur in some cultures. After several days of saturation media coverage attacking Allen as insensitive and racist, the senator apologized for using the heretofore obscure racial epithet, declaring he had no idea of its offensive meaning.

But Mark Potok, director of the SPLC's so-called intelligence project, said he did not believe Allen. "On the face of it, it's virtually impossible to believe that suddenly he made up a nickname or somehow this popped into his head," Potok said on the August 22 "Democracy Now!" radio program. "I think we're seeing the real George Allen. I think that this is not some freak moment. It's not a psychotic break. This is what the man really is." A few days earlier, Potok was quoted in the Washington Post making a similarly strong statement: "To me, it looks like yet another case of a politician pandering to the worst instincts in an all-white crowd."

Yet liberal Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, a Democrat who filibustered the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and who used to be a paid recruiter for the Ku Klux Klan, got a free pass from the SPLC in a June 21, 2005 National Post article about Byrd's memoir, *Robert C. Byrd: Child of the Appalachian Coalfields*. The article deals with how racism used to influence the U.S. political process, especially in the South and reprints a letter Byrd wrote in 1945 opposing efforts to racially integrate the U.S. armed services. "Rather I should die a thousand times, and see Old Glory trampled in the dirt never to rise again, than to see this beloved land of ours degraded by race mongrels," Byrd wrote. But SPLC spokeswoman Heidi Breirich dismissed

the report as ancient history. "It's not just Robert Byrd who was touched by this, but many, many people," the article quoted her saying. "The fact of the matter is, for many years, the Klan wasn't very far off the mainstream of American politics," Breirich said. Or could it be that targeting a liberal politician beloved by SPLC's donor base doesn't make a lot of sense?

### What is a hate group?

The SPLC frequently smears groups it disagrees with as "racist."

Although the SPLC's list of hate groups includes groups that are based on racial hatred such as the Ku Klux Klan and the black separatist groups New Black Panther Party and Nation of Islam, which is headed by anti-Semite Louis Farrakhan, it lists other groups whose claim to the dishonor is more dubious. SPLC includes on its list the Traditional Values Coalition, a group of social conservatives who oppose homosexuality on religious grounds.

The SPLC also accuses the American Enterprise Institute, the influential conservative think tank, of links to racism, in part because it has employed a well-known conservative intellectual, writer Dinesh D'Souza, as its John M. Olin Fellow. AEI is part of "an array of right-wing foundations and think tanks [that] support efforts to make bigoted and discredited ideas respectable," noted the summer 2003 issue of *Intelligence Report*, a Center magazine. D'Souza is a scholar "whose views are seen by many as bigoted or even racist," the article stated. But why attack D'Souza, a dark-skinned immigrant to the U.S. from India? Could it be because the acclaimed author has made powerful attacks on the kind of racial alarmism that is the SPLC's bread and butter?

In *The End of Racism* (1995), D'Souza argued that "virtually all contemporary liberal assumptions about the origin of racism, its historical significance, its contemporary effects, and what to do about it are wrong." In the book, D'Souza also pilloried opportunistic race-baiters. "It is the civil rights industry which now has a vested interest in the persistence of the ghetto, because the miseries of poor blacks are the best advertisement for continuing programs of racial preference and set-asides," D'Souza wrote.

D'Souza, a former policy advisor in the Reagan administration, also argued in *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex*

## Corrupting the Youth?

According to the SPLC, you may already be a racist deep down, without even knowing it.

SPLC's special website [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org) offers helpful guides that teachers can use to indoctrinate children in politically-correct multiculturalism. Tolerance.org also advises website visitors to take Harvard's "Implicit Association" test to uncover their own deep-seated racist tendencies: "Studies show people can be consciously committed to egalitarianism, and deliberately work to behave without prejudice, yet still possess hidden negative prejudices or stereotypes. So even though we believe we see and treat people as equals, hidden biases may still influence our perceptions and actions."

Tolerance.org re-posted an article by Elizabeth Bauchner in which she recounted how she explained the highly contentious sociological concept of "white privilege" to her son: "I went on to explain in age-appropriate terms that our country was actually founded by white colonists who enslaved Africans and either killed Native Americans or moved them onto reservations. White people have been opening doors of opportunity for other whites ever since, I told him."

Lesson outlines intended for teachers in Tolerance.org's "The Power of Words" curriculum, have a surreal—sometimes absurdist—quality to them, as if a vulgar standup comedian or an avant-garde performance artist were egging an audience on, testing how far he can go before getting yanked off the stage with a cane. The lesson plans were co-written by Susan M. Shaw, a women's studies professor at Oregon State University, and Janet Lockhart, who with Shaw co-wrote "Writing for Change: Raising Awareness of Difference, Power, and Discrimination," which is also posted at Tolerance.org.

Lesson 1 tackles "male-bashing and gender." The stated "teaching goal" of Lesson 1 is "Students will achieve an understanding that many disparagements used to refer to males are based on comparing them with stereotypically female traits, such as weakness." The lesson plan examines a series of swear words more suitable for a locker room than a classroom. Lesson 3, "Anti-Semitism and Hate Speech," encourages teachers to discuss various anti-Semitic epithets. The outline also encourages teachers to use a 1940 Nazi propaganda film, *The Eternal Jew*, to help drive the lesson home. The film's narrator likens Jews to vermin: "Wherever rats appear they bring ruin, by destroying mankind's goods and foodstuffs." In Lesson 4, "Reclaiming Pejorative Words," the stated teaching goal is: "Students will develop an understanding of the dynamics of social power differences as they relate to the evolution of racial, gender, and sexual orientation-based epithets (pejorative language). Students will develop an awareness of the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexual orientation bias."

Lesson 6, "Intention and Perception," examines the words "FemiNazi" and "homophobia." The lesson plan also includes the kind of spirited defense of political correctness one might expect to hear from a Stanley Fish or a Ward Churchill: "PC/politically correct/political correctness: A term that became popular on American university campuses around 1990, used for a set of ideas, concerns, principles and directives that stresses social nonoppressiveness, inclusiveness and sensitivity to diverse groups of people. . . . The terms political correctness and politically correct have been surrounded by a great deal of critical rhetoric and attempts to explain, mock and discredit them." Lesson 7 looks at "ethnocentrism and xenophobia." Students examine a list of ethnic slurs. Lesson 9, titled "Normative Sexuality," examines "some of the effects of compulsory heterosexuality of various aspects of society."

But what exactly is "compulsory" heterosexuality? And should teachers be teaching their students swear words?

A Tolerance.org "Hate In The News" bulletin from a week before Halloween 2002 asks young readers to think carefully about the political ramifications of trick-or-treat costumes. Two excerpts follow:

### "WEARING A FUNNY COSTUME?"

Ask yourself: Is the humor based on 'making fun' of real people, real human traits or cultures?

Though intended to be funny, last season's 'Mental Patient' costume by Disguise was considered demeaning, dehumanizing, and humiliating to individuals struggling with a mental illness and their families. Complete with a 'Hannibal' type mask and a straightjacket [sic], the costume reinforced stereotypes and fears about persons with mental illness."

### "WEARING A 'BEAUTIFUL' COSTUME?"

Ask yourself: If the costume is meant to be beautiful, are these characteristics drawn from commercial references, such as movie characters?

Too often, beautiful at Halloween means white, blonde, princess masks. What statement does your Halloween costume make about what constitutes beauty – and about who is beautiful and who isn't?"

The latter entry raises the obvious question: Can't white, blonde people be beautiful too? Should white, blonde people be embarrassed about being white and blonde? Should anyone be embarrassed about their physical attributes?

-Matthew Vadum

on Campus (1991) that the intolerant, politically correct culture of American universities stifles free thought because it is obsessed with race, class, and gender.

And then there are all those Nazis. According to a recent edition of Intelligence Report, admirers of the Third Reich have infiltrated the U.S. armed services:

"Neo-Nazis 'stretch across all branches of service, they are linking up across the

branches once they're inside, and they are hard-core,' Department of Defense gang detective Scott Barfield told the Intelligence Report. 'We've got Aryan Nations graffiti in Baghdad,' he added. 'That's a problem.'"

Accompanying the article, "A Few Bad Men," by David Holthouse, is a painting of a row of helmeted U.S. soldiers in uniform with their arms raised in a Nazi salute. Since America is deeply racist, according to the SPLC, it only follows that its military must be racist as well.

## Immigration

A September smear of a politician who takes a hard line on immigration illustrates the SPLC's standard operating procedure for dealing with those hostile to its open-borders agenda.

After Representative Tom Tancredo of Colorado, a Republican who favors tougher immigration policies, addressed a Columbia, South Carolina, event that its organizer noted was open to all, the SPLC falsely characterized the

event as being sponsored by the League of the South. The Center considers the obscure group to be a “neo-Confederate,” “white nationalist,” hate group.

Following Tancredo’s speech, a self-serving report titled “Congressman addresses hate group,” appeared on the SPLC’s website, creating the impression that the event was an official League of the South event. But a Denver Post report from September 13 quoted Garland McCoy, head of an activist group called Americans Have Had Enough, saying his group hosted the event, which he said anyone was free to attend.

The SPLC report also marveled at how Tancredo could give a speech “from behind a podium draped in a Confederate battle flag,” and with a portrait of Robert E. Lee in plain sight. However, Tancredo delivered his speech at the South Carolina State Museum, which has a permanent Confederate Army exhibit. Is it surprising that Confederate paraphernalia was present?

The Center has also gone after the Minuteman Project, which seeks to monitor illegal border crossings into the U.S. from Mexico. The Minuteman group has a broad

base of support among conservatives and throughout the nation as a whole, but was labeled as racist last year by the SPLC’s Intelligence Project. It may take some intellectual toughness to insist that the nation has the right to decide who may or may not cross its borders, but surely it’s not hate.

But Morris Dees doesn’t see it that way. He sees all opposition to immigration as a symptom of hate. When in 2004 a slate of anti-immigration candidates sought election to the Sierra Club, a prominent environmentalist group, Dees offered himself as an alternative candidate, urging his fellow Club members to “vote against the greening of hate.” The Club had long been on record as favoring a stable U.S. population in order to reduce alleged strains on the environment. According to Dees’s twisted reasoning, doesn’t this mean the Club was already a bastion of hate?

But now even liberal media mogul Ted Turner sees illegal immigration as a problem that needs to be dealt with somehow. “Our army can’t protect us from invasion,” Turner told a National Press Club audience on October 9. “We’re being invaded by a million people every year. They’re coming in barefooted and they’re walking across the Rio Grande or coming off boats, however they can get here, and they’re looking for a job.” Will the SPLC demonize Turner too?

## Conclusion

A disinterested observer might conclude that Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center are irrelevant activists left over from the 1960s, hangers-on to memories of past civil rights campaigns. They trudge on, enamored of their own propaganda.

Richard Samp, chief counsel for the Washington Legal Foundation, told *Organization Trends* that he finds it difficult to take anything the SPLC does nowadays seriously. “There are so many of these [liberal groups] that they have to speak in particularly shrill tones in order to distinguish themselves from the many other groups out there,” Samp said. “I certainly disagree with their saying America is racist. I don’t think they really believe that,” he said.

SPLC’s hyping of racism in America is “simply fundraising puffery,” Samp said.

Yet it may be too easy to dismiss SPLC. It has mastered the art of inflaming racial passions, and in doing so it undermines Americans’ confidence in the nation’s racial progress. SPLC’s activism may be too profitable an enterprise for it to give up, but it can have a corrosive effect on our politics. Jim Sleeper, author of *Liberal Racism*, wrote that “there is a race industry that has a moral and financial stake in ginning up these racial bogeymen.” Sleeper told columnist Deroy Murdock that the race industry makes “a real effort to play up the bad news and play down the good.... The ground is shifting under our feet, and a lot of these people don’t want to let go.”

*Matthew Vadum is Editor of Organization Trends.*

**OT**

## Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

I read your article entitled “Smart Growth and Suburbia.” (October 2006, by James Dellinger and Ryan Balis)

You along with many Republicans and conservatives have come down on the wrong side of this issue. Annexing farm after farm around our towns and cities and paving them over with strip malls and housing developments is not in the best interest of any American. You would do well to look at this one again.

