

THE FIRE EATER

VOLUME III, 2009

Dead Men Tell No Tales But Do They Cash Stimulus Checks?

by Al Benson, Jr.

18 May 2009

In this era of ever increasing socialist bureaucracy it seems that the federal government in Washington wants to usurp more and more functions of our daily lives unto itself. Yet more and more, it proves itself unqualified to handle most of them. Could it possibly be that the federal government really doesn't care whether it handles these various unconstitutional functions well or not as long as it controls them? After all, if the feds control everything then they can show us proletarian masses where the power is really at, can't they?

Only recently I read an article from <http://www.myfoxny.com> dealing with those stimulus checks everyone has been checking their mailboxes for every day now (the same stimulus checks they are going to tax us on next year). The article stated: "This week, thousands of people are getting stimulus checks in the mail. The problem is that a lot of them are dead." As I read the brief article, my first thought was "I wonder if those stimulus checks to the dead folks are part of the political payoff to those deceased citizens of Chicago, Illinois, and Gary, Indiana, who, faithfully every election year rise from their graves and vote and vote and vote" I have often wondered how many Chicago politicians who are now in office would have made it without the votes of the deceased.



The Fox News article mentioned a lady in Valley Stream, New York, who was expecting her \$250 stimulus check. When the check finally arrived and her son opened it they found that the hoped-for check was made out to her father, who had passed away in Italy 34

years ago! He had been a US citizen when he returned to Italy back in 1933, but had only returned to the US for a visit back in 1969. It turns out that this gentleman was never even part of the social security system! Of course, maybe the present administration, looking at his Italian name, thought he was an illegal immigrant and so sought to buy his vote with a check. Who knows? Whatever their rationale is, his stimulus check is probably not going to help his daughter out very much, especially since he's no longer alive to endorse it.

The Social Security Administration has, reportedly, sent out 52 million checks so far, but admits that some of those checks mistakenly went to dead folks because the agency didn't have any record of their deaths. That may be, but how do they happen to send out checks to dead people that were never on social security? They saw fit not to address that issue. It seems there have been between 8,000 and 10,000 checks sent out to people that are no longer among the living. Even if you figure it on the low end that's about \$2 million that went to corpses somewhere. Wonder who will cash them.

Remember, this is the same federal government of which FEMA is a part. Most of us here in Louisiana can remember how well FEMA handled the Hurricane Katrina affair. While New Orleans was flooding, the head honcho at FEMA was being interviewed on television where he was showing off the latest addition to his wardrobe. Though he didn't fiddle while Rome burned, he did pose while New Orleans flooded.

This is the same federal government whose response to the international terrorist problem is to seek to disarm honest Americans because, as everyone on the left knows, all Americans are right-wing extremists and potential terrorists and so the Second Amendment should be annulled so they can't buy anymore automatic weapons to ship to the drug dealers in

Mexico--who, if you believe the leftist drones in Washington, get all their weapons at US gun shows!

Another fine example of the federal government operating at peak efficiency!

And just think, these are the people that want to be in charge of our health care system! Heaven forbid! Just goes to show you how socialist redistribution of the wealth really works. Why even those who couldn't take it with them when they passed from this life will now get stimulus checks. And your great-grandchildren and their grandchildren will get to pay for all this. Is socialism a great system or what?

For His Wife in Winter

by MacDonald King Aston

18 May 2009 (17 February 2007)

Though I wander astray from you,
Yet never far. For the Light
Behind all things speaks the true
Tongue of you and me, never the spite

Of the hasty, nor the mere self
Consumed by its brief labor in time,
And yet not: laying up the dingy pelf
Of itself. There where up we climb

The final stairs to that Light, and to
The knowledge of it, stands a door.
It opens only for me and only for you,
And when it shuts, the Light shines more.

