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1996

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Time was one might have expected opponents of official society to welcome a grassroots movement arming to defend individual liberties against federal encroachment. Contrary to such expectations, many who are pleased to locate themselves on the “left” have raised a cry of alarm at the militia movement surpassing even that from government circles.

A flyer published by a group that describes itself as “Against Hate” seeks to warn the public about the militia movement. “Blood will be spilled in the streets of America,” it quotes one militia leader saying.

People join militias for various reasons, explains the flyer: “They see the violence at Waco, Texas or the incident between white supremacist Randy Weaver and federal officials and believe they too will be attacked; others see the ban on assault weapons in 1994 as a sure sign that the Federal Government is out to subvert the Constitution.”

“The Government did make mistakes at Waco and with Randy Weaver,” admits the flyer. So the incineration of eighty people and

the assassination of a woman and child by federal officials are “mistakes,” when they happen to people these opponents of “hate” disagree with.

But the militias are paranoid, we are told. “They believe that there will be an armed confrontation with the Federal Government sooner or later. Militias say that our [our?] government and the United Nations are going to create the New World Order, where Americans will be slaves to international bankers and if you resist, militia leaders claim, you’ll be hauled away to a concentration camp.”

If the authors of the flyer expect these views to turn us against the militias, they will be disappointed. So far we have agreed with the opinions cited above.

But the militia movement was initiated by militant white supremacists, insists the flyer. We do not doubt it; certainly, white supremacist groups exercise considerable influence within it. Why should anyone be surprised? White supremacy is rampant in this society, and militant white supremacists seek to establish their hegemony within popular movements. But we note that Michigan, home of reputedly the strongest militia in the country, was the scene of one of Jesse Jackson’s greatest electoral triumphs, and we bet that many militia members voted for him in 1988. Wherever they stand now, they could not have been motivated principally by white supremacy. One thing for sure: the law-and-order stance of the so-called anti-racists can only reinforce white supremacist influence.

The flyer advises us, “The key to protecting the rights and civil liberties of all Americans does not lie in forming armed paramilitary groups who want to take the law into their own hands.”

We can think of no better way.

The conventional “left,” however, seeks protection elsewhere. Consider a recent fundraising letter from the Southern Poverty Law Center, which claims to have “the most extensive computerized files on militias and hate groups in existence,” including over

11,000 photographs, reports on 14,000 individuals, and intelligence on over 3,200 groups. The SPLC boasts of having written to Attorney General Janet Reno in October 1994, before the Oklahoma City bombing, warning her of impending illegal, violent activity by white supremacist groups. It publishes Intelligence Report, which goes out regularly to over 6,000 law enforcement agencies.

Does this snooping and snitching foreshadow the brave new world they seek to build?

The SPLC says it has no interest in stopping groups with unpopular views, or interfering with “legitimate” shooting clubs. It merely seeks to stop “unauthorized” militias. But if “unauthorized” militias are repressed, the only armed groups remaining will be the “authorized” ones.

We think it was Dwight Macdonald who said that what gave him hope for the future of this country was the deeply ingrained tradition of lawlessness. Like the Los Angeles Rebellion and the “wigger” phenomenon, the militia movement is a rebellion against the massive, faceless, soul-destroying system that is sucking the life out of ordinary people in this country and around the world. Of course it carries with it danger as well as promise. Insofar as it has a vision of the future, it is not ours. We do not underestimate the importance of this difference. But it has done more to shatter the image of government invulnerability than any other development of recent times. That the “left” fails to see the potentials it reveals and does less than nothing to develop its own challenge to power is an index of its irrelevance.

From its first issue, **Race Traitor** has insisted that only the vision of a new world can compete with the fascists for the loyalty of those angry whites who think that nothing less than a total change is worth fighting for. Abolitionists must draw a line between themselves and the “loyal opposition.” If they fail to do so, they will not be heard.