



## Gun Control Crowd Directs Vitriol at NRA

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The National Rifle Association changed the results of three of the last five presidential elections. If there had been no NRA, the narrow victories of George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004, and Donald Trump in 2016, would have been narrow defeats. But while the NRA's growing influence has encouraged and vindicated supporters of our right to keep and bear arms, it has also galvanized our detractors. Today, these powerful forces are working together to destroy the NRA, repeal the Second Amendment and shrivel the First Amendment.

Like many other civil rights organizations, the NRA often has been vilified. The current propaganda shares common features with hate campaigns from many different places and times. Over the course of human history, just about every religious or ethnic group has been persecuted with similar tactics. So have many other victims.

Here's how the process works.

### **Dehumanization**

The target group is claimed to be not really human, but rather composed of sub-humans or monsters. One form of dehumanization is the blood libel. In Medieval Europe, some people claimed that Jews kidnapped and murdered Christian children in order to use the children's blood as an ingredient for matzo. Many mobs attacked Jews because of blood libel rumors.

Similarly, according to anti-gun campaigner David Hogg, NRA members and elected officials who support the Second Amendment want children to be killed. "It just makes me think what sick [expletive] out there want to continue to sell more guns, murder more children and, honestly, just get re-elected," Hogg said. He also asked, "What type of [expletive] person does that?" "They could have blood from children splattered all over their faces and they wouldn't take action, because they all still see these dollar signs," he declared. He also stated, "Our parents don't know how to use a [expletive] democracy."

According to Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., if you don't support his anti-gun bills, then "you're an accomplice" to the Parkland killer.

The NRA has “in essence, become a terrorist organization,” said Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy. In Florida, a political action committee run by a former Clinton White House staffer put up a billboard proclaiming, “The NRA is a terrorist organization.”

In school walkouts organized with the aid of administrators and teachers’ unions, signs said, “Our Blood/Your Hands.” Students were told to chant, “Hey, hey NRA, how many kids did you kill today?”

Echoing a theme from the anti-gun so-called Million Mom March in 2000, rapper Eminem said, “They love their guns more than our children.”

Hate speech like the examples above rings false to the many Americans who know NRA members or other Second Amendment supporters. These Americans know that pro-gun rights people love children as much as do anti-gun advocates, even though the groups have different ideas about the best ways to protect children.

The dehumanizing blood libels are not aimed at listeners who have personally seen NRA members teach and exemplify safety and responsibility. Instead, the blood libels are aimed at people who don’t know NRA members or other responsible gun owners, and who are eager to imagine the worst.

Another technique of dehumanization is to claim that the targeted group is unclean—or that it carries disease. In the early 1990s, anti-gun staff at the federal Centers for Disease Control aimed to make guns like cigarettes in public perception: “dirty, deadly—and banned.” (William Raspberry, “Sick People with Guns,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 19, 1994, based on interview with Dr. Mark Rosenberg, director of the CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control). Part of the argument was that gun injury is a “disease,” and therefore gun owners are like disease carriers.

### **Conspiracy Theories**

Conspiracy theories are used to frighten the public about the target group. A classic example is the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a book that purports to be the secret plan for Jewish global domination. It was probably created in the 1890s by the Russian secret police, the Okhrana. Similarly, Eminem thinks the NRA is “responsible for this whole production. They hold the strings, they control the puppet.” That, he believes, stops the government from doing anything about “gun owners clutching their loaded weapons.”

Other people have conspiracy theories based on the NRA and Russians, which were debunked in Kimberley A. Strassel’s March 23 column in *The Wall Street Journal*.

There’s even a conspiracy theory that NRA isn’t really a membership organization of millions of the best and most civic-minded Americans. Instead, it is allegedly run for the firearm manufacturers for the sole purpose of selling more guns.

“Proof” of the conspiracy? More than 20 percent of NRA annual revenue comes from advertising in the monthly magazines. To the conspiracy crowd, this proves that gun manufacturers run the NRA.

In reality, the majority of the advertising space in any given NRA magazine has nothing to do with firearms, hunting, etc. The space for firearm ads is usually a small percentage of an issue.

But again, the anti-gun propagandists aren't trying to persuade those who are well-informed. Their lies are aimed at people who don't know better.

The big lie technique was explained by Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*. He observed that most people “themselves often tell small lies in little matters but would be ashamed to resort to largescale falsehoods. It would never come into their heads to fabricate colossal untruths, and they would not believe that others could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously.”

### **Ostracism**

Hate demands ostracism. Normal people must be prevented from associating with members of the target group. For example, Jim Crow laws were used to prevent ordinary business and social relations among people of different races.

The forces that demand ostracism know that if ordinary social relations were allowed to occur, then different types of people would get to know each other. If diverse people could interact freely, the dehumanization would be undermined.

The blood libelers are working to make firearm owners and Second Amendment supporters into outcasts from respectable society. A Massachusetts woman recently observed that it was much easier being accepted after she came out as a lesbian than when she came out as a gun owner. Massachusetts-level intolerance is now being pushed nationally.

The Bumble dating app has banned people from posting pictures showing them with a firearm. Throughout the United States, schools are under pressure to refuse grants from The NRA Foundation for rifle or Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programs. Supposedly, even money put toward guiding teenagers in learning responsible and safe firearm use is “blood money.”

In Brooklyn, anti-rights groups frightened several restaurants out of honoring their contracts to host an NRA Foundation dinner. Connecticut anti-gun activists tried to get a restaurant in Plantsville to refuse an NRA Foundation dinner, but did not succeed.

In Ohio, campaigners are working to expel Jane Portman from the board of trustees of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center because her husband, U.S. Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, supports the Second Amendment.

At St. Thomas University in Florida, the chief financial officer, Anita Britt, was removed because she accepted a position on the board of directors of American Outdoor Brands, a conglomerate that owns Smith & Wesson and other firearm-related brands.

Outdoor retailer R.E.I. now refuses to carry products such as CamelBak, Giro and Bolle because their parent company, Vista Outdoor, also owns the Stevens and Savage firearm manufacturers.

Citibank has started to use its financial clout to cut off firearm businesses that operate in full compliance with the law—such as selling a shotgun and shells to a 20-year-old or selling a replacement 13-round magazine for a handgun to a 40-year-old. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is working to pressure other banks to follow suit.

Delta Air Lines ejected NRA members from a discount program, then provided free charter flights for people to attend the March 24 anti-gun protest in Washington, D.C. The New England Patriots also provided a charter flight.

The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, an organization of the religious left, is working with asset management firms to pressure all businesses in the United States to cut any ties with NRA. The group also asks that company events be held only in states that have harsh anti-gun laws. And it urges banks to refuse to lend money to firearm manufacturers that make “assault weapons” or that refuse to endorse gun control.

### **Silencing**

Many of the most ardent opponents of the Second Amendment also target the First Amendment. They are outraged by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the *Citizens United v. FEC* case. The government argued that it could prohibit the publication of books or the distribution of movies during election years—if the name of a federal candidate or incumbent was mentioned. A 5-4 majority of the U.S. Supreme Court said that the First Amendment prevents such censorship, but that decision hangs by a thread.

During his term as NRA president, Charlton Heston often warned about the intolerance for free speech and free thought on college campuses. Political correctness now dominates many large businesses and media organizations. According to a 2017 Cato Institute study, 58 percent of Americans believe that the current political climate prevents them from saying what they believe. Among conservatives, the figure is more than 70 percent. Similar results came from a 2017 Rasmussen poll, in which 66 percent of Americans said they feared getting in trouble for saying something politically incorrect.

Anti-gun writer Amanda Marcotte of salon.com expressed the views of many on the left today: “‘Free speech’ is now being used primarily, perhaps exclusively, as a right-wing code for white nationalism.”

