

*The William and Naomi Gorowitz Institute  
on Terrorism and Extremism*

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# ARMED & DANGEROUS:

MILITIAS TAKE AIM AT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

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*Fact Finding Report*



Anti-Defamation League

1994

## ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

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This publication was prepared by Irwin Suall, Director of Special Projects;  
Thomas Halpern, Associate Director, Fact Finding Department;  
David Rosenberg, Assistant Director, Fact Finding Department;  
and James Q. Purcell, Assistant to the Civil Rights Director.

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## Introduction

Bands of armed right-wing militants, most calling themselves "militias," are cropping up across America. They have no centralized structure, but there are linkages among some of them, consisting largely of the sharing of propaganda material and speakers. A survey conducted by the Anti-Defamation League has found evidence of their activity in no fewer than 13 states.

The aims of these militias, often bellicosely stated, involve laying the groundwork for massive resistance to the federal government and its law enforcement agencies as well as opposition to gun control laws. In the view of many such extremists, numbering in the thousands, America's government is the enemy, now widening its authoritarian control and planning warfare against the citizenry.

To the militia ideologues, gun control legislation -- the Brady Law,<sup>1</sup> restrictions on assault weapons,<sup>2</sup> etc. -- are major stratagems in a secret government conspiracy to disarm and control the American people and abolish their Constitutional "right to bear arms."<sup>3</sup> They are also obsessed with the role of government in two recent events -- the Branch Davidian confrontation in Waco<sup>4</sup> and the Randy Weaver siege in Idaho<sup>5</sup> -- which they interpret as signs

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<sup>1</sup> The Brady Law requires a five-day waiting period in the sale of all handguns, during which time a background check will be performed on the purchaser through a national computerized network.

<sup>2</sup> The 1994 federal crime bill recently signed by President Clinton bans the sale and possession of 19 different types of assault weapons and limits gun clips to a maximum of 10 bullets.

<sup>3</sup> The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states: "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

<sup>4</sup> The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (ATF) originally attempted to enter the Branch Davidian compound in order to seize illegal weapons and arrest those responsible. The residents of the compound resisted the raid through arms, killing four ATF agents. The residents then remained in the compound for several weeks until a second assault at which time the compound burst into flame killing more than 80 group members.

<sup>5</sup> Randy Weaver, a white supremacist, failed to appear in Federal Court on a weapons charge in 1992. He hid out with his wife, his children, and an associate, Kevin Harris, in a cabin in a remote area of northern Idaho. The U.S. Marshals Service, learning of Weaver's whereabouts, surrounded the cabin. In the 11-day siege which followed, a Deputy Marshal, William Degan, and Weaver's son and wife were slain. Finally, Weaver and Harris surrendered. At their subsequent trial in July 1993, Harris was acquitted of all charges and Weaver was acquitted of all but two lesser charges, for which he served 15 months in jail. The incident has since been made into a cause celebre by right-wing extremists.



of impending tyranny. The answer, say these extremists, is ultimately, necessarily, *paramilitary* resistance. An armed and aroused citizenry must be mobilized and ready for a call to war.

For most, if not all, of the militias, the fear of government confiscation of their weapons is a paramount concern. Samuel Sherwood, head of the "U.S. Militia Association" in Idaho, states: "When they come around to collect weapons, we'll have the legal and lawful structure to say 'no' to that." Randy Trochmann of the "Militia of Montana" gets tougher: "If and when the federal government decides to confiscate weapons, people will band together to stop them. They are not going to give up their guns." And the "enemy" easily becomes nightmarish: Robert Pummer, a leader of the "Florida State Militia," says that his group is "capable of defending ourselves against chemical and biological agents."

Although thwarting gun control is the chief aim of the militias, they seek to turn the clock back on federal involvement in a host of other issues as well, e.g., education, abortion, the environment.

Case in point: Norman Olson, a regional militia commander in northern Michigan, has envisioned violence erupting if present government policies continue. Olson, a Baptist minister who owns a gun shop, declared: "We're talking about a situation where armed conflict may be inevitable *if the country doesn't turn around*." (Emphasis added.) Most often the central issue of the militants has been the legality of guns themselves. Clearly, their deeper suspicions and terrors should be of concern: Is their militant cause merely the alleged gun-toting "right" of citizens? -- or is it the "turning around" of the U.S. itself from what the militants see as the "treasonous" direction of the federal government's present policies? The question which no one can answer just yet is what, exactly, the "militias" intend to do with their guns.

Might they still, as many observers hope, limit themselves to the time-honored means provided by the Constitution -- freedom of expression, the ballot, the courts, the right of petition -- or do they intend to resort to lawlessness?

A recent episode in Virginia offers some partial but troubling evidence. Members of a militia group calling itself the Blue Ridge Hunt Club were arrested for possession of illegal weapons. The leader of the group, James Roy Mullins, and three others who were taken into custody, were found to be stockpiling weapons in their homes and storage facilities. Found on a computer disk in Mullins' home was a draft of the group's newsletter stating that it planned

a series of terrorist actions in furtherance of its aims. According to an ATF official, the group intended to further arm itself by raiding the National Guard Armory in Pulaski, Virginia.

A further and vexing problem uncovered by investigation of the growing militias is the presence in some of them -- even in leadership roles -- of persons with histories of racial and religious bigotry and of political extremism. In the Northwest, for example, a militia leader has a background in the Aryan Nations movement; elsewhere we find other erstwhile neo-Nazis and Ku Kluxers.

The militias are of concern and doubtless will remain so in the coming months; they are driven by a combustible issue in American life which remains unresolved -- that of gun control, an issue of urgency and passion in a society beset by violent crime. Coming head to head: a cry for weapons restrictions and a perceived Constitutional right. Most of those siding with the latter are law-abiding citizens who feel that guns are desirable for personal defense or for sport. Many of them feel that the National Rifle Association (NRA) adequately represents their concerns; others who see the NRA as too moderate have sought out more extreme advocates such as the American Pistol and Rifle Association (APRA). Of late, however, still others are resorting to the mustering of a far more desperate and dangerous "resistance" -- the militia movement that is the focus of this report.