Fire Eater Links

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Secession Is in Our Future (Clifford F. Thies, Mises)

Alabama

by *MacDonald King Aston*

18 May 2009



The Fire Eater Quotation

A simple exercise in logic is then all that is required to answer the question of secession. If secession be not a power delegated by the Constitution (which it was not), and if secession be not prohibited to the states united (which it was not), then secession is a power “reserved to the States respectively, or to the people” (which it is). Jefferson Davis, in his lengthy *Rise and Fall*, went to great lengths to articulate the historical antecedents to the right of secession by the people of the sovereign states, but the entire question is answered by the logic given above, not by ideology, not by any “theory,” and certainly not by Lincoln’s Puritan–Yankee ideology of conformity enforced by violence.

MacDonald King Aston, (“The Spirit of Pity,” Yankee Babylon)

A Confederate Teenager in Yankee New England

(It Just Wasn't Done!)

by Al Benson Jr.

4 June 2009

As a youngster, from about age ten onward, I guess I would have to call myself a Confederate sympathizer. I knew virtually nothing about the War of Northern Aggression at that tender age, but I occasionally saw a movie with “Civil War” battles depicted in it. I can remember rooting for those ragged guys in the tattered gray uniforms and hoping they’d win out over all those guys in those fancy blue uniforms. I suppose today that would make me guilty of “thoughtcrime.” As a youngster I lived in Southern New England, the haven of Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Abolitionists, and so rooting for those “rebels” was something that just wasn’t done, at least not in my neck of the woods. But, then, even at age ten, I guess I was a bit of a non-conformist.



When I was ten years old I bought my first (of many) pair of cowboy boots. I had worked doing odd jobs and running errands for almost a year to save up the money for them—a dime here, a quarter there, until I had almost enough, and

my Dad, though not a non-conformist, paid the little bit I was short. You just didn’t wear cowboy boots in Southern New England in the late 1940s and early 50s—it just wasn’t done. Most people didn’t even know what they were. Guess they just didn’t watch enough Western movies.

Southern New England being what it was and I being who I was, things gradually slid from bad to worse for me. I was one of those people who just couldn’t seem to follow all the Southern New England do’s and don’ts, which dealt with how folks are supposed to live in Southern New England, often to the consternation of my own family. I was “different” and in that part of the world at that point in time “different” was something that just wasn’t done!

But, when I reached the ripe old age of fifteen, I really slipped the traces, and from then on, I didn’t bother looking back. I remember that, one warm summer evening my Mom and I went to the Shrine Circus, which was something the Shriners put on every year to raise money for their charitable projects. It was somewhat like a typical circus, and during a break between the acts there was a carnival midway where you could go and spend your extra money if you had any. As Mom and I were walking down the midway we came to a vendor who was selling Yankee and Confederate kepis. (There’s a word for you kiddies to look up in the dictionary).

Although I looked, I was going to just walk on by when my mother stopped and said “Would you like a hat?” I don’t think she ever fully realized what she started with that question. I walked back and said, “Yes,” I’d take one, and she then asked “Which one do you want?” Knowing that either would be controversial in our neighborhood (anything was except baseball caps), I hesitated—and it was then that I heard what I have always described as a “non-audible voice” which in my mind, though I could not physically hear it, seemed like it was about three and a half feet in back of my left shoulder, and it very clearly communicated to me that I should “Take the gray one.” So I did. And I started wearing it the next day.

Remember, this was back when much of the phony “civil rights” stuff was just starting up and New England, like the rest of the country, was being fed all of “Mississippi burning” propaganda about how bad life was all over the South and how mean and nasty all those racist Southerners were. Interestingly enough, the racist Northerners were never mentioned, and growing up where I did, I definitely knew there were quite a few. But for the prostitute press, racism did not exist north of Mason-Dixon. You didn’t discuss its having any presence in the North. It just wasn’t done!

However, wearing that “rebel” hat did not win me many friends, which helped, I guess, to make me even more of a rebel than I already was. It wasn’t that I consciously tried to aggravate folks—I just wanted to do my own thing and be left alone. That wasn’t altogether possible in the Southern New England of that day. Seeing that I didn’t really know a lot about the War and all the reasons for it at that point, it was a bit hard to defend my position. All I knew was that it wasn’t about slavery, but since no one else there that I ran across seemed to grasp that, it wasn’t much help to me. In his own good time the Lord gave me the information I

needed to deal with the subject, but He didn't do it right then.