As long as the NRA can communicate the truth about civil rights and public safety, then gun prohibition will be much more difficult to impose. This truth isn’t lost on anti-gunners. In an interview, Hogg told CNN that the NRA should “disband.” And at rallies, people chant, “Hey, hey, ho, ho, the NRA has got to go.”

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To silence speech, the propagandists have demanded that Apple, Amazon, Google, AT&T and Roku stop carrying NRATV. Because NRATV encourages lawful gun ownership, including for lawful self-defense, it is “dangerous content,” according to Bloomberg staffer Shannon Watts. Celebrities, including Alyssa Milano, Evan Handler and Jim Gaffigan, supported the call for censorship.

Meanwhile, YouTube is removing content that instructs people in lawful and safe activities like repairing a firearm or reloading ammunition.

## **Delegalization**

When the king of France in 1685 repealed the Edict of Nantes, he removed legal protection for the Protestant minority. Soon, persecution of Protestants grew much worse.

The elimination of legal gun ownership in the United States requires repeal of the Second Amendment. Repeal is favored by 39 percent of Democrats, according to a February poll by The Economist/YouGov. Among Democrats, 82 percent favored banning all semi-automatics, and 44 percent wanted to ban all handguns.

Some politicians who pander to such extremists claim to support the Second Amendment. Their words are true only in a Clintonian sense—in other words, they are lies.

Preemption laws ensure that gun laws are consistent throughout a state. They prevent local governments from passing more imposing restrictions on gun owners beyond what state laws already require. Some of Bloomberg's supportive mayors demand repeal of preemption laws. They claim, "Our states are choosing the National Rifle Association over your lives." These mayors are from Tallahassee, Fla.; Pittsburgh; Minneapolis; Portland, Ore.; St. Louis; Topeka, Kan.; Orlando, Fla.; Kansas City, Mo.; Dayton, Ohio; Ann Arbor, Mich.; and Providence, R.I. The Tallahassee and Orlando mayors, joined by eight other Florida mayors, have filed a suit to overturn the Florida statute that prevents them from banning guns in cities.

An atmosphere of frenzy against constitutional rights is possible in a society where many people disparage personal freedom and wish that there were little or no limits on government.

According to a November 2017 YouGov poll, 26 percent of Americans consider Che Guevara a hero, and 18 percent think the same of Vladimir Lenin. Vladimir Putin got 25 percent, Josef Stalin 13 percent, and Venezuelan tyrant Nicolás Maduro 12 percent. In other words, there are millions of people who approve of tyranny, often enforced by mass murder against a disarmed population. Mass shootings happen the most in countries where the government has all the guns.

The solutions to the above lie in the First Amendment. First, there are the rights of assembly and association. As a member, donor and volunteer for NRA, you participate in the largest civil rights association in world history. Today, civil rights opponents are attempting to destroy the Association for the same reason that segregationists in the 1950s and 1960s attempted to destroy other civil rights groups—civil rights cannot be eliminated until civil rights groups are exterminated.

Second, there is your First Amendment right to free speech. Sometimes, the speech of responsible citizens can overcome tremendous foes. On the Maine ballot in 2016 was a proposal for a universal gun registration law. (Proponents called it a "universal" background check, but it went much further than that.) It was a Bloomberg project, and it started off with a big lead in the polls.

On Election Day, Mainers rejected it 52-48 percent. David Farmer, who led the campaign for the initiative, later explained the defeat:

"We know for a fact we lost the argument at the kitchen table and the bar and the bowling alley," Farmer told The New York Times. "The gun enthusiasts were talking to their friends and

relatives and neighbors. They felt about it in a way that was so passionate that they won those one-on-one encounters, and they were very successful in bringing in people to their side.”

The greatest political power of the NRA and of responsible gun owners is the power of individual citizens who discuss things calmly with their friends, families and communities.

Gun prohibitionists aim to terrify you into believing that if you speak out for civil rights, you will be destroyed by their tantrums. Whether the First and Second Amendment survive, or are progressively sliced into nothingness, depends on the fortitude of responsible citizens in standing up for civil rights and public safety.