There follows a state-by-state synopsis of militia activity.

## Arizona

Efforts have recently begun in Arizona to create a militia movement. David Espy, who portrays himself a latter-day American Revolutionary captain, has attempted to organize militia meetings over the last several weeks. An advertisement he placed in the September 11 and 25, 1994 issues of the Prescott Courier announced a meeting in Paulden, Arizona of the "Association of the Sons of Liberty and the Volunteer Militia." The purpose of the meeting was to discuss plans for action against the federal government which, he asserts, "continue[s] to pass legislation that weaken our unalienable, private property and Bill of Rights (sic)." The formation of a militia is an integral part of Espy's plan:

So, everyone out there, who thinks that taking pride in owning firearms, is being fanatical or nuts, should remember where you are living and how we all got here to begin with. It wasn't by just sitting back and letting the government run our lives and usurping our fundamental rights as free people. So forgive me, if I see a clear and present danger with what is happening in our country today, and that I feel a genuine and rational need to form a volunteer militia force, if for no other reason than to [let] Washington know that there is still a large group of us out here that have inherited revolutionary DNA and are willing to fight for it until our dying breath.

Another aspect of his plan is a demand for "the legal cessation (sic) of Arizona from these federal United States."

Also active in Arizona is Gary D. Hunt, a man obsessed with the Waco Branch Davidian incident. Hunt himself was present during the siege in Waco and wrote about the event at the time, comparing the Branch Davidians to the original revolutionary Minutemen: "I understand why [the Minutemen] were willing to stand and face portions of the greatest military force in the world. And I understand why David Koresh and the other brave defenders of Mount Carmel stand fearlessly defending their home and mine."

More recently, Hunt has distributed a flier dated July 2, 1994 and labeled "Sons of Liberty No. 3." The flier describes the effectiveness of militias in the Revolutionary War and suggests that militias are again needed now. At the bottom of the flier, written in by hand, Hunt announced: "March on Phx FBI 8-25-94 5-6 p.m. to release the Branch Davidians. Bring legal signs + guns. Tell a friend." The FBI and Phoenix Police paid close attention, but the planned march never materialized.

## Colorado

Militias in Colorado have benefitted from the support of a number of right-wing groups. Most active in the movement are so-called Patriot groups that proliferate throughout the state. Others showing support for militias in Colorado are the Constitutionists, the Guardians of American Liberties (GOAL), and state representative Charles Duke.

Militias, calling themselves Patriots, are being formed across the state and are currently operating in Lakewood, Longmont, Boulder, Greeley and Fort Collins. The Fort Collins group is led by Duncan Philp.

The Patriots' propaganda promotes the view that the federal government has betrayed the people and the Constitution through laws regarding home-schooling, abortion, taxation, freedom of speech and religion, and, most importantly, gun control. While calling on citizens to take political action (e.g., write their Congressmen, attend meetings, etc.), they also urge that people prepare to resist the government by forming militias and stockpiling weapons, groceries and other necessities for survival.

The Patriots publish a newsletter and sell tapes and videos through "The Patriot Library." Among the titles for sale are "The New World Order, Communist groups supported by Hillary Clinton," as well as tapes describing black helicopters said to be scrutinizing the actions of citizens in the western states. A June 22, 1994 "Patriot Factsheet" encouraged members to read, by computer access, *The Spotlight*, the organ of the anti-Semitic Liberty Lobby.

Guardians of American Liberties, a multi-state organization centered in Boulder, is attempting to take a leadership role in the militia movement. It describes itself as a "national grassroots network of American Citizens formed to insure our government is free of corruption, that it is actively aligned with the will of the people and to safeguard the Constitution of the United States of America from all forms of corruption." GOAL has some 40 to 50 members in Colorado as well as claimed chapters in Texas, Arizona, California and Nevada. It has established a militia committee, although it is not clear what degree of success it has achieved in organizing militias in Colorado or elsewhere. GOAL literature lists these additional committees: a "Federal Reserve & IRS Committee," a "Political Prisoner Committee," and a

"Sovereignty & Freedom Committee," beneath which is printed the slogan, "Kick the Feds out of the Counties."

GOAL's leader, Stewart Webb, has appeared frequently on right-wing radio shows to discuss his various conspiracy theories regarding, among other issues, the S&L and BCCI scandals. Webb has a history of anti-Semitism. From the mid-1980's and into the 90's, he made a series of threatening anti-Semitic phone calls and continued to do so even after receiving a cease and desist order.

The Constitutionists, a Kansas-based extremist group whose leadership includes Evan Mecham, the impeached former governor of Arizona, has received support in its promotion of militias from Colorado State representative Charles Duke. Duke spoke at the group's June conference in Indianapolis and promoted the formation of militias as an effective way for citizens to protect themselves from the government. At a Patriots meeting last July, Duke said: "We need some ability to get some firepower to protect the citizens. I would like to see a militia...[the type] that functions as a sheriff's posse and has sufficient training."

Radio station KHNC in Johnstown has offered its facilities to the Patriots and other groups active in the militia movement. KHNC broadcasts continuous Patriot programs and talk on "conservative issues." Among regulars on the station are Bo Gritz (see Idaho section of this report) and Dr. Norm Resnick, an outspoken opponent of gun control. In addition to using the radio to air their views, Colorado militias also disseminate information on computer bulletin boards that reach readers across the country. The Colorado Free Militia and Boulder Patriots, for example, are promoted on the New Age Electronic Information Service, a Colorado bulletin board.

## Florida

Several groups using the name "militia" have appeared in Florida.<sup>6</sup> Among them are groups whose handbooks and leaflets variously engage in anti-Semitic innuendo, serve up alarmist warnings of a government conspiracy to abolish individual rights (especially gun ownership rights), and specify the amount of ammunition and other material each militia member is expected to carry.