Freedom of choice is a value all Republicans and conservatives share, probably above all others. But we also share a desire for a healthy, safe, livable environment. I think we err by coming down on the side of the freedom of choice, even if it means destroying the natural environments of our communities.

I think we need to be a little more imaginative. Towns and counties can provide appropriate compensation to farmers and landowners, in terms of tax breaks for example. That assumed, smart growth can be a useful tool in protecting our countryside from the sprawl that has ruined the natural environment surrounding so many of our towns and counties.

And, from a political point of view, I think it’s increasingly likely that there are as many “healthy environment” votes out there as there are votes for “strip malls and mushroom housing developments.” I think we risk shooting ourselves in the foot on this issue.

**Jack Fischer**  
Sherwood, Maryland

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Thank you for your support.  
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Capital Research Center’s  
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November 21, 3:05 p.m.  
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at <http://www.righttalk.com>  
(replays follow at 5 minutes past the  
hour for the following 23 hours)

# BrieflyNoted

The **Sierra Club** applauded the state of California's decision in September to sue six of the planet's biggest automobile manufacturers over global warming, contending that the greenhouses gases emitted by their products have caused significant environmental damage, Reuters reported. "(California) just passed a new law to cut global warming emissions by 25% and that's a good start and this lawsuit is a good next step," said **Dan Becker**, head of the group's global warming program. Automakers have referred to the litigation, launched by state Attorney General **Bill Lockyer**, as a "nuisance suit." "Automakers are already building cleaner, more fuel-efficient vehicles, and every single auto sold in California is approved by the state of California before it goes to the dealer's lot," the **Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers** said in a statement.

Meanwhile, British tycoon **Richard Branson** announced plans to spend \$3 billion to fight global warming over the next 10 years. The founder of **Virgin Airlines** appeared with **Bill Clinton** at the "Clinton Global Initiative," a project of **William J. Clinton Foundation**. Branson said he will use the profits from his transportation companies to develop alternative energy sources.

**Yale University** announced ambitious plans to indoctrinate Fortune 100 corporate board members with the climate change catechism. "Climate change is no longer the purview of scientists only," said **Gus Speth**, dean of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. Speth founded the **Natural Resources Defense Council**. "Corporate directors are going to need a strategic and analytical underpinning to navigate the transformations that climate change will require in their businesses in the coming years," said Speth. Yale will work with **Ceres**, a nonprofit that links institutional investors to environmental groups.

The **IRS** has warned **All Saints Episcopal Church** in Pasadena, California that it risks losing its tax-exempt status over an anti-war sermon preached by its former rector on October 31, 2004 shortly before the presidential election. An IRS spokesman said the agency recognizes "the constitutional rights of freedom of speech and religion, but there is no constitutional right to be exempt from federal taxation." The church's attorney said the IRS offered a settlement: "They said if there was a confession of wrongdoing, they would not proceed to the exam stage. They would be willing not to revoke tax-exempt status if the church admitted intervening in an election." The church declined the offer.

The world's least transparent nonprofit, the **United Nations**, will not release a financial disclosure form filed by Secretary General **Kofi Annan** under a disclosure policy he established after reports that his son and other UN officials were involved in the oil-for-food scandal. The \$64 billion UN program was supposed to let Saddam Hussein's Iraq sell limited amounts of oil in exchange for food aid. Observes **Nile Gardiner**, director of the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at the **Heritage Foundation**: "The culture of secrecy remains intact in the upper echelon of the United Nations."

More than 30 longstanding supporters of the **American Civil Liberties Union** are demanding the removal of the organization's leaders, the New York Times reported September 26. **Ira Glasser**, executive director of the ACLU from 1978 to 2001, is among the dissidents: "We're a protest group, trying to get the board to exercise its fiduciary and governing responsibility in a way that it has not." At a protest website, [www.savetheaclu.org](http://www.savetheaclu.org), Glasser accused current executive director **Anthony Romero** and other ACLU officials of various improprieties, including mismanagement and suppressing free speech within the group in order to boost donations.