

Agriculture by Marcia Merry

Subversion in the farmbelt

Who's behind the radical left-wing and right-wing groups? Look to the Communist Party, the ADL, and the cartels.

Worse than swindlers and snake oil salesmen, are a number of individuals and groups running dirty operations to deliberately demoralize and subvert farmers attempting to mobilize emergency action against the depression.

Most of the farm "personalities" you see on television, for example, the "Rev." David Ostendorf and Merle Hansen, are not at all indigenous spokesmen for farm interests. If you look at who backs them, you find ties leading right back to the Eastern Establishment policy circles, or to the Minneapolis base of operations for the international food cartels, which actually favor the radical shrinkage of U.S. farm capacity. These special interests are using the pseudo farm activists as hired hands for promoting their policy of reducing food output for world consumption and expanding U.S. food exports to the Soviet Union.

The common theme in the demands of these groups is to reduce crop acreage (in the name of "fighting erosion"), reduce food output (in the name of preventing food "surpluses"), and returning to more primitive, low-technology farming methods (in the name of organic gardening or "back-to-the-land" mysticism). These false friends of the farmer never identify the role of the International Monetary Fund in the overall shutdown of the Western economy, nor the need for emergency measures to reverse the bankruptcy of the world economy as a whole.

One example of the current soap-box farm spokespersonship is David Ostendorf, associated with Prairie

Fire and the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition. He constantly presses for the removal of land from production, in the name of preventing erosion on land given "in covenant with God." The Ford Foundation is one of the funders of the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition; it also reportedly received \$500,000 from country music crooner Willie Nelson, from the take of the Farm Aid Concert.

A co-spokesman for Prairie Fire is Dan Levitas, a youngster from New York City, whose father, Mitchell Levitas, was a member of both the Communist Party and of the New York Council on Foreign Relations.

There are both "right-wing" and "left-wing" versions of these hot-house farm groups. The right-wing varieties have been promoting arms, violence, and neo-Nazi rhetoric. The left-wing groups usually crusade against nuclear power and defense, and promote share-the-wealth primitivism.

The groups are played off against each other, in the "gang-countergang" mode of warfare pioneered by counterinsurgency experts of the British Empire. For example, Merle Hansen, with his ties into KGB and Communist Party networks, recently toured Michigan, denouncing right-wing extremism in the farm belt.

This rhetoric is merely part of a cynical scenario to instigate violence and despair. Investigators have discovered that one of the control centers of a number of neo-Nazi, anti-Semitic organizations is the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL), which is using the threat from these groups to gain influence over left-wing and

religion-based farm organizations.

Individuals connected with the ADL operations include Lawrence Humphrey of Velma, Oklahoma, who is reportedly linked to the terrorist Posse Comitatus, and to the "Aryan-Nation"-connected Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord extremists. This winter, Humphrey brought 12 armed men, and Tom Kersey, a former leader of the American Agriculture Movement (AAM), to a stand-off with a sheriff at the foreclosure of Kersey's friend, farmer Oscar Lorrick, of Cochran, Georgia. The event drew widespread media attention.

Behind the scenes, Humphrey had connections to stage this event with Charles Wittenstein of the Atlanta ADL, and Michael Lieberman, Sheldon Filger, and Morton Wrywick of, respectively, the Chicago, Omaha, and Minneapolis offices of the ADL.

In January, Lawrence organized a tour with Tom Kersey to Minnesota, North Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa, advocating violent confrontations over farm foreclosures. Their program called on farmers not to plant at all this year—in supposed recognition of the Biblical "Year of Jubilee."

This has given the ADL and others the pretext for organizing and influencing countergang farm groups. In Minneapolis, for example, a test-tube group was formed on Jan. 10 called the Family Farm Resource Organizing Committee, recruited by the ADL and others to oppose "extremism."

In an attempt to counter and threaten the growing number of farmers who have declared their candidacies for Congress on the basis of presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche's emergency economic platform, the ADL in January issued a report, "The Farmer and the Extremists," which slanders associates of LaRouche as "anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi."