

# Trump Justice Department intervenes to defend fascists and neo-Nazis

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In another step towards the establishment of police-state rule under President Donald Trump, the Department of Justice and the FBI announced Tuesday they had obtained a grand jury indictment of the Southern Poverty Law Center on 11 counts of financial fraud, wire fraud and conspiracy.

The charges are entirely bogus and brought in bad faith, with Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche and FBI Director Kash Patel knowing that there is no case to answer, and that any court not run by Trump stooges would dismiss it as preposterous.

The organization is charged with deceiving its donors by using contributions to pay informants who were members of neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups. The SPLC is alleged to have committed “fraud” by setting up dummy accounts in financial institutions to make the payments, since a Ku Klux Klan member could hardly cash a check from a well-known civil rights organization.

The amount spent on this program was relatively small, about \$3 million over a 10-year period (2014–2023) for an organization with an annual budget regularly topping \$100 million. Eight paid informants are named in the indictment, exposing them all to retaliation by the violent fascists with whom they rubbed shoulders.

Contrary to the claim that these payments benefited the fascist groups—made by Blanche and Patel at their press conference—the United Klans, the Aryan Nations and several other groups in which the SPLC had informants are now largely moribund. In other words, the information gathered contributed to the demise of the organizations, rather than promoting them.

Acting Attorney General Blanche declared that the SPLC was “manufacturing the extremism it purports to oppose by paying sources to stoke racial hatred,” as though racism was the product of undercover operations by anti-racists, rather than produced by the reactionary social conditions that exist under the capitalist system, and fomented deliberately by the ruling elite to split the working class.

Blanche himself works for the greatest promoter of racial hatred and other forms of fascist bigotry, particularly

xenophobia. President Trump began his public political career with a diatribe against Mexican immigrants as rapists and murderers, ordered the restoration of Confederate names for US military bases, and pardoned the fascist thugs who stormed the US Capitol building on January 6, 2021.

The SPLC was founded in 1971 as a legal resource for victims of KKK violence, and won several notable legal victories, including a judgment in 1989 that bankrupted the United Klans of America and forced the group to turn over its headquarters building to the mother of a young black man murdered by its members.

The group has become a target of the Trump administration because it has maintained a focus on exposing far-right hate groups, even as the Republican Party has been transformed into a fascist operation under the Make America Great Again label. In particular, the SPLC identified Turning Point USA as “a case study of the hard right” because of its promotion of bigotry against the LGBTQ population. It applied similar labels to the Family Research Council and Moms for Liberty, also for anti-gay bias, and the Center for Immigration Studies, identified as a hate group for citing white supremacist and antisemitic arguments against immigrants, derived from the neo-Nazi “Great Replacement Theory.”

After the assassination of Turning Point leader Charlie Kirk last September, FBI Director Patel cut all ties to the SPLC, which had regularly supplied information on white supremacist groups to the federal government. Centi-billionaire Elon Musk tweeted that the group was “guilty of incitement to murder Charlie Kirk,” backing a smear campaign against the group. Now Patel has taken a further step, obtaining an indictment, not just of the individuals who set up the dummy accounts, but of the SPLC as a whole, subjecting all its assets to potential confiscation as the proceeds of crime.

The indictment of the SPLC has produced a barrage of statements of opposition from civil rights and civil liberties groups. To cite only a few:

- American Civil Liberties Union Executive Director

Anthony D. Romero condemned the action as “yet another example of the Trump administration’s extreme attempts to silence its critics.” He added, “This administration’s continued weaponization of the Justice Department to target organizations speaking out against its agenda is anti-American behavior harkening back to the McCarthy era.”

- Maya Wiley, president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, called the indictment “a blatantly obvious attack on civil rights and civil liberties to whitewash the foot soldiers of the great replacement theory and other extremists.”

- Marc Morial, president and chief executive of the National Urban League, said the indictment’s purpose was intimidation: “It is about silencing organizations that have spent decades confronting hate, protecting vulnerable communities and advancing justice under the law.”

- Legal Defense Fund (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson stated, “LDF condemns in the strongest possible terms any effort to deploy government resources to target civil rights organizations committed to exposing white supremacy instead of trying to combat it.”

The Washington-Baltimore News Guild, which represents unionized workers at the SPLC, issued a statement calling the federal indictment “rooted in politics rather than the law,” and said its members’ work was “a continuation of the civil rights movement, not a betrayal of it.”

There has been relatively little response from the Democratic Party to this flagrant attack on democratic and civil rights. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer raised the issue in passing during a floor speech Wednesday, then posted a one-paragraph social media post that did not actually identify the SPLC as the target of “a vindictive campaign against the organizations that safeguard our democracy.”

Congressional Republicans, by contrast, have raised hosannas, with Texas Republican Representative Chip Roy telling the ultra-right *Daily Signal* that the indictments “are an enormously important step forward,” which would lead to further prosecutions “beyond SPLC.”

Roy declared, “We know that there are significant efforts underway across agencies to continue to root out not just SPLC but the vast array of Marxists and leftists that are actively engaging in this activity to undermine our society. I think it’s important that the indictments are indicative of what we know of the SPLC, but we also know that it’s a much bigger network and the administration does, too.”

Acting Attorney General Blanche is spearheading the campaign against all potential opposition to the Trump administration for his own benefit—he wants Trump to name him to the top job permanently—by catering to the political requirements of the would-be dictator and former client. As

one commentator pointed out, Blanche has not been able to find evidence to bring charges against a single person in the mushrooming scandal over the multi-millionaire sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein. Instead, he brings charges against a civil rights group for fighting white supremacists and neo-Nazis.

Another commentator pointed out that President Ulysses S. Grant founded the Department of Justice in 1870 “to help suppress the Ku Klux Klan in the Southern states and enforce federal civil-rights protections for formerly enslaved Americans. On Tuesday, Justice Department officials announced what may be the first Klan-friendly prosecution in the department’s history.”

That historical reference underscores the colossal dangers now facing the working class, as the Trump administration seeks to turn back the clock, not only on the gains won by working people through bitter struggle in the 20th century, but even further back.

The Democratic Party is not a force for opposing the promotion of fascism from the highest levels of the state. The Democrats refused to mobilize any serious opposition to the January 6 coup at the time, and will not mobilize one now against the authoritarian movement consolidating state power—because doing so would require an appeal to the only social force capable of defeating fascism: the working class.

The working class must build a mass independent political movement to defend democratic rights, oppose imperialist war, and fight for the socialist transformation of society.



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