One such outfit is the Florida State Militia, whose prime mover is Robert Pummer of Stuart, in Martin County. Pummer, a Kansas native who was a drug dealer in Michigan in the early 1970's and served time for second-degree murder, has been agitating on some of the same issues exploited by militia-style groups around the country: gun control, the Branch Davidian conflagration in Waco, the Randy Weaver siege at Ruby Ridge in Idaho, allegations of Russian and other foreign troops operating on U.S. soil, and other conspiracy-minded themes. He claims members in every Florida county.

The Florida State Militia's handbook, published by Pummer, declares: "[W]e have had enough -- enough drugs and crime, enough violence and bloodshed, enough Waco- and Ruby Ridge-style government attacks on Christian Americans." The handbook explains how to organize militia regiments. It prescribes the recommended survival gear and weaponry: "BUY AMMO NOW! YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BUY IT LATER!" While expressing worry over the possibility of infiltration, the handbook offers the following reassurance: "[Y]ou still have your inner circle, and this the FBI, ATF, or any other federal scumbags cannot penetrate, if you keep up your guard."

Publications contained in a "Patriot List" in the Florida State Militia's handbook include several anti-Semitic periodicals: *The Spotlight*, organ of the Washington, D.C.-based Liberty Lobby, the wealthiest and most active anti-Semitic propaganda organization in the country; *The Truth At Last*, an obsessively anti-Black and anti-Jewish hate sheet produced by longtime extremist Ed Fields of Marietta, Georgia; *Criminal Politics*, a conspiracy-oriented anti-Semitic, "anti-Zionist" and anti-establishment monthly; and *The National Educator*, whose pages have honored the leaders of the far-right terrorist gang called The Order and the neo-Nazi paramilitary

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<sup>6</sup> Not included in this report are those militias that exist merely as resolutions by some county commissions to demonstrate their symbolic opposition to gun control.



group, Aryan Nations. The handbook says a short-wave radio is an essential piece of communications equipment. It particularly endorses the Liberty Lobby-controlled program "Radio Free America" as one source that transmits "what the mainstream media will not tell you."

Pummer's militia sponsored an Information Fair and Campout in St. Lucie County on the weekend of September 17, 1994. The event attracted approximately 100 attendees, including some parents who came with their children. Most attendees carried firearms, including some semi-automatic weapons. Many wore knives. A workshop on radio communications was conducted by a man who identified himself as a retired police chief and Air Force officer. All attendees were encouraged to attend the U.S. Constitution Restoration Rally in Lakeland, Florida, on October 1 (see below).

A Key Largo-based group calls itself alternately the United States Militia and the 1st Regiment Florida State Militia. Making a specious claim to legitimacy from such documents as the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers, the Florida Constitution and Florida statutes, this group has been attempting to recruit members at "patriotic" and anti-gun control gatherings in Florida. Mimicking the style of the Declaration of Independence, its literature speaks of a "Train of Abuses" perpetrated on state and local governments and the citizenry by the federal government. "Just as our Founding Fathers of this country shook off their shackles of bondage," the group declares, "so must we."

The militia's regulations state that "County units will be organized in each county of the state." Militia members are told to expect to spend one weekend a month engaging in unit activities including rallies, shooting events and fund raisers. A list of suitable equipment is provided, which includes one thousand rounds of ammunition per weapon and six 30-round magazines for each militia member. While the group's regulations state that "The unit may not be used against the police or governmental authority within the state of Florida," an exception may be made when such an "entity" commits "crimes of violation of their oath of office" and of "sections or articles of the Constitution of the United States of America and of this state."

The United States Militia's material was distributed at a U.S. Constitution Restoration Rally in Lakeland, Florida, on October 1, 1994. Attended by 1,000 to 1,500 people, the event was sponsored by Operation Freedom, an outfit created by Charles and Ruth Ann Spross of Maitland, Florida. The Sprosses describe their effort as a "for profit partnership," and, indeed,

they offer for sale scores of video and book titles, such as "The Planned Destruction of America" and Linda Thompson's "Waco, The Big Lie." Featured on the schedule at the October 1 gathering was a speech by M. J. "Red" Beckman, of Montana, who has been influential in the militia movement in his home state.

Distributed along with the speakers program at the rally was a sheet bearing the heading: "Paul Revere Rides Again." It proclaimed: "A strong and growing Underground Patriotic Movement with state-wide militia groups exists against The Sinister Ones that is unreported by the monopolistic and controlled establishment media." (sic) Identifying such enemies as the House of Rothschild, international bankers, the Federal Reserve System and the Trilateral Commission, the flier asked: "What is the range of British and Israeli influence in the upper tiers?" It urged readers to "Stockpile food, water, guns and ammo. Never surrender your weapons.... Subscribe to the weekly populist newspaper *The Spotlight*.... Form or attend meetings with other spirited patriots.... Consider yourself warned!"

Also distributed in large numbers at the rally was a flier urging that "All Gun Owners Should Fire A WARNING SHOT As A Signal To The New Congress" on November 11 at 11:00 pm. "Congress has failed to safeguard the Bill of Rights," it reads, "especially the 2nd Amendment." It further declares:

A warship will fire a warning shot across the bow, a rattlesnake will sound off; these warnings are never ignored. It is time to warn politicians that if they do not respect the Bill of Rights they should at least fear the wrath of the People. Congress is forcing the country into a civil war.

A group in Tampa that claims alignment with a national "patriot movement" has ordered four judges and several Hillsborough County officials, including the tax collector, to give themselves up for arrest to the group's so-called Constitutional Court. Founder of the group, Emilio Ippolito, and his daughter, Susan Mokdad, reportedly said they have an unarmed militia composed of volunteers to execute the Constitutional Court's orders. Subsequently, Ed Brown, an activist with an armed militia group in New Hampshire, contacted Florida law enforcement authorities, prosecutors' offices and the Florida Bar Association to express support for Ippolito's "court."

## **Idaho**

As in other parts of the country, the recent rise of militias in Idaho can be linked to four events: the Randy Weaver siege, the Waco disaster, the passage of the Brady Law and the federal anti-crime law. Idaho militias identify particularly closely with the Weaver incident because it took place inside the state and because some key militia figures in the region were allied with Weaver and indeed participated in the events surrounding the siege.

Samuel Sherwood, an Idaho militia leader, has recruited hundreds of Idahoans into his United States Militia Association. At a July meeting in Blackfoot, Idaho, Sherwood reportedly told potential recruits that President Clinton's crime bill authorized the government to hire 100,000 former Royal Hong Kong police to come to America to enforce gun control laws. As of August 1994, Sherwood's association has organized militias in at least a dozen of Idaho's 44 counties.

Sherwood's recruitment campaign has met with opposition from law enforcement officials. The Tri-County Sheriff's Association, representing 16 eastern Idaho counties, has passed a resolution against the formation of militias. Greg Moffat, Madison County Sheriff and the leader of the association, has asserted that they would "give absolutely no support to the idea of a militia."

### **Bo Gritz**

Although his current project is not strictly speaking the formation of militias, Bo Gritz's activity closely parallels the militia movement. Gritz, the 1992 Populist Party candidate for president, is a former Green Beret, well-known for conducting SPIKE (Specially Prepared Individuals for Key Events) training throughout the region, preparing participants in weapons and survival techniques.

Gritz is currently creating an armed community on a 200-acre piece of land in Central Idaho known as "Almost Heaven." He purchased the land and is now selling it in lots. A second community called "Shenandoah" is also planned nearby. Gritz plans to live at Almost Heaven with 30 other families in a self-sufficient community which he has said will obey all laws "unless they go against the laws of God and common sense." Through rigorous military training, Gritz plans to prepare his followers to prevent the government from making any

attempts to intrude: "I want a community where if the F.B.I. looks at us, they'll end up saying it's more trouble than it's worth."

Gritz derives much of his support from his opposition to the federal government's actions in the Weaver and Waco cases. He himself was present at the Weaver standoff and assisted Weaver in surrendering to the authorities. Gritz recently wrote in his newsletter, "The tyrants who ordered the assault on the Weavers and Waco should be tried and executed as traitors." But Gritz's extremist views go beyond opposition to certain government policies. For example, in his book, *Called To Serve*, he peddles the anti-Semitic myth that Jewish families control the Federal Reserve System.

## Indiana

Indianapolis is the home base of Linda Thompson, an influential figure in the militia movement nationally. Thompson is a lawyer and chairman of the American Justice Federation, which describes itself as "a group dedicated to stopping the New World Order and getting the truth out to the American public." Thompson claims to have contact with militias in all 50 states. She appears frequently at militia gatherings and gun shows, to lecture and sell her videos "Waco, The Big Lie," and "Waco II - The Big Lie Continues." The latter, she claims, "proves conclusively the government murdered 100 men, women and children at Mt. Carmel in April, 1993." She also sells other propaganda material such as "The Traitor Files," which purport to link "Bill and Hillary Clinton to a Marxist-Terrorist network."

On July 13, 1994, Thompson was arrested in Indianapolis for using her vehicle to block a bus carrying supporters of President Clinton's health care plan. She was charged with obstructing traffic. At the time of her arrest police officers seized from her person a .45-caliber pistol and a .22-caliber Derringer pistol. They also found in her vehicle an assault rifle with 295 rounds of ammunition. Her case is pending.

Thompson's most ambitious undertaking to date was a planned militia march on Washington, D.C., on September 19, 1994, where an ultimatum was to be delivered to the government. The ultimatum commanded members of Congress to initiate legislation that would, among other things, repeal the 14th, 16th and 17th Amendments to the Constitution, and the Brady Law and NAFTA. Designating herself "Acting Adjutant General," of the "Unorganized Militia of the United States," Thompson ordered all participants to come "armed and in uniform." She announced that, besides delivering the ultimatum, "The militia will arrest Congressmen who have failed to uphold their oaths of office, who will then be tried for Treason by citizens' courts."

Realizing after several months that support for her march was lacking, Thompson called it off, yet her standing in the militia movement apparently remains undiminished.

The John Birch Society, troubled about Thompson's influence on its members and staff, found it necessary to warn them against her. On May 12, 1994, the Society, issued an official "admonition to all members and a directive to all employees" to "stay clear of her schemes." They said: "Linda Thompson's call for the arrest in September of members of Congress and the

President of the United States by an armed militia is not just insane, it is contrary to all understanding of the nature and identity of the enemy." It appears that even by the standards of the John Birch Society, Thompson is too radical.

Meanwhile, Thompson continues to appear at rallies and conferences around the country, and on radio, promoting the militia cause and calling down thunder upon the American government and its law enforcement agencies.

A rally to form a militia in Indianapolis took place in September 1994, at a union hall in the south central part of the city. In attendance were some 200 persons, filling the hall to capacity, while an overflow crowd was turned away.

A smaller militia is believed to be functioning in Switzerland County, in eastern Indiana. The county, long plagued by extremist activity, has been the home base of the Northwest Territory Knights of the KKK, a Klan splinter group.



## Michigan

The militia movement has gained a following in Michigan. The most visible such group in the state has sprung up in northern Michigan. Spokesmen there make the (probably exaggerated) claim that militias have 10,000 members and that brigades are operating or are currently forming in 66 of the state's 83 counties. Meetings reportedly draw 50 to 100 attendees.

The issues animating Michigan's militias are the same as those fueling the movement nationally. Chief among them is a belief that gun control legislation is but a prelude to a complete ban on firearms ownership in this country. An essential additional ingredient, though, is their conviction that the government intends to wage war on citizens who refuse to give up their weapons. They cite as evidence for this view the tragic assault on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, and the 1992 raid on the cabin of Randy Weaver in Idaho, in which Weaver's wife and son and a federal marshal were killed. They also contend that this same federal government is acquiescing in the surrender of U.S. sovereignty to the United Nations and other international bodies. One militia, accordingly, aims to "stand against tyranny, globalism, moral relativism, humanism and the New World Order threatening to undermine these United States of America."

Norman E. Olson, 47, a Baptist minister and gun-shop owner in Alanson, is the Commander of the 1st Brigade, 2nd Division, Northern Michigan Regional Militia. After a few months of discussion and recruitment, the group was established in April 1994. It conducts training exercises twice a month. At a recent session, weapons reportedly included Chinese SKS semi-automatic assault rifles, shotguns and deer rifles.

When residents complained about militia members clad in camouflage uniforms and painted faces gathering with their rifles at a village park and a public campground in Pellston, the village council banned firearms from those and other village sites. Militia commander Olson threatened to sue the village for allegedly violating his rights. He also announced that his group would no longer convene in the park or the campground, saying: "The people of Pellston have got to want the light of liberty."

Olson strenuously denies that the Northern Michigan Regional Militia is racist or anti-Semitic. He claims some Jewish ancestry, and professes admiration for Israel. But his militia's

rhetoric on occasion has been extreme and alarmist. In reference to the aborted march on Washington promoted by Indianapolis militia leader Linda Thompson, Olson has written: "Many thousands are prepared to go to Washington in uniform, carry their guns, prepared to present the ultimatum to the President and to Congress. This may be the beginning of a Concord-like confrontation." A militia pamphlet distributed at a May meeting in Petoskey attended by some 55 people reportedly asked: "What force exists to prevent a state or federally orchestrated massacre like the one in Waco from occurring in Michigan?" Ray Southwell, a real estate agent who is the group's information officer, has said: "I'd guess that within the next two years, you will see the Constitution suspended." His further prediction: "Christian fundamentalists will be the first to go under fascism this time. Just like the Jews were the first last time."

Southwell speaks as though he regards confrontation with law enforcement as inevitable. His militia is preparing for the day "when martial law is declared." "We are taking a stand," he says, "and are prepared to lose everything."

Other militia activists in Michigan have had their own encounter with the law. Police in Fowlerville (Livingston County) arrested three militia members on September 8, 1994. Loaded rifles and handguns, as well as gas masks, night-vision binoculars and two-way radios, were found in their car. At the men's scheduled September 14 hearing, at least two dozen uniformed supporters staged a protest in front of the courthouse and stomped on a United Nations flag. The suspects failed to appear and are considered fugitives. They were described by their supporters as security aides to Mark Koernke (a.k.a. "Mark from Michigan"), a former Army intelligence officer whose "America in Peril" video and speeches have helped to recruit members to militias around the country.

All the confrontational talk has caught the attention of law enforcement authorities. "Some of their material is disquieting because it defines the U.S. government as the enemy," said a Michigan State Police commander. "It is disquieting if people think redress is in armed conflict with the U.S. government." The head of the Detroit office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms expressed the hope "that the militia groups would use the power of the vote rather than the threat of armed violent confrontation to accomplish their goals."

## **Missouri**

Militias are active in Missouri but do not appear to be as well-organized as in other states. They operate in at least five southern Missouri counties: Crawford, Green, Barton, Dade and Cedar, and number collectively approximately 130 members. The militias hold irregular meetings to view training videos, discuss paramilitary techniques and exchange literature reflecting right-wing views.

Missouri's militias are attempting to organize themselves for political action by, among other things, running candidates for local office. In keeping with their political aspirations, they have attempted to avoid any public identification with more extreme groups, although some members also belong to the John Birch Society and the Populist Party.

## Montana

Militias have been forming in Montana since February 1994. While the rhetoric of these groups focuses on gun control and other familiar militia causes, examination reveals that some of the leading figures in the Montana militia movement have also promoted anti-Semitic views or have participated in the activities of the racist and anti-Semitic far right.

Meetings have been held across the state, drawing as many as 800 at a March 10 meeting in Kalispell. Two other meetings there also drew over 150 participants. Similar gatherings held in Hamilton, Eureka, Big Timber and Great Falls drew over 200 participants each. Smaller numbers attended meetings in Sanders County, Billings and Troy. While the crowds at initial meetings have been large, they have tended to fall off somewhat at subsequent gatherings.

Montana militias often dwell on the state's history as an independent outpost of freedom. A recent militia newsletter quoted, with approval, Gary Marbut, president of the Montana Shooting Sports Association (an anti-gun control group) in a call for rejection of all federal control over the state:

Montanans are fed up with the federal government dictating to Montana and the people of Montana and we are through with Congress's increasing encroachment on the Bill of Rights. We have a thirst for freedom in Montana, and we simply will not subsist under the boot heel of federal tyranny. There may be some debate about what the Second Amendment means to the U.S. Supreme Court or the people of Peoria, but there is no question about what the Second Amendment means to the people of Montana. "The great purpose" as Patrick Henry said, "is that every man be armed."

### Militia of Montana

The Militia of Montana (M.O.M.) is among the most visible and the most extreme of such groups in the country. M.O.M. is run in Noxon, Montana by the Trochmann brothers, John and David, and David's son, Randy. John Trochmann was a featured speaker at the 1990 Congress of the Aryan Nations, the Idaho-based neo-Nazi organization that promotes anti-Semitism, white supremacy and the establishment of a white racist state. He has also been an active supporter of Randy Weaver, the white supremacist who was involved in a shoot-out with federal authorities. Some members of M.O.M. circulate neo-Nazi publications among themselves. One such book, *Seed of the Woman*, is a "novel" detailing the wild exploits of

several young neo-Nazis in a contemporary America peopled by gross stereotypes. Its favorable depiction of Nazi-inspired slaughter and its promotion of Nazi doctrine make it a prescription for violence against Jews, blacks, homosexuals and others.

M.O.M.'s eight-page pamphlet, "The Militia," discusses the history of militias and their origin in the United States, arguing that the Second Amendment was intended to allow the citizens to form "unorganized" militias in order to protect themselves from a potentially tyrannical government. It outlines the militia's role as follows:

To balance the military power of the nation with the might of the militia will put at odds any scheme by government officials to use the force of the government against the people. Therefore, when the codes and statutes are unjust for the majority of the people, the people will rightly revolt and the government will have to acquiesce without a shot being fired, because the militia stands vigilant in carrying out the will of the people in defense of rights, liberty and freedom.

The purpose of government is in the protection of the rights of the people, when it does not accomplish this, the militia is the crusader who steps forward, and upon it rests the mantle of the rights of the people. (sic)

Displaying the group's attitude towards taking up arms, John Trochmann recently said: "We don't want bloodshed. We want to use the ballot box and the jury box. We don't want to go to the cartridge box. But we will if we have to."

M.O.M.'s newsletter, *Taking Aim*, details the ways that the government is currently failing to protect the rights of the people. It cites gun control and the crime bill as evidence of this, but also suggests a variety of conspiracy theories about plans by world leaders to implement a world government. M.O.M. plays to paranoid fears by making wild claims about the supposed activity of foreign military troops in Montana and across the country. One report on the activity of out-of-state troops brought in to fight forest fires concludes: "One more note: Mysterious deaths have been taking place since these troops appeared. Coincidence? We do not know." In addition, the newsletter makes a homophobic slur in alluding to rumors regarding Attorney General Janet Reno's sexual orientation.

M.O.M. advertises and distributes books, tapes and videos that provide further "information" on their conspiracy theories. Typical of the selection is a video advertised as "The Countdown to History (Biochip - Mark of the Beast) UN Police Force, One World Govt.,

Chip implants. All by the year 2000-Totally Documented." Also offered are tapes and videos on organizing militias and on survival and combat techniques.

### **Red Beckman**

M. J. "Red" Beckman, an influential figure in the militia movement, has a record as an anti-Semite and an anti-tax activist. He recently lost a long struggle with the IRS when he was finally evicted from his land long after it had been sold to pay for taxes due the government. Beckman, like many militia proponents, is a conspiracy theorist. He has said that the Federal Reserve Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the so-called New World Order are conspiring to dominate the world. In his 1984 book, *The Church Deceived*, Beckman proclaimed that the Holocaust was a judgment upon the Jews for worshipping Satan. More recently, he appeared on KULR-TV, a Montana television station, and repeated his view that Jews are worshippers of Satan.



## New Hampshire

New Hampshire law provides for an "unorganized militia" made up of all citizens over the age of 18 who are not in the national guard or state guard. Militia enthusiasts in New Hampshire have pointed to the state's legislation (as well as the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution) to explain and justify their seemingly oxymoronic organization of "unorganized militias." There is nothing to suggest, however, that they actually intend to serve according to the spirit of the laws by which they justify their own existence. Such laws call for the governor of the state to direct members of the "unorganized militia" to serve in the National Guard during times of crisis.

New Hampshire is the home of the Constitution Defense Militia, a well-organized group with at least 15 members. It is not known if the group engages in paramilitary training or the stockpiling of weapons.

The group has held meetings at the home of Edward L. Brown of Plainsfield. Brown is outspoken in his support of the concept of militias and devotes much of his time and energy to the causes embraced by them: opposition to gun control, the United Nations and the federal government. He recently lobbied against a bill that would ban guns in school zones, for example.

While much of Brown's activity appeals to mainstream opponents of gun control and big government, his enthusiasm for conspiracy theories and his reliance on extremist propaganda places him on the far reaches of the political spectrum. Brown is a devoted reader of *The Spotlight*, the organ of Liberty Lobby, the best-funded and most active anti-Semitic propaganda organization in the United States. In a recent telephone call to ADL, Brown acknowledged that he gets his information on domestic and international affairs from *The Spotlight*. He recently wrote letters to his Congressman and Senators in Washington regarding the alleged build-up of hostile foreign troops inside the United States. Other members of his militia reportedly also embrace conspiracy fantasies involving the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, and the Rockefeller Foundation.

At a recent meeting of the group, members expressed their admiration for two extremist figures: Bo Gritz and Linda Thompson (see the sections of this report on Idaho and Indiana). The group has been in contact with Gritz regarding the organization of militias.

## New Mexico

As in neighboring Arizona, the organization of militias in New Mexico is in the nascent stages. Thus far, the most visible manifestation of pro-militia sentiment in New Mexico has been found in *The Free American*, a monthly newspaper published privately by Clayton R. Douglas and his wife, Jan Douglas. The September 1994 issue contained an advertisement declaring: "It's Time To Take Matters Into Our Own Hands. It's Time To Protect Our Constitution! Join The New Mexico Unorganized Militia." The accompanying phone number for more information was the number of the newspaper itself.

The militia movement appears to be taking hold in Catron County, an area that in recent years has experienced much anti-federal government sentiment among some residents. Among the groups attempting to organize a local militia are "Concerned Citizens" and the "Patriots of Catron County."

Finally, literature from Linda Thompson's (see Indiana section) "Unorganized Militias of the United States," has been distributed through gun shops in Albuquerque.

## North Carolina

North Carolina's militia movement has been fueled by an alarmist vision of a U.S. government bent on the destruction of American liberties.

A Monroe-based group called Citizens for the Reinstatement of Constitutional Government has coalesced around Albert Esposito. He denies that he is preaching revolution, but his rhetoric includes clear overtones of preparation for battle with the imagined enemy. He urges the group to amass caches of the "Four B's": Bibles, bullets, beans and bandages. Many members own semiautomatic weapons, including AR-15's and AK-47's.

The group's program is a mixture of anti-government, religious and conspiratorial ideas. It aims to "make the Holy Bible and the United States Constitution the law of the land," and it vows to "resist the coming New World Order (one world government)." To accomplish its goals, it promises to "Remove treasonous politicians and corrupt judges from positions of authority, and return authority to the people." (Precisely how these malefactors are to be removed from office is not stated.)

Citizens for the Reinstatement of Constitutional Government meets twice a month, alternating between Monroe, in Union County, and Matthews, in neighboring Mecklenburg County. At one meeting, Esposito, a 43-year-old contractor, reportedly repeated G. Gordon Liddy's alleged statement about the new crime law's assault weapons ban: "He said, 'If they pass it, don't obey it. And if they come after you, meet force with force.'"

The group has distributed application forms for the "National Free and Sovereign Civilian Militia, North Carolina state Division." The forms ask applicants whether they are proficient in the operation of handguns and rifles, "reloading ammo," and a variety of survivalist skills.

Esposito has espoused his views on guns at Union County commissioners' meetings. He also railed against federal encroachment in announcing his support for a nonbinding resolution passed by the commission in support of school prayer. Holding a copy of the Constitution in the air, he declared: "We control the county. Not Washington."

Consistent with such anti-federal government views, Esposito says he has refused to file federal income tax returns for three years running because he regards the tax as unconstitutional.

The group he leads split off from a tax-protest group in Charlotte called the Carolina Patriots, three of whose leaders were convicted in October 1994 of conspiracy to help people avoid their tax obligations. Esposito's group has attempted to distance itself from the Carolina Patriots.

In addition to their views on guns and taxes, members of the Monroe group have expressed ideas and conspiracy theories that are characteristic of some other militias around the country. These include charges that the Federal Reserve system has enriched a tiny elite (the group's literature advocates the abolition of the Federal Reserve), and that some government employees have been implanted with computer chips in order to monitor the citizenry. Another claim made at one of the group's meetings, that the government cannot require private citizens to obtain a driver's license, echoes the stand of an earlier extremist group, the Posse Comitatus.

A separate North Carolina militia group has been formed in Greenville, in the eastern part of the state. Led by Scott Brown, the unit is part of the Idaho-based United States Militia Association. Brown reportedly has said his group worries that government representatives "don't really understand what the Constitution means and stands for, and they're voting away our unalienable rights." It is not known whether the Greenville unit is engaging in any more incendiary rhetoric or activity. But this fear -- which is apparently spreading and growing -- that the government is a threat to the rights of the people, is a central theme that militia groups are feverishly trying to exploit.

A computer bulletin board in Alamance County, called "The Spirit of '76," has served as an area recruiting point for the militia led by Linda Thompson, the Indianapolis woman who is a leading figure in the militia movement nationwide. Another bulletin board system that made Thompson's computerized materials available has referred individuals interested in joining the militia to The Spirit of '76. For its part, The Spirit of '76 has declared itself off limits to police and other government authorities by posting a warning that states: "This BBS [bulletin board system] is a PRIVATE system. Only private citizens who are NOT involved in government or law enforcement activities are authorized to use it."

## Ohio

Several militia-like groups have arisen in scattered communities in the State of Ohio. One such militia has been meeting and conducting paramilitary training exercises in Pike County in rural south central Ohio. There is overlapping participation, and a weapons-sales connection, among the Pike County militia, the neo-Nazi SS Action Group and the Ku Klux Klan.

Other militia groups have arisen in Franklin County and Warren County. A militia-type group called "Patriots" meets in Cincinnati and conducts paramilitary exercises in rural Clermont County.

## Virginia

On July 27 of this year, James Roy Mullins, a founding member of a militia-like group called The Blue Ridge Hunt Club, was arrested and charged with the possession and sale of a short-barreled rifle and unregistered silencers and with facilitating the unlawful purchase of a firearm. Ultimately, three other members were also charged with firearm offenses. Federal officials said that Mullins had formed the club to arm its members in preparation for war with the government. The cases are pending.

The group, formed earlier in 1994, has had as many as 15 members. They are said to have met three times before Mullins' arrest. While members of the group say that their purpose is to lobby against gun control laws, federal law enforcement officials tell a much different story. An ATF official who investigated the case said that "Mullins is organizing a group of confederates, to be armed and trained in paramilitary fashion, in preparation for armed conflict with government authorities should firearms legislation become too restrictive." Evidence of such preparation is substantial. In searches of members' homes and storage facilities, federal agents found a stockpile of weapons. In Mullins' home, agents found 13 guns, several of which had homemade silencers. They also found explosives, hand grenades, fuses and blasting caps in a separate warehouse.

Even pretrial incarceration has not stopped Mullins from threatening violence. While in jail, he wrote a letter to a friend saying that he wanted to borrow a machine gun in order to "take care of unfinished business" with certain prosecution witnesses.

The strongest indications of the group's goals was the draft of a portion of its newsletter found on a computer disk obtained by federal agents. On the disk, Mullins had written:

Hit and run tactics will be our method of fighting... We will destroy targets such as telephone relay centers, bridges, fuel storage tanks, communications towers, radio stations, airports, etc... human targets will be engaged ... when it is beneficial to the cause to eliminate particular individuals who oppose us (troops, police, political figures, snitches, etc.).

An ATF official also said that Mullins was planning to arm the group by burglarizing the National Guard Armory in Pulaski, Virginia.



## **Conclusion**

Given the revolutionary posturing of so many of the militias, and the role in them of hatemongers of long standing, the better part of wisdom dictates that close attention be paid to them. There is a role here for the press and for citizen organizations that monitor extremism. The Anti-Defamation League is pledged to do its part.

The chief responsibility for keeping on top of the militia threat, however, plainly rests with the law enforcement branch of government. That this responsibility must be implemented with all due respect for the legal rights to which everyone is entitled should go without saying. Law enforcement agencies need the requisite resources to monitor these groups and to take appropriate measures, when necessary, to protect the public.

One such tool is paramilitary training legislation already on the books of many states. Those laws (many patterned after a model bill first formulated by ADL, which is appended to this report) should be applied, where appropriate. In states where such laws have yet to be adopted, ADL urges that they be given prompt consideration.

The right to hold and promote one's views on the issues which are agitating the militias -- such as gun control, the environment, and abortion -- is inviolate under the Constitution. There is no right, however, to use force or violence either to impose one's views on others or to resist laws properly enacted. That is the crux of the problem presented by the rise of the militias.

## Appendix

### ADL MODEL PARAMILITARY TRAINING STATUTE

A. (1) Whoever teaches or demonstrates to any other person the use, application, or making of any firearm, explosive or incendiary device, or technique capable of causing injury or death to persons, knowing or having reason to know or intending that same will be unlawfully employed for use in, or in furtherance of, a civil disorder; or

(2) Whoever assembles with one or more persons for the purpose of training with, practicing with, or being instructed in the use of any firearm, explosive or incendiary device, or technique capable of causing injury or death to persons, intending to employ unlawfully the same for use in, or in furtherance of, a civil disorder --

Shall be fined not more than \_\_\_\_\_ or imprisoned not more than \_\_\_\_\_ years, or both.

