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# Southern Poverty Law Center wracked in turmoil, called a 'con' for 'bilking gullible liberals'

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In August 2017, following the Charlottesville riots, Apple made a contribution of \$1 million to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). Apple also matched two-for-one employees' donations to the Southern Poverty Law Center through September 30th of that year and had Apple's iTunes Store offer visitors a way to donate to the SPLC.

In a letter to employees in August 2017, explaining Apple Inc.'s contribution, CEO Tim Cook wrote:

Apple will be making contributions of \$1 million each to the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League. We will also match two-for-one our employees' donations to these and several other human rights groups, between now and September 30. In the coming days, iTunes will offer users an easy way to join us in directly supporting the work of the SPLC. Dr. Martin Luther King said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter." So, we will continue to speak up. These have been dark days, but I remain as optimistic as ever that the future is bright. Apple can and will play an important role in bringing about positive change. – Apple CEO Tim Cook in a letter to employees, August 2017

Uh, yeah. Aging well, Cook's missive hasn't:

"In the days since the stunning dismissal of Morris Dees, the co-founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center, on March 14th, I've been thinking about the jokes my S.P.L.C. colleagues and I used to tell to keep ourselves sane," Bob Moser reports for The New Yorker. "Walking to lunch past the center's Maya Lin-designed memorial to civil-rights martyrs, we'd cast a glance at the inscription from Martin Luther King, Jr., etched into the black marble — 'Until

justice rolls down like waters' — and intone, in our deepest voices, 'Until justice rolls down like dollars.'"

"The first surprise was the office itself. On a hill in downtown Montgomery, down the street from both Jefferson Davis's Confederate White House and the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, where M.L.K. preached and organized, the center had recently built a massive modernist glass-and-steel structure that the social critic James Howard Kunstler would later liken to a 'Darth Vader building' that made social justice 'look despotic.' It was a cold place inside, too," Moser reports. "But nothing was more uncomfortable than the racial dynamic that quickly became apparent: a fair number of what was then about a hundred employees were African-American, but almost all of them were administrative and support staff— 'the help,' one of my black colleagues said pointedly. The 'professional staff' — the lawyers, researchers, educators, public-relations officers, and fund-raisers — were almost exclusively white. Just two staffers, including me, were openly gay."

"In the decade or so before I'd arrived, the center's reputation as a beacon of justice had taken some hits from reporters who'd peered behind the façade. In 1995, the *Montgomery Advertiser* had been a Pulitzer finalist for a series that documented, among other things, staffers' allegations of racial discrimination within the organization. In *Harper's*, Ken Silverstein had revealed that the center had accumulated an endowment topping a hundred and twenty million dollars while paying lavish salaries to its highest-ranking staffers and spending far less than most nonprofit groups on the work that it claimed to do," Moser reports. "The great Southern journalist John Egerton, writing for *The Progressive*, had painted a damning portrait of Dees, the center's longtime mastermind, as a 'super-salesman and master fundraiser' who viewed civilrights work mainly as a marketing tool for bilking gullible Northern liberals."

"Co-workers stealthily passed along these articles to me — it was a rite of passage for new staffers, a cautionary heads-up about what we'd stepped into with our noble intentions," Moser reports. "Incoming female staffers were additionally warned by their new colleagues about Dees's reputation for hitting on young women. And the unchecked power of the lavishly compensated white men at the top of the organization — Dees and the center's president, Richard Cohen — made staffers pessimistic that any of these issues would ever be addressed."

#### Much more in the full article - recommended - here.

"The president of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Richard Cohen, announced his resignation Friday, the latest in a series of high-profile departures at the anti-hate organization that have come amid allegations of misconduct and workplace discrimination," Matt Pearce reports for The Los Angeles Times.

"The departure will mark the end of an era at the Montgomery, Ala., nonprofit, whose staff had recently raised questions about whether the organization's long-standing mission of justice and anti-discrimination — which had yielded hundreds of millions of dollars in donations from the public — had matched its internal treatment of some black and female employees," Pearce reports. "Under Cohen's watch, the center had also received frequent criticism for its aggressive fundraising tactics and for its depiction of some right-wing figures as extremists. And the organization had been unable to shake long-standing internal concerns over the diversity of its predominantly white staff and white leadership."

"Cohen's departure comes one week after he fired his longtime partner, Morris Dees — the center's co-founder, chief trial counsel and its biggest public face for nearly half a century — for undisclosed misconduct, a move that stunned insiders and marked the most significant changing of the guard in the center's history," Pearce reports. "The recent resignations came amid staff concerns over the recent resignation of one of the organization's top black attorneys, Meredith Horton, who wrote in a farewell email that 'there is more work to do in the legal department and across the organization to ensure that SPLC is a place where everyone is heard and respected and where the values we are committed to pursuing externally are also being practiced internally."

#### Read more in the full article here.

**MacDailyNews Take:** One thing we definitely agree with that Apple CEO Tim Cook wrote in his letter to employees is:

Regardless of your political views, we must all stand together on this one point — that we are all equal. As a company, through our actions, our products and our voice, we will always work to ensure that everyone is treated equally and with respect.

Cook's decision to fund a questionable outfit like the SPLC (that was questionable *long* before these recent resignations) in the name of Apple Inc., no less, that most certainly did not "ensure that everyone is treated equally and with respect," even within its own walls, was obviously an embarrassing mistake.

## In a nutshell, Cook literally funded inequality and disrespect in the name of Apple Inc.

Where were Apple's Board of Directors when Cook's knee-jerk reaction was formulated? Were they even consulted? If so, why didn't they nip Cook's ill-considered plan in the bud? If the Board wasn't consulted, why not?

The problem isn't Tim Cook espousing political views and donating to political causes. It's a free country. The problem is his very questionable practice (to a properly-functioning BoD) of hijacking Apple's brand and riding on Apple's coattails to do so.

Even with you agree 100% with everything Tim Cook says and does (which, unless you are Tim Cook, is likely an issue in and of itself), all you have to do is simply imagine that Apple's CEO is someone else — say, <u>Peter Thiel</u> — and that they're also prone to using Apple's brand and established goodwill to espouse and promote their own political beliefs... We're pretty sure that Steve Jobs did not intend for Apple to be turned into a personal soapbox for whoever happens to be occupying in the CEO's office at the moment. — <u>MacDailyNews, June 26, 2018</u>

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter.* — Dr. Martin Luther King

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