But that "rebel hat" was the beginning—no, maybe the cowboy boots were the beginning. I'm not sure which. Either way I learned that, for whatever reason, I just did not have a New England mindset. I think I would have been more at home in rural Mississippi than I was in Massachusetts, both then and later.

As for the event I've just described and the reasons for it, I have reflected many times. I've mentioned this event to a few of my Southern friends. They seem to have no problem accepting and understanding it. Some of them have had similar experiences of their own. I mentioned it to one of my Northern friends several years ago and he said "You had a conversion experience." I had never thought of it in quite those terms. A decade later I did have a "conversion experience" which brought me to faith in Jesus Christ. To me that was a conversion experience, not the other, and yet the other was not insignificant because it pointed me in a direction I might not otherwise have taken consciously. So I believe that the Lord used it in my life also.

Years later, I got another "rebel hat," along with most of the rest of the gray uniform, and have worn them in several Southern heritage parades over the years, and to conferences and other events. I have never been ashamed of that gray uniform or of the "rebel hat," and those who prattle about the War being all about slavery and racism are either ignorant of the real reasons for the War or they hope you are. Either way, they can keep their leftist propaganda and I'll keep my "rebel" uniform. My wife, son, and I now live in the deep South, and we've been more content here than anyplace "up North" we ever lived. So I reckon, God willing, we're fixin' to stay.

The Gitfiddle

(From "Buffalo Bob & The Clown Prince of Darkness")

MacDonald King Aston

4 June 2009

The simple story was Zach picking up a cheap classical guitar and playing three of his songs for them. The real story was Bob and Rick Richardson crouching on the floor,

Nick leaning against the wall, and Bernie cross-legged on the small bed, and Zach's hands waltzing over the strings. Nothing complex, nothing simple. Lots of minor chords, hammeroffs, and a free-bleeding soul for the world to see, if it chose. Words that burned.

O do you remember?

When you and I were young,

And flowers hung in windows

And songs were always sung

I can hear a voice calling

An old man's life from here.

But you can't wipe away the memory

Like you wipe away a tear.

The arpeggiated E-minor singing a sadness too old for Zach's twenty years. Somewhere, behind the music, Bob saw a picture of himself, five years old, in Maryland, staring out of a basement window. *But you can't brush away a memory like you wipe away a tear.*

Bob looked back at Rick. Rick's eyes were focused on Zach's hands. Phwack-diddle-phwack-phwack-dong. He'd never seen a classical guitar hammered that way. Again nothing complex, but when Zach strummed he slammed the strings. He turned to look at Rick. And then, from the chaos of the slamming chords into a slow E-minor to D to C. Karla, Karla, Karla, Karla. Thence to silence. No one spoke for a few seconds. Zach handed the guitar to Bob. "Here, that's enough of my stuff. Why don't you play some?"

Bob took the guitar. "Ah," he fumbled, "all I know is the cover tunes I've been playing."

Then Zach surprised him. "I've got an idea, boys. Here's a plan. I say we jump in the car and head out for the Bird Sanctuary, first having secured the necessary and correct Mind Balm, in both post and haste, to wit, namely, that thereto and henceforth do we seek out the waterfall at the path's end, do indeed, and not only that, but take guitars to accompany said Balm and boys, nor stop until we have MASTERED THE SUN. And we'll take out gitfiddles with us, commencing to sing only after we have stocked our larder."

This speech was Bob's first introduction to the curious mixture of implausible vocabulary, irreducible syntax, and imploded semantics that often rolled out of Zach's head. In the next few weeks he was to find that Zach kept journals devoted to abstruse and esoteric vocabulary, poetry, and quotations. Zach would spend hours by Bernie's pool memorizing this verbal armamentarium. When necessary,

he would pull an exotic word, a phrase, or even a whole poem from his horde, casting it forth with a Delphian brevity. At twenty years, armed with a prodigious capacity for reading and four years of high school Latin, Zach gave the impression of a college professor.

"I'll bring the cigars," Nick said.

"I'll drive," said Rick Richardson, who had remained silent until now. "I've got a full tank just about."

"Sure," said Bernie, tossing his long brown hair over his shoulders. He looked nervous though. Meeting new people was never easy for him.

Remembering the Gettysburg Reunion of 1913

by Calvin E. Johnson, Jr.

27 July 2009

Do you know who Gen. Robert Edward Lee, Major Gen. George Edward Pickett, and Major Gen. Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain were? Are children still taught about these men and all those who met on the famous War Between the States battlefield at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania? Some call the Gettysburg Battlefield the most haunted place in America, as many thousands died on that fateful month of July 1863. The story of the Battle of Gettysburg and 50th Anniversary Reunion would make for a heart-warming and touching TV historic mini-series or Hollywood movie.

Comrades and friends, these splendid statues of marble and granite and bronze shall finally crumble to dust, and in the ages to come, will perhaps be forgotten, but the spirit that has called this great assembly of our people together, on this field, shall live forever. (Dr. Nathaniel D. Cox at the 1913 Gettysburg Reunion)

The summer heat of July 1913 did not keep the old Confederate and Union Veterans from attending the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. It has been written that over 50,000 sons of the North and South came for what has been called the largest combined reunion of War Between the States veterans. The youngest veteran was reported to be 61 and the oldest was 112 years young. No one dared to criticize the United States and Confederate flags which flew side by side at the Gettysburg soldier's reunion of honored men who had been enemies on the field

of battle just 50 years earlier. Some of today's politicians and people's rights groups could learn something from these grand old men of yesterday. Knowledge is power!

The State of Pennsylvania hosted the 1913 reunion at the insistence of state Governor John K. Tener. Tener also encouraged other states to arrange rail transportation for the participants. Down South in Dixie, the United Daughters of the Confederacy helped raise money for the transportation and uniforms for their Confederate veterans. The soldiers of Blue and Gray, black and white, came with heads high and full of war stories.

It is written that the hosts did not count on black Confederates attending the meeting and had no place to put them but the white Confederates made room for their Southern brothers. Black Union veterans also attended this event.

Nearly 700,000 meals were served that included fried chicken, roast pork sandwiches, ice cream and Georgia watermelon. The temperature soared to 100 degrees and almost 10,000 veterans were treated for heat exhaustion and several hundred more were hospitalized. The United States Army was also present in support, and the old men loved the attention.

A highlight of the reunion was the Confederate Veterans walk on the path of Gen. George Pickett's charge that was greeted, this time, by a handshake from the Union Veterans. President Woodrow Wilson spoke to those veterans with compassion and appreciation and said that these "venerable men crowding here to this famous field have set us a great example of devotion and utter sacrifice. They were willing to die that the people might live. But their task is done. Their day is turned into evening. They look to us to perfect what they have established. Their work is handed to us, to be done in another way but not in another spirit. Our day is not over; it is upon us in full tide."

These men of Blue and Gray are gone but let's never forget them. God bless!

Reds In America In 1860

(Who Would've Thunk It?)

by Al Benson Jr.

6 July 2009

Communists in America in 1860 (and before)? As I live and breathe! We sure didn't learn that in the government schools we attended, did we? Government schools were, and are, in the words of a preacher I knew several years ago, "a billion-dollar tax rip off." What they neglect to teach you is usually of much greater importance than the drivel they manage to pass off as "quality education."

While living in Indiana in the late 1970s, I had a good friend on the East Coast who was the pastor of a small country church out in the middle of nowhere. Yet this man knew more about what the Communists and their fellow travelers were doing in this country than most any other Christian I had ever met. He kept track of them because he correctly perceived them as anti-Christ and part of his ministry was as a watchman on the wall to warn Christians about their machinations. In 1979 he sent me an article from the Communist newspaper *Daily World*, which contained information dealing with one Joseph Weydemeyer. It turns out that Comrade Weydemeyer was a close friend of Karl Marx, that deadbeat "champion of humanity" who was so busy promoting world revolution that he couldn't even take time out to provide a living for his family. Something else that Comrade Weydemeyer was, to my surprise at that time, was an officer in the Union army during the "late unpleasantness." I can remember thinking back then, "What was this Communist doing in the Union army?" I, who at that time had been a conservative and patriotic activist for about a decade, had never heard of any such thing. Just about all the other patriotic folks I knew back then had never heard about it either. I have since wondered why. Surely some of the anti-Communist groups around the country would have known about and mentioned something like this—wouldn't they? If they did, then nobody I talked to ever saw it, and again, I have to wonder why.

In the early 1980s I began to run across similar information, from a little rightist newspaper here in Louisiana, *The Councilor*. It is no longer published. It probably didn't have a large national circulation, but the man who published it

had apparently done quite a bit of historical research and concluded from it that there was a batch of generals in the Union army under Lincoln who had serious socialist and Communist connections in Europe—the "Forty-Eighters." These were refugees from the failed 1848 socialist revolts which rocked many European countries at that time. When those revolts failed, many of the socialist revolutionaries there ended up, by various routes, in the United States, most of them in the Northeast and Midwest.

The entire concept was a little mind-boggling at first; totally at odds with what I had learned, and I must admit I didn't do a lot with the information for a while. I put it in my files for future reference in case anything else about it came along.

As I started doing more research on the War (thanks to that horrible docudrama of Ken Burns) in the early 1990s, I started to come across some of the names of those socialist and Communist generals of Mr. Lincoln (who was quite familiar with their leftist connections) and I started to think that, maybe, just maybe, this was an aspect of the War and its aftermath which had been rather studiously neglected.



Carl Schurz

So I started to dig a little. I went to the local public library and found a book with a list of all the Union generals during the whole War. I copied that off and began checking out the names of all the generals who sounded foreign. Most of them ended up having been born in Pennsylvania or Illinois or some such place and so I crossed them off. But, checking through old biographical dictionaries in yet another library, I found a dedicated minority of them who were born in Europe and had, indeed, participated in the 1848 revolts. Some of their names are fairly well-known to those who study the history of the War: Franz Sigel, Carl Schurz, August von Willich, Louis Blenker, etc.

At the end of a couple months I had a list of about 18–20 of these socialists and outright Communists who ended up in Mr. Lincoln's armies. You might well be tempted to say: "Oh well, in an army that size, what does such a small number amount to?" Taken by itself, the number isn't big—except that all of the 18–20 ended up brigadier or major generals—which meant they had the command of and influence over thousands upon thousands of Union soldiers. This was the tip of the socialist iceberg in this country. But it didn't stop there. In the following years I came up with a whole batch of more Forty-Eighter names

who, for some reason, overwhelmingly supported Lincoln and the Union.

I kept digging; “huntin’ and peckin” as my daughter says. As I went along I found a whole batch of those Forty-Eighters in the North who were journalists, which meant they influenced those who read their left-wing material. Some of these socialists even got in on the ground floor of the new Republican Party and helped write the Republican Party platform for Lincoln’s election in 1860. So much for those who vainly try to inform me that the Republican Party has a conservative foundation. Just the opposite is true. In 1860 the Republicans were the flaming leftist radicals of America. This was a revelation to me, who had, for years, been a registered Republican. After further research, I became an ex-registered Republican.

Having reached a point where I felt I needed to try to pass some of this on to others, I started out by doing a series of articles in a newsletter I published at that time, *A Voice In The Wilderness*. I did a series of articles about Lincoln and his socialist supporters in that newsletter and named the names I had come up with up to that point. Eventually, I put four of the newsletters on this subject together in booklet form and entitled it *The Socialist Supporters of Honest Abe*. That was back in early 1993. I no longer publish *A Voice In The Wilderness*, but I still have a handful of those old booklets left. I take them around to small groups I speak to and sell them for a buck apiece. It gives folks a little something to take away if they are interested.

Eventually, I updated this material and made it into a regular booklet and later it became one of a series of five booklets (with tests) which I sell in *The Home School Mini-History Series*. The whole thrust of this material was to give kids who were home schooled, and their parents, a fresh look at what I consider one of the most important parts of this country’s history—the period of the War of Northern Aggression and the basically Marxist “reconstruction” which was really the end of the America the Founders gave us. We now live in post-America and most of us don’t realize it.