B. Nothing contained in this section shall make unlawful any act of any law enforcement officer which is performed in the lawful performance of his official duties.

C. As used in this section:

(1) The term "civil disorder" means any public disturbance involving acts of violence by assemblages of three or more persons, which causes an immediate danger of or results in damage or injury to the property or person of any other individual.

(2) The term "firearm" means any weapon which is designed to or may readily be converted to expel any projectile by the action of an explosive; or the frame or receiver of any such weapon.

(3) The term "explosive or incendiary device" means (a) dynamite and all other forms of high explosives, (b) any explosive bomb, grenade, missile, or similar device and (c) any incendiary bomb or grenade, fire bomb, or similar device, including any device which (i) consists of or includes a breakable container including a flammable liquid or compound, and a

wick composed of any material which, when ignited, is capable of igniting such flammable liquid or compound, and (ii) can be carried or thrown by one individual acting alone.

(4) The term "law enforcement officer" means any officer or employee of the United States, any state, any political subdivision of a state, or the District of Columbia, and such term shall specifically include, but shall not be limited to, members of the National Guard, as defined in section 101(9) of title 10, United States Code, members of the organized militia of any state or territory of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the District of Columbia, not included within the definition of National Guard as defined by such section 101(9), and members of the Armed Forces of the United States.

## Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

### NATIONAL OFFICE

823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017 .....(212) 490-2525

### WASHINGTON OFFICE

1100 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. (Suite 1020), Washington, D.C. 20036 .....(202) 452-8320

### REGIONAL OFFICES

#### ALBUQUERQUE

P.O. Box 21639, Albuquerque, NM 87154 .....(505) 843-2712

#### ARIZONA

The First Interstate Tower, 3550 North Central Avenue (Suite 914),  
Phoenix, AZ 85012 .....(602) 274-0991

#### ATLANTA (Southeast)

One Securities Centre, 3490 Piedmont Road N.E. (Suite 610), Atlanta, GA 30305 .....(404) 262-3470

#### BOSTON (New England)

1 Lincoln Plaza, (Suite 301), Boston, MA 02111 .....(617) 330-9696

#### CHICAGO (Greater Chicago/Wisconsin)

309 West Washington, (Suite 750), Chicago, IL 60606 .....(312) 782-5080

#### CLEVELAND (Northern Ohio)

505 Terminal Tower, Cleveland, OH 44113 .....(216) 579-9600

#### COLUMBUS (Ohio/Indiana/Kentucky)

42 East Gay St., (Suite 814), Columbus, OH 43215 .....(614) 621-0601

#### CONNECTICUT

419 Whalley Avenue, New Haven, CT 06511 .....(203) 787-4281

#### DALLAS (Northwest Texas/Oklahoma)

12800 Hillcrest Road (Suite 219), Dallas, TX 75230 .....(214) 960-0342

#### D.C. (D.C./MARYLAND)

1100 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. (Suite 1020), Washington, D.C. 20036 .....(202) 452-8310

#### DENVER (Mountain States)

300 South Dahlia Street (Suite 202), Denver, CO 80222 .....(303) 321-7177

#### DETROIT (Michigan)

4000 Town Center (Suite 420), Southfield, MI 48075-1405 .....(810) 355-3730

#### HOUSTON (Southwest)

4635 Southwest Freeway (Suite 400), Houston, TX 77027 .....(713) 627-3490

#### LOS ANGELES (Pacific Southwest)

10495 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90025 .....(310) 446-8000

#### MIAMI (Florida)

150 SE Second Avenue (Suite 800), Miami, FL 33131 .....(305) 373-6306

#### NEW JERSEY

741 Northfield Avenue, West Orange, NJ 07052 .....(201) 669-9700

#### NEW ORLEANS (South Central)

925 Common Street (Suite 975), New Orleans, LA 70112 .....(504) 522-9534

#### NEW YORK CITY (New York City, Westchester, Rockland, Putnam and Long Island)

823 U.N. Plaza, New York, NY 10017 .....(212) 490-2525

#### NEW YORK STATE

125 Wolf Rd. (Suite 504), Albany, NY 12205 .....(518) 446-0038

#### OMAHA (Plains States)

333 South 132 Street, Omaha, NE 68154 .....(402) 333-1303

#### ORANGE COUNTY

2700 North Main Street (Suite 500), Santa Ana, CA 92701 .....(714) 973-4733

#### PALM BEACH COUNTY

The Commerce Center, 324 Datura Street (Suite 223),  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401 .....(407) 832-7144

#### PHILADELPHIA (Eastern Pennsylvania/Delaware)

230 South Broad Street, 20th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19102 .....(215) 735-4267

#### SAN DIEGO

7851 Mission Center Court (Suite 320), San Diego, CA 92108 .....(619) 293-3770

#### SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

22622 Vanowen Street, West Hills, CA 91307 .....(818) 587-3220

#### SAN FRANCISCO (Central Pacific)

720 Market Street (Suite 800), San Francisco, CA 94102-2501 .....(415) 981-3500

#### SEATTLE (Pacific Northwest)

Plaza 600 Building (Suite 720), 600 Stewart Street, Seattle, WA 98101 .....(206) 448-5349

#### ST. LOUIS (Missouri/Southern Illinois)

10926 Schuetz Road, St. Louis, MO 63146 .....(314) 432-6868

#### VIRGINIA/NORTH CAROLINA

6330 Newtown Rd. (Suite 326), Norfolk, VA 23502 .....(804) 455-9002

### OVERSEAS OFFICES

#### JERUSALEM

30 King David Street, Jerusalem, Israel 94101 .....011-972-2-251-171

#### CANADA

Cooperative Association with the League for Human Rights of Canadian B'nai Brith

15 Hove Street (Suite 210), Downsview, Ontario, Canada, M3H 4Y8 .....(416) 633-6227