A few years later on down the line, I did an article for the *Southern Patriot* about Lincoln’s socialist and Marxist friends, which they were good enough to publish for me. Several months later, a professor from Georgia wrote another article commenting on my article and he said someone should write a book about this. I contacted him and offered my research material for use should he know of anyone who would write such a book. He emailed me back and suggested that I write the book. I felt distinctly

unqualified (still do) but he assured me I could do it. I then asked a couple others who affirmed his thoughts, so I made a beginning. After compiling another mountain of research material and working on about 100 pages of manuscript, I talked to Donnie Kennedy, who is an accomplished pro-Southern author. Donnie offered to help me with it and so we worked together after that for the next two years. Being more familiar with the literary scene than I, Donnie did a lot of the leg work I would not have been able to do, so without him, the book probably would not have gotten published, or if it did it would have taken me ten years instead of two.

The result of our collaboration was our book *Red Republicans And Lincoln’s Marxists* (iUniverse, Bloomington, Indiana). In the book, we dealt with the socialist and Communist penetration of this country in the 1850s and how that penetration helped to change the direction the country went in, not for better but for worse. We dealt with how the Forty-Eighters influenced the Northern government and the Union armies and we discussed Lincoln’s support for them and their socialist cause, both in Europe and in this country. This was material we found that most present—day Court Historians only touch briefly on, a comment here or there, and then they pass on, hoping most people who read their stuff won’t pick up on this.

The War of Northern Aggression was our French Revolution if you will—a Marxist revolution—and we have to begin to rethink it in those terms or we will never understand subsequent events. Again, I have often wondered just how “conservative” some of our patriotic groups really are. I have a friend who belongs to one I used to belong to. He wrote them suggesting they consider *Red Republicans* for use as a learning tool for their membership. He has written them twice. The first time they ignored him. The second time all they said was “this might be a project we should consider.” But that was quite a while ago now and they don’t seem to have “considered” it yet, so I begin to wonder what the group is all about at this point.

Both Donnie Kennedy and I feel that our book has broken new ground in demonstrating that leftist influence started much earlier in this country than most are aware of and a lot earlier than our “historians” care to admit. That being the case, I submit that if our view of our past is faulty, then our vision for our future will be also.

John Grisham and Morris Dees: Birds of a feather?

Al Benson Jr.

12 August 2009

A couple years ago someone gave me a copy of one of John Grisham's books which I really enjoyed. After reading it I picked up several more, some at used book stores. They were well written and Grisham could spin an interesting yarn that held your attention, especially about lawyers, since he had once been one. Although I didn't totally agree with all of his viewpoints, nonetheless I felt that in many instances he attempted to understand the Southern mindset, and he lived here, not up in New York or out in Hollyweird.

He also wrote about some places I have been to, the Mississippi Delta country, Memphis, Northeast Arkansas, and a few other spots. As you read his books you could picture some of the places he wrote about, and it was, in a sense, almost an armchair vacation to read some of his stuff. I realized that, being a best-selling author, he'd have to have somewhat caved in to the current gods of political correctness, but it seemed he had done so without making a big deal of it.

All of that being said, very recently, I took my entire stock of John Grisham books and turned them in at our local used book store. Henceforth, no Grisham books will line my bookshelves. I have to admit, I hadn't thought very much about John Grisham's political views beyond the fact that they probably weren't quite the same as mine. Someone had told me he was a Christian and I thought, somewhere along the line, I had read that he had taught Sunday School. But, then, so did Jimmy Carter and that was no recommendation for him.

Whatever he did or didn't do, I was recently sent a copy of a letter, (actually two copies of the same letter from different sources) where John Grisham was writing to encourage people to support Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center. His letter started off:

I'm writing to you about Morris Dees, an Alabama lawyer and a friend, who needs your help in his fight to put dangerous hate groups out of business...In 1971, he founded the renowned Southern Poverty Law Center to carry on his fight for justice. Since then Morris and his colleagues have filed a series of lawsuits that have put dangerous hate groups out of business...But their work is far from over. That's

why they need your help.

He then prattled on about how the number of "hate groups" in this country has increased 50% since 2000, and on and on ad nauseam. I could hardly believe it when I read it. My first thought was "Is Grisham this naive, after all the stuff he's written about lawyers and politicians?" My next thought was "No, he's really not naive. This is, unfortunately, probably where he has been all along—just like Obama. He literally can't do other than what he's doing here. He doesn't have the mindset for it."

How terribly sad! So now he's openly touting Morris (Sleaze) Dees' seamy outfit. Let's take a brief look at this outfit Mr. Grisham is so anxious to have you toss your hard-earned money at.

For one thing, Mr. Dees' organization hardly needs your financial help to combat what he refers to as "hate groups." His organization is literally awash in financial contributions—the golden goose and the cash cow all rolled into one! Ken Silverstein, writing in *Harpers* back in November of 2000, told us that:

The SPLC is already the wealthiest civil rights group in America...Back in 1978 when the Center had less than \$10 million, Dees promised that his organization would quit fund-raising and live off interest as soon as its endowment hit \$55 million. But as it approached that figure, the SPLC upped the bar to \$100 million...Today the SPLC's treasury bulges with \$120 million, and it spends twice as much on fund-raising—\$5.76 million last year—as it does on legal services for victims of civil rights abuses. The American Institute of Philanthropy gives the Center one of the worst ratings of any group it monitors, estimating that the SPLC could operate for 4.6 years without making another tax-exempt nickel from its investments or raising another tax-deductible cent from well-meaning people like you.

Most of this loot is raised through direct mail pleas. In fact the Philanthropy Institute gave the SPLC an "F" rating for how it administers those funds it collects. Most of those funds seem, strangely, to remain at headquarters, with a mere trickle finding its way down to the "poor and oppressed" whom Dees claims he wants to help.

JoAnn Wypijewski wrote in *The Nation* in February of 2001:

What is the Southern Poverty Law Center

doing...? Mostly making money...In 1999 it spent \$2.4 million on litigation and \$5.7 million on fundraising.

Too bad Mr. Grisham didn't do a little homework before issuing his plea for help for Dees' poor, struggling "civil rights" organization!

And then, there are those "hate groups." Supposedly, according to Grisham (wonder where he got his figures) they have, as already noted, increased by over 50 percent since 2000. He then goes on to inform us that the backlash against Obama's election "in certain quarters" along with the difficult economic times, have acted to create a perfect environment for the proliferation of these "hate groups."

The message here is rather plain—if you dare to disagree with the great Obama, then you are a potential "hater" just like those folks that protest his socialist politices have suddenly become "right-wing extremists and low-level terrorists." These are the labels they arrogantly pin on any of the American people who are not outright socialists. It seems, in retrospect, that Dees is willing to go after those hate groups that will bring in the big bucks via donations.

According to an article written by Dr. Boyd Cathey in 2004 for the League of the South:

In 1986 the SPLC's entire legal staff resigned in protest over Dees' refusal to address the issues of homelessness, voter registration, and affirmative action which they considered more important to poor minorities—but much less lucrative than appealing to largely white benefactors about the evils of the Klan.

Dr. Cathey noted that, at one point, the SPLC claimed that the state of Ohio was rife with right-wing "hate groups." It listed forty hate groups in that state. Dr. Cathey said:

David Martin, an investigative reporter for the Cleveland Scene checked those claims and found them woefully exaggerated and disingenous. Instead of the 'haven for hate' claimed by the SPLC, Martin found that most of the cited groups were marginal, miniscule, and practically non-existent. One of the "groups" listed was a ninety-year old sight-impaired man who had once published a newsletter.

This same situation is typical for many other states. Often the separate "hate groups" in a given state tend to be chapters of one particular organization in that state that Dees and his cohorts don't like and so they are all listed for

that state as separate "hate groups."

This is what John Grisham is asking his readers to contribute their money to in these hard times. With his books on many of the best-seller lists, I'm sure Mr. Grisham has many more dollars to throw at Mo Dees than most of us do. So I'd suggest that he give a very large contribution to the SPLC if he thinks Mr. Dees' outfit is so great. "

As for me and my house" from now on we will pass up any future Grisham books. If Grisham can so easily ask for money for a leftist organization like the SPLC, then he no longer needs my readership of his work and he no longer has my respect.

Syzygy

by MacDonald King Aston

19 August